

Become What You Believe (Ephesians) – Part 6

In chapter six, Paul is going to teach us about wearing the armor of God – but before he gets us ready to WAR, he teaches us to SUBMIT. We have to bring our civilian's will and understanding into line with military standards, codes, rules, regulations, and ways of thinking.

Our relationship with God is the only relationship in which we know that the other party is right ALL THE TIME. But God puts us in human relationships, where there are times that the authority we are submitted to is not right. Why? So we can learn submission to HIM (not them!).

6:1 – the best time to learn obedience and submission is as a young child – parents, don't neglect to teach respect for authority to your children!

6:1 – God doesn't expect children to UNDERSTAND everything their parents tell them to do, He just expects them to OBEY – and this principle applies to His own (spiritual) children

6:2-3 – compare the lives of those having respect for authority with the lives of those who don't – all behavior has consequences – what a difference!

If you can learn a principle on any level (or at any age) you can learn it on every level (i.e. tithe on your first dollar!).

6:4 – God's plan for His people is filled with CHECKS and BALANCES – submission must occur in an environment of MUTUAL submission

6:4 – the command is given to the FATHER (our society leaves nurturing to the MOTHER) - children learn their values from the authority figure at home

6:5-6 – your work ethic on your secular job is a concern to God because it concerns your character (how you act when no one is looking)

6:6 – “eyeservice” - you only do what is right when someone is looking!

6:7-8 – we are rewarded BY THE LORD, not necessarily by the person or place we invest in His Kingdom – WE DO ALL OF OUR WORK FOR HIM! (stop looking to others to compensate you for what you do for them!)

God simplified NT church structure by giving only ONE job opening to every member – **SLAVE** (i.e. Jesus washed His disciples' feet) – the term means a servant so devoted that, even if they were offered their freedom, they would refuse it because of their lifelong commitment to their beloved master!

AS SLAVES TO CHRIST, WE ARE TRULY FREE!

Exodus 21:5-6 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

None of us has any justifiable excuse for ever saying, “That job is beneath me” – sorry if you think you're too good for the job, but no other openings are available in God's kingdom! None of us ever has a justifiable reason for ever saying, “They were using me at that church” – that's why we got into God's Kingdom, to be USED by the Lord!

6:9 – GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS (Acts 10:34), BUT HE IS A RESPECTER OF PRINCIPLES ... AND OF PASSION!

6:9 – when you are in a position of leadership, don't take advantage of others / no one should lead who has never followed! (Joshua was a great leader because he had submitted to a flawed leader like Moses)

Why has Paul spent so much time talking about submission? Because when soldiers are submitted they will not break rank, and they will win!

There are things that God will SHOW you (and even let you TASTE), but then He will expect you to FIGHT for it (i.e. the spies in Jericho).

6:10 – members of the NT church must be STRONG - that is a mandate from God - not weak, not passive, not indifferent, not whining, but STRONG

The strength of God is not proven by how much you can AVOID, it is proven by how much you can ENDURE (i.e. Jesus on the cross).

Christians in North America have never really had to SUFFER anything, but yet we complain about our "light afflictions" - wouldn't a "testimony service" in Heaven be a bit embarrassing?!

6:11 – PUT ON the armour of God, and PUT OFF your own ideas and strategies – the devil is too smart for you if you fight in your own strength (“wiles” = “trickery”)

6:12 – don't respond in the FLESH because you are actually being attacked in the SPIRIT – don't let the PROBLEM back you off from the PROMISE (we have become so secular that we think everything we are facing is natural; today we "counsel" instead of "wrestle" – but it doesn't help!)

6:13 – it is HIS armour, but it is YOUR stand ... we must engage in spiritual warfare because Satan opposes every step we take ... one principle governing the receiving of God's blessings – NOT WITHOUT STRUGGLE! (your PROMISE is always locked up behind a PROBLEM – i.e. Jericho)

We live simultaneously in two spheres of existence – the spiritual realm and the natural realm. The spiritual realm is the “parent” realm from which everything natural is given birth; the natural realm is simply an outworking of the spiritual realm.

You cannot defeat the Enemy in the natural realm! You must defeat him in the spiritual realm, and then the natural realm will fall in line with what has been accomplished in the Spirit.

PEOPLE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY – THE DEVIL IS YOUR ENEMY!

6:14-17 – every piece of the armour of God pertains to our identity in Christ

Loins girt about with truth	Base your entire life on pure motives
Breastplate of righteousness	Guard your heart with holiness
Feet shod with peace	Lack of peace indicates lack of balance
Shield of faith	“Soak your shield” in the Word of God
Helmet of salvation	Keep your mind on one thing – salvation!
Sword of the Spirit	To wield the sword you must know the Word

6:18 – this generation has done more with PRAISE than any other generation, but they still haven't learned how to PRAY (must be a balance!)

When the church doesn't pray, we are not even on the battleground!

6:19-20 – those that carry the "mystery" are on the HIT LIST of Hell, but the bonds can't stop the “ambassador in bonds”!

6:21-22 – “my affairs” – pray thoroughly, and with accurate information – **PRAY ALL THE WAY THROUGH A PROBLEM – PRAY THE DETAILS!**