



A Study of Galatians, Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians

Many times we look at the congregations of the New Testament and we think of them as the cream of the crop, the best of the best, the models of what we are to be. The truth is that these congregations were much more like our congregation that we think. These congregations had blessings and challenges just like we do. The apostle Paul did as much guiding, leading and rebuking as he did motivating and complimenting the people for their faith.

As we look at these congregations we pray that God leads us to see that there is much that we can learn from the guidance and teachings that God gave them through the apostle Paul. We will also pray that our congregation can also grow through that same guidance and teaching.

Introduction:

Chapter 6 of Ephesians is another chapter that has been artificially chopped. Think about a tree that has been cut down. After the branches have been cut off, what is left?

That is what chapters 4,5,6 of Ephesians really is. One long trunk of Paul's writings where one thought leads to another.

But you can't move the trunk. You can't get it into the back of your truck, you can't tow it on a sled with your snowmobile, how do you make the trunk manageable?

This is what happens with some of the books of the Bible. The early church fathers decided to divide the books of the Bible into chapter and verse. Many times, the divisions are understandable. However, there are other times where they chop up a section that should be together.

Our God is a God of order. He gives roles to us in the Bible that we are to follow. Our very first role was to rule over the earth, subdue it, and fill it. God gives other roles for Christians to be salt, light, ambassadors, fishers and farmers in his kingdom. In chapter 5, we see the roles of marriage under the heading of Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

We saw how God lovingly gives these roles to men and women in a marriage and expects that they will follow them out of love for him. In chapter 6, we see a few more roles that God gives to his people. In the same way he expects those who are married to follow their roles, he expects these to follow their roles out of love for him.

Read 6:1-3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— ³“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

1. What is the logical connection between the section on marriage at the end of chapter 5 and this section?
2. Paul speaks to children. What does that say about their faith and their sanctified living?
3. What is the role that children are to live in?
4. What is the difference between honoring and obeying?
5. Generally speaking, what is the blessing when families live under God’s directions?
6. What does this section add to the debate about the importance of the family unit?

Read 6:4. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

7. Why is this statement directed at fathers?
8. In a wider context, what is God’s direction to parents?
9. Why is this primary role of parents so important?

Read 6:5-8. ⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, ⁸because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

10. What was a part of Roman society? (something that we do not have any more)
11. This is not a Biblical statement on the morality of slavery. Paul is not trying to change the societal norm of slavery by telling the slaves to rise up. What is he trying to do?

12. What are some statements that show the Christian attitude towards work?

13. Read those directions again. What strikes you?

14. Think back on your career, your job. After reading these directions, how do they make you feel?

Read 6:9. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

15. Here is something strange, but glorious. There are no different directions given to slave owners, bosses than to workers. How can bosses show their Christian faith?

Read 10-12.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

16. The Christian life will always be a struggle. Attacks on the faith will take the form of temptations and moral lapses. There will be temptations to yield on points of doctrine. There will be temptations to formalize religion and reduce it to an external thing, a mere shell. There will be temptations of lovelessness toward fellow believers and hatred toward those who are not believers.

- In the face of these daily temptations, how would Paul respond?

17. Why do we need divine help?

18. How should this change our view of sin and temptation?

Read 6:13-18.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

19. There are 5 defensive weapons. What are they?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

20. What is Paul's message to us when he talks about these weapons?

21. As Christians, are we just supposed to stay behind friendly lines, hunker down with our safe armor and stay away from harm? How do you know?

22. What can God do to defend you?

23. What can God do when we use his Word offensively?

Read 6:19-24

¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³ Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

24. What does Paul need the people to do for him? What should we remember to do for our leadership?

25. After all the direction of the letter, how does Paul close the letter? Why is this comforting?

26. How does God's Word in Ephesians help us as congregation members, and as God's people, live in this world?