



### Time to Reflect

- In what ways can we strive to ensure that God exists at the very heart of the family unity in today's world?
- What are some of the challenges that our children face today that prevent them from growing in the Christian faith?

In our previous study we focused on Christian living and our attention was drawn to the context of a family home. We reflected on Christian love and the importance of being a praising and thankful people. This week we will be discussing what it really means to live the lordship of Christ and we will consider how Christians should remain true to their faith at home and in society.

**“Paul’s solution to the antagonisms in the home and in society was *regeneration* – a new heart from God and a new submission to Christ and to one another.”**

(Warren Wiersbe, *Be Rich: Ephesians*, p161)

### Specifics

- When we read newspapers or watch the daily news programmes it is easy to become negative. Many of us might ask ‘what is the world coming to?’ We can define the current state of the world as a mess and reflect on where it all went wrong.
- Our passage is a strong reminder that lasting harmony can only be achieved when we submit to the lordship of Christ and Paul focused on several key areas as he encouraged the Ephesians to have harmony in Christ.

#### **1. Christian Children (v1-3)**

- Paul issued a very clear instruction that children are to obey their parents “...in the Lord” (v1a). The Christian faith applies to children as well as to adults. Every aspect of family life and society is to be defined and influenced by our Christian faith.
- Warren Wiersbe suggests that obedience is right (v1b) and he reflects, “**Since the parents brought the child into the world, and since they have more knowledge and wisdom than the child, it is right that the child obey his parents.<sup>1</sup>**”
- Obedience is also commanded (v2a) and Paul made clear reference to the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16).
- To honour parents means more than simply to obey. It implies the need to show respect and love, to care for them as long as is required, and to bring honour to them through how we live.
- Note also that obedience brings blessing (v2b-3). The fifth commandment has a promise attached to it! Obedience ensures quality of life and God enriches the lives of those who are obedient to Him.
- These verses are a reminder of the importance of having God at the very centre of the family unity. They are not instructions for children to be treated harshly or unfairly.

<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Be Rich: Ephesians* (David C Cook, 2009), p162.

## 2. Christian Fathers (v4)

- As Paul moved on to offer instruction to fathers, he was actually reminding the Ephesians of the importance of good parenting.
- The Bible does record instances where parents neglected their children by failing to instruct them properly and being bad examples to them. For example, David pampered Absalom, Eli failed to discipline his sons, and Isaac spoiled Esau while his wife showed favouritism to Jacob.
- Parents are to encourage their children and model consistency. Wiersbe contends, “**Christian parents need the fullness of the Spirit so they can be sensitive to the needs and problems of their children.**”<sup>2</sup>
- Parents must also nurture their children, bringing “...them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (v4). This speaks of the need for balanced growth – intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and emotional.
- Paul challenged Christian parents to ensure that God would be the main influence in the home and Christian values the core of society. This would certainly go a long way to counteracting many of the problems that exist in the world today.
- Wiersbe issues a very direct challenge. He writes, “**Home is the place where the children ought to learn about the Lord and the Christian life. It is time that Christian parents stopped passing the buck to Sunday school teachers and Christian day-school teachers, and start nurturing their children.**”<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Christian Servants (v5-8)

- In (v5) we read about slaves and masters. There were probably sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire at the time Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians.
- It is worth noting that the gospel message is against the practice of slavery and Paul does not endorse slavery in this passage.
- In broad terms, what is communicated here is a teaching that could (and should) be applied to Christians in the workplace.
- Christians should recognise, above anything else, that they are primarily serving Christ (v5). Their work should always be of the highest possible standard as doing a good job is the will of God.
- Christians are called to serve wholeheartedly (v7) and then they will be rewarded by the Lord. Wiersbe reminds us, “**We are to serve Christ, not men. We shall receive our rewards from Christ, not men.**”<sup>4</sup>

## 4. Christian Masters (v9)

- The final verse speaks into work relationships, particularly how managers and those in positions of responsibility should engage with those they lead.
- Wiersbe draws our attention to Boaz as a positive example of sound and faithful leadership. He reminds us that, “**The master must serve the Lord from his heart if he expects his servants to do the same.**”<sup>5</sup>
- Those in positions of authority need to respect the people they lead and have a clear desire to glorify the Lord in all that they do. They are to be encouragers who practice the lordship of Christ and avoid playing favourites (v9).
- Such an approach to life will lead to the development of joy and thankfulness, and the emergence of positive relationships. Modelling the lordship of Christ leads to positive and lasting transformation.

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<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, *Be Rich: Ephesians*, p165.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p167.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p168.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p169.