

The Book of Ephesians – Part Fourteen

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Adapted from John Herbert's Notes; Read by Ralph Alley

1). Ephesians 6:5

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

- a). In our study over the past few weeks we have seen that the Book of Ephesians presents three particular relationships (marriage, parent/child, and master/servant) as examples of “submitting to one another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21).
 - b). We have seen that wives are to submit to their own husbands, as to the Lord, as the husband is the head of the wife.
 - c). And that husbands are to be submitted to Christ who is their head.
 - d). Children are to be submitted to their parents.
 - e). And fathers [and mothers] are to be submitted to God as a child of God.
 - f). Servants are to be submitted to their masters.
 - g). And the masters are to be submitted to God as His bondservant.
 - h). And in these three we have the complete picture of our relationship to Christ. We are to pursue the marriage relationship with Him in the full assurance of His faithfulness in the same way as a child has complete trust in its parents. And all this is done by choice, as a bondservant of God.
 - i). The most remarkable and most challenging thing about all of this is that our submission to Christ with a view to the coming Kingdom is demonstrated through our relationships with others.
- 2). In the example of our opening scripture we see that the servant [remember we are looking at an employee/employer relationship here] is to obey his master ‘according to the flesh’, in ‘fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart,’ and this is to be done ‘as to Christ’ and not to men.

a). Again, according to the scripture, this is the will of God for the servant, and if he is obedient to this 'with goodwill doing service,' then the 'good works' that he does in this, he will receive the same from the Lord.

b). Then as we saw in 1Peter Chapter 2, the servant is to conduct himself in this way not just with a master who is 'good and gentle', but also with the master who is harsh -

1Peter 2:18

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

c). What we can see is that the servant's faithful obedience to the command of Christ with respect to his relationship with his master, irrespective of the master's treatment of him, would correlate with the works of gold, silver and precious stones to be revealed at the Judgment Seat.

d). Then from the other side if the coin we have in verse 9 -

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

e). *Believing* earthly masters, masters 'according to the flesh', are themselves servants of Christ. Therefore, in their role as 'master,' they are to be faithfully obedient to their Master in heaven when it comes to their relationship with their own servants on the earth - hence the Scripture says to masters, 'do the same things to them, giving up threatening'.

f). As with the servant, the master will be held accountable for his faithful obedience to this at the Judgment Seat.

g). How the servant and the master 'according to the flesh' treat each other is what they can expect from their heavenly Master.

h). This is a principle that will hold true for husbands and wives and children and parents also.

Matthew 7:2

"For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

And -

Luke 19:22 "

And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.'

And-

Romans 2:1

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

And-

Luke 6:37

"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

m). As we ponder the implications of what we see here, we will come to the sobering realization that we cannot be casual or cavalier about our relationships in any aspect of our lives. What we do and what we say on a daily basis is of fundamental importance to our appearance at the Judgment Seat.

n). Perhaps here we can find context in our own lives for the scripture that says in Matthew 12:36-

"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

And -

Proverbs 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

3). With regards to the Book of Ephesians, our examples of submission conclude with the master and servant, but there are other commands to submission and obedience found elsewhere in scripture that would be good to look at. Paul gives this advice to Timothy-

1Timothy 5:1

Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father...2 older women as mothers...

a). Those who are younger are to submit themselves to those who are older, so as to give respect and deference and honor to one who is older in years.

4). We also see this in -

Romans 13:1

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

a). And -

Titus 3:1

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

And-

1Peter 2:11

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 ¶ Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men –

c). In all three of our scriptures here it is the word 'hupotasso' that's used for the word "submission," showing that we are to submit ourselves to the ordinance of God and in that submitted position, place ourselves under the governing authorities.

d). This would encompass everything from driving the speed limit, to being honest on our tax returns. Whatever the governing authorities at Federal, State or local level require of us, providing it is not contrary to the commands of Christ, we are to do - without criticizing, without complaining and without protesting. But rather, we are to do it heartily as to the Lord as the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

e). And our scripture clearly points out the consequences for doing the wrong thing -

Romans 13:2

"Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."

f). It is the world's view, and most of the 'church', that we have the right to protest anything government does if we don't like it – the truth is we have no right to protest, but a responsibility to obedience.

h). This may be one of the areas of our life where we can 'redeem the time' that we have previously spent venting about those things we are not to touch in this present age.

5). We see more detail concerning submission *within the body of Christ* in the Book of Hebrews-

Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

a). Here in Hebrews we move into a specific relationship within the body – those who 'rule' and those who are 'ruled over'.

b). The word 'rule' here is the Greek word 'hegeomai,' which means to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); to consider.

c). We can see that 'ruling' here is the idea of *leading and protecting*, in the same way a husband is to 'rule his family well.' It has absolutely nothing to do with domination.

d). Backing up a few verses in Hebrews 13 will help clarify this -

Hebrews 13:7

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

And also-

1Corinthians 16:15

I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints-- 16 that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.

f). Those who 'rule' within the church are to provide an example of faithful obedience which those within the body can follow. This is not talking about perfection, but an example of faithfulness in the midst of struggling with the flesh.

g). And according to our Hebrews scripture, those who are ruled over are to obey and be submissive for a clearly stated reason - for they (those that rule over) watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.

h). Those who 'rule over' actually "Watch Out" – And the word 'watch' literally means to be sleepless. They are [to be] vigilant with regards to each person's soul. That which they teach, that which they advise, that which they model is all with the salvation of the soul in view. This is the passion, this is the driving force –

[1Thessalonians 2:19](#)

[For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?](#)

i). Ruling over is never about selfish ambition or conceit, but being the servant of all with the Kingdom in view –

[Mark 10:42](#)

[But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."](#)

j). And again, according to our scripture, those given the rule must give an account for each person's soul under their charge. And that giving of an account should be after a particular fashion – "Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

k). It is to be done with 'joy and not with grief' – and the grief part would come from those under their care choosing not to obey and be submissive. The scripture plainly says that not obeying and being submissive 'would be unprofitable for you' – the one not obeying the command of scripture.

l). There is, as I am sure you will realize, a tremendous challenge here for those who 'rule over' and the necessity for a complete trust in God for those who would be subject to their rule.

m). Neither side of this coin is easy – but then whoever said that it would be?

6). And finally, with regards to submission, there is this from James –

[James 4:7](#)

[Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.](#)

a). And this really is the summary of all isn't it? If we submit to God with regards to the commands given for submission, we will be able to stand against the devil. And if we give him no opportunity to find a place in us, he will flee from us.

b). To choose to be submissive to another person in obedience to Christ strikes at the very heart of our pride and our arrogance. The rewards for doing so are off the charts, and the warnings for disobedience are equally striking.

c). Exodus 19:5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.⁶ 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

And-

d). 1Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

And-

e). Leviticus 26:18

'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

And-

f). 2Thessalonians 1:7

...and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,⁸ in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.¹¹ ¶ Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹² that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And-

g). Hebrews 3:18

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?

And-

h). 1Peter 4:17

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

7). Now as we think about all of this, it may become extremely daunting, but let's remember two very important things. Firstly, God never requires us to do something that cannot be done. It doesn't mean it is necessarily easy, as we are in a constant battle with our old man. But we can do it. And secondly, we will remember a scripture from earlier in Ephesians -

Ephesians 4:7

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

a). God gives us the grace to be able to do what has to be done.

b). We are going to spend a little time now looking at personal holiness, and the various facets of submission we have studied in past weeks, and set them within the context of two parables that Christ gives concerning the faithful servant.

8). The first parable is found in -

Luke 19:11

Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' 25 ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be

given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 'But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'"

a). Here we have the parable of the minas, a parable concerning the work that must be done during the Lord's absence, with a view to His return.

b). We see 10 minas given to 10 servants, showing the completeness of what is in view.

c). Each servant receives exactly the same amount, and then sets about making a profit on what he has been given.

d). Each servant, although starting with the same amount, produces a different return. The first one earned 10 minas in addition to what he was given; the second one earned 5 minas in addition to what he was given, and the third one earned nothing and had no extra minas at all, apart from what he was given.

e). And the reward given to each is directly related to the amount of profit made. One received authority over 10 cities, the next received authority over 5 cities, and that last one earned nothing, and what he had was taken from him.

f). We can see this same type thing in the parable of the sower -

Matthew 13:23

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

g). This then is our call to personal holiness -

Ephesians 4:1

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called...

h). And would encompass so much of Ephesians Chapters 4 and 5.

i). We have all been given grace for personal holiness, and it is our individual choice as to how much we choose to be faithfully obedient to the commands of Christ.

9). If we now go to our second parable, the parable of the talents we will notice something different -

Matthew 25:14

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and

immediately he went on a journey. 16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22 "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

a). Here we have exactly the same situation as our previous parable – the nobleman and the man would be the same person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the servants would be the same servants, all Christians from this dispensation. But in our parable here, rather than each servant receiving exactly the same, they are all given different amounts ‘each according to his own ability’ –

Ephesians 4:7

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

b). And this provides us with another part of the same picture from the previous parable. What we see here is that the reward for each servant is based upon what they do with the various amounts they are given.

d). The one who received 5 talents has exactly the same reward as the one who has 2. There is no differentiation made as a result of the amount that each is given. It is how they respond to what is given them that is judged.

- e). And so we can see a correlation between the different amounts of talents given to the servants and the different amount of God appointed roles and responsibilities and the grace that goes with them, that is given to each of us.
- f). What is so encouraging here is that it is not the number of roles to which we are appointed that matters, but our faithfulness in those roles. Whether God has given us the grace to accomplish many roles or just one is not the issue. If we are faithfully obedient in those roles then the person with one role will receive the same reward as the person with many roles.
- g). And we should understand that the work that we do that correlates with the profit made in our parable is in our choice to die to our flesh, as we choose faithful obedience in the midst of our struggle with our old man.
- h). Whatever God requires of us to do He has given us the grace to accomplish it in faithful obedience. As always the choice is ours.
- i). [Colossians 1:5](#)
...because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;
- j). [2Corinthians 6:1](#)
We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
- 10). So now, let's review exactly what we have seen in the Book of Ephesians regarding our own individual, personal holiness.
- a). [Ephesians 4:1](#)
I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- b). [Ephesians 4:15](#)
...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head-- Christ--
- c). [Ephesians 4:22](#)
...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

d). Ephesians 4:25

Therefore, putting away lying, "

e). Ephesians 4:26

"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil.

f). Ephesians 4:28

Let him who stole steal no longer,

g). Ephesians 4:29

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth

h). Ephesians 4:31

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

i). Ephesians 5:1

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love,

j). Ephesians 5:3

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

k). Ephesians 5:11

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

l). Ephesians 5:15

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

m). Ephesians 5:17

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

n). Ephesians 5:18

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

o). Ephesians 5:21

...submitting to one another in the fear of God.

And we will continue with this series next week, God willing.