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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Ephesians 6.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Ephesians 6.

Topics.

- Children, obey your parents in the Lord.
- Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger.
- Slaves, obey your earthly masters.
- Masters do not threaten your slaves.
- The armour of God.
- Standing against the schemes of the devil.
- We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.
- Principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness.
- Take up the whole armour of God and stand firm.

The Previous Chapter.

In the previous chapter Paul talked of walking as children of the light discerning what is pleasing to the Lord and understanding his will. He spoke of wives submitting to their husbands as to the Lord, of husbands loving their wives, as Christ loved the church, of a church without spot or wrinkle and of two becoming one flesh.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

Children, Obey your Parents in the Lord.

Ephes. 6:1-3 ----- ¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honour your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

NOTICE: the focus is parents who are in Christ and as such it is assumed that they have their child's best interest at heart.

Paul is citing the fifth commandment from the book of Exodus in which God told the children of Israel: -

- Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you" (Exod 20:12-20).

The promise that things may go well for the people of Israel and that they may live a long life, but Paul is applying the promise now to all who obey it (v3). There are two reasons for this: -

1. God blesses those who show honour and respect to their parents.
2. Children who learn to obey their parents learn self-control and this skill of course is going to greatly profit them in many ways throughout their life, it will give them advantages in their careers and in business and greatly benefit them in their friendships and marriage relationship.

Fathers, do not Provoke your Children to Anger.

Ephes. 6:4 ----- ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

In the book of Proverbs it is written: -

- Those who love their children are diligent to discipline them (Prov. 13:24) because foolishness and recklessness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from them (Prov. 22:15) so do not withhold discipline from a child; if you smack them they will not die, but you will keep them from taking the wrong path and save them from trouble (Prov. 23:13-14) since the rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to themselves brings shame to their mother (Prov. 29:15).

Provoke: in this context carries the idea of provoking and enraging to anger whether there is a justifiable reason or not.

NOTE: this does not mean that the only form of discipline is with a rod, it is the principle of discipline that is important not what is used, i.e., many parents have found denying children of something they like especially teenagers to be very effective. The principle is that there should be some form of discipline administered that causes the child to feel some kind of pain whether it be emotional or physical.

Biblical discipline: is not about a Mum or Dad waiting until their patience is exhausted and their child has driven them to frustration causing them to lash out in anger, this type of discipline is of the flesh and certainly not from God. God's idea of discipline is to administer whatever type of punishment a parent may choose and administer it in love and control without the child feeling any sense of rejection. If it is a controlled smack with a wooden spoon, the child should be hugged afterward and in love have explained to them why they were smacked.

If it is being denied something the parent should calculate first that what they are about to deny the child off they have the strength and courage to carry it through. It is absolutely pointless to say, "You are not watching T.V. for a month" and then not carry it out, in fact it's almost worse than saying nothing at all since it teaches the child that the parent is not a person of their word and once a child realises that it won't be long before they are controlling the parent.

As cute as a child maybe they are not backward in
quickly learning how to get their own-way.

Another tip for new parents: a child should not be disciplined for something that is an accident, i.e., maybe they knocked Mums best vase off the table, this is not a discipline situation but a training one, discipline is about defying authority, when a child is told to perform a duty or task that they are quite capable of doing and they definitely refuse this becomes a battle of the child's will against the parents will, it is in this situation that some form of punishment should be applied (especially if the child continues to be defiant), but always in love and always without creating any sense of rejection.

Because of this principal it is always a good idea before telling a child to do something to mentally consider if what you are telling them to do is something that they should do or simply something you would like them to do. If it is not something that is important then ask them to do it rather than tell them. This has two advantages: -

1. If they don't do it you are not bound to discipline them.
2. They learn that when you do tell them to do something and they don't do it there will be consequences.

Asking is appealing to their better nature and hoping that they will respond accordingly, but if they don't it is O.K. since what is being asked is not something that is deserving of discipline whereas telling is a command and as such should be obeyed.

A Practical Example.

A parent may have made it a law in their house that the children have to make their bed when they get up so when the parent sees the bed still in a mess at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and they tell the child to go and make their bed, if they don't some form of discipline should follow. But if Mum drops a fork in the kitchen and asks the child to pick it up, but because the child is occupied with other things doesn't do it,

they don't need to be disciplined. Obviously no parent wants to be disciplining a child all day so to avoid this be aware of the principle of asking or telling one is a command while the other is simply a request. Should any parent be interested in this topic further James Dobson has a very good book titled, Dare to Discipline which should be available through most Christian book shops.

Slaves, Obey your Earthly Masters.

Ephes. 6:5-8 ----- ⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Masters in this context are not the kind we might think of as in Hollywood Blockbuster movies with whips and their slaves in chains being tortured and brutally beaten, but even if they were the principal remains the same since a slave has no-rights and therefore no power and as such should they try to stand against their master or shirk their work they will bring the wrath of their master upon them.

The spirit behind what Paul is saying is one of protection since if slave obeys their master whether they are watching or not watching and do the work that is expected of them as though they were doing the will of God and work with a good attitude as to the Lord they will be kept safe since the master will have no cause to unleash his fury. But the masters Paul has in mind are mostly far more civil than these types of cruel brute beasts. Paul no-doubt understands that no-one enjoys working as a slave and therefore tells those who are slaves and belong to God to work as unto Him knowing that those who are honest, faithful and do what is right and good as unto the Lord are storing up for themselves eternal rewards in heaven.

NOTE: this same principal also applies today to those who work for employers.

Masters do Not Threaten your Slaves.

Ephes. 6:9 ----- ⁹Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality (respect in KJV) with him.

Partiality: means favouritism.

Here Paul is bringing the balance between masters and slaves. Masters are not to threaten their slaves, this by extension also means they are not to abuse or maltreat them. The words, "Their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him" (v9). Means that the same God who is over the slave is the same God who is over the master, and the words, "There is no partiality with him" means that whether a person is a master or slave, noble or lowly, rich or poor, God shows no favouritism, but rather does what is right and just no matter what a person's status is in life or lack of it.

NOTE: even those who belong to God's Kingdom are not favoured above justice and doing right over those outside of the Lord's Kingdom. God does not pervert justice or deny it simply because a person maybe in the Lord's Kingdom. If a brother in Christ deliberately lies to protect himself from a criminal activity, and a secular man is truthful God will stand alongside the truthful man not the one who lies even though he maybe in God's Kingdom. This does not mean the secular man is saved to eternal life, but it does mean that God respects him far more than the brother in Christ who lies to protect himself. It is in this sense that God shows no partiality or favour.

The Armour of God.

Ephes. 6:10-18 ----- ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil (diabolos). ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in

the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,. ¹⁸praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

The conclusion to Paul's entire letter to the Ephesian brothers and sisters and by extension to all who belong to the Kingdom of Christ is to, "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might" (v10).

Standing against the Schemes of the Devil.

The words, "Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil" (diabolos) (v11) show that all the armour listed in these verses is to protect brothers and sisters from the temptations, schemes and tricks of the devil.

Devil: (diabolos) means false accuser and slanderer.

In this context standing against the schemes of the devil carries the following two ideas: -

1. To resist being enticed by the distorted teachings of corrupt religious leaders and denying the faith because of hardship or persecution by powerful secular authorities that are opposed to God, His will, His plans and His purposes.
2. Standing against the schemes of the devil also embraces the idea of resisting any thought that causes the mind to be troubled i.e., anxiety, worry, stress etc., especially doubts about the Bible, Christ and one's own eternal salvation.

SUMMARY: the devil which simply means an accuser, slander or one that opposes can firstly be seen as every thought in the mind and every attitude in the human heart that is opposed to God and the Lord Jesus Christ which is manifested outwardly in religious leaders who distort the Gospel of Christ for their own selfish gain and secular rulers who oppose God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the church and violently persecute those who faithfully proclaim Christ's name. Secondly the devil can be seen as the personification of every thought in the mind and every attitude in the heart that brings a person into fear, anxiety and doubts about the Bible, their faith in Christ and their eternal salvation.

We do Not Wrestle against Flesh and Blood.

The words, "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (v12) mean that we do not go to war for the Kingdom of God or physically fight to protect the truth of God as they did in the Old Testament rather our battle is spiritual and involves spiritual weapons and not man made swords and spears.

This warfare: is not about gathering together in prayer groups and by warrior type prayers cast down evil demonic spirits as some are taught by certain religious teachers to do. A rather foolish idea since where are they going to cast these so called evil spirits to considering they teach that they are eternal and can move about as they choose. Sadly this is happening in some of today's modern churches (I was once one of those who naively prayed in this manner). This is a gross misunderstanding of Scripture and simply praying empty words into the wind.

The Warfare: of those who belong to Christ is not calling down demonic spirits through prayer nor is it with fists, swords and guns but rather every brother and sisters warfare/battle is to live a life that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to get the Good News of the Gospel out to the unsaved world, both of these are opposed to the world system, its morals and its lifestyles and will bring troubles, persecutions and hardships accordingly.

The Principalities, Powers, and Rulers of the Darkness: of this world that we wrestle against are false and corrupt religious leaders who have great authority and influence over the church and who are motivated by selfish ambition, ego, pride and money and the desire to be important and powerful. They are priests or ministers who persecute the church or distort the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and secular rulers of the nations of this world that are against Christ and the church.

For Paul at the time of writing this letter the principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness would have been the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes who aggressively set out to persecute the church as well as the Jewish religious leaders who had great influence in enticing the followers of Christ back under the law and the Caesars or rulers of Rome who were violently against those who declared Christ as their King.

NOTE: the expression, “Forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12) does not refer to evil entities called devils, since there is no evil in heaven dwelling with God. It is simply a biblical expression that is given to religious leaders. They are spoken of as being in, heavenly places because to hold a position of priest was considered by the Jews the highest honour that could be bestowed on anyone thus the reason they are referred to as be in, heavenly places, but though the position was considered, heavenly it did not mean that the one holding the position was heavenly they could be serving God with a faithful heart or for their own selfish ambition pride, ego and lust for importance, power and control.

For further information on the Devil see the title: -

- Devil, in (Satan and his Family) (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Take up the Whole Armour of God and Stand Firm.

The whole armour of God is: -

- Truth and righteousness.
- Peace and faith.
- Eternal salvation and the word of God.
- Prayer and supplication in the Spirit.
- Enduring and supporting each other in the faith.

Paul's statement; “Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (v13) clearly shows that this armour is not about attacking or being aggressive, but about being protected. Those in the Kingdom of God are not called to confront the world, but they are entitled to protect themselves.

The evil day refers to any moment our faith is in jeopardy, physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually, but also embraces the secular world and age we live in. The words, “Having done all” show that our first response to any situation is to do all that is within our power to heal the offending circumstance and bring it to a peaceful end or remove the temptation, but if this cannot be achieved then we are simply called to stand firm and resist (i.e., don't attack, retaliate, seek revenge or succumb to the temptation).

The purpose of the armour is to protect the person wearing it.

The 1st piece of armour is the, Belt of Truth.

The words, “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth” (v14) means two things: -

1. Soak yourself in the words of Christ and make them the stronghold of your life and the strength of your mind.

2. Always be truthful (it is better to tell the truth and suffer the immediate consequences than live forever with the lie).

The 2nd piece of armour is the, Breastplate of Righteousness.

The words, "Having put on the breastplate of righteousness (v14) means to live a lifestyle that brings honour to God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by doing what is right and doing-good to others (i.e., treating them with respect and decency).

The 3rd piece of armour is the, Gospel of Peace.

The words, "As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the Gospel of peace" (v15) carries two thoughts: -

1. To always be ready to share the Good News of the Gospel.
2. To be humble and forgiving always ready as much as it is in our power to make peace.

The 4th piece of armour is the, Shield of Faith.

The fiery darts in the following verse, "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one (v16) refer to: -

- Lies, gossip, backbiting and deceit.
- Hatred, strife, anxiety and fear.
- Salvation by religious works and self-effort.

In short the fiery darts of the evil one refers to anything that is against God, the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel and that is against those who faithfully follow him or that has the potential to cause them to fall.

The fiery darts brothers and sisters are to protect their mind from is: -

- The collective consciousness and thinking of this world.
- The lack of morals and self-centredness of the world.
- Greediness and desire for gain and craving to hold on to more than is needed.
- Lies, gossip, backbiting, deceit, hatred and strife.
- Anxiety, fear, and the thought they can earn salvation by religious works and self-effort.

The 5th piece of armour is the, Helmet of Salvation.

The words, "Take the helmet of salvation" (v17) means to always know with absolute confidence that our salvation to eternal life is not dependant on us keeping religious rites, customs or traditions or on our own self-effort, but solely on our faith in Christ and on God's grace.

The 6th piece of armour is the, Sword of The Spirit.

The words, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v17) means two things: -

1. That to be fully protected we must always be reading the word of God, but not as a legalistic program that must followed for fear we will fall out of fellowship with God, but with a devoted heart that desires to seek after the Lord, desires to grow in wisdom and to understand God and the Lord Jesus Christ in far greater depths.

2. It means that we should not only read it, but apply the teachings of Christ to our lives, i.e., "Love your neighbour as yourself" meaning do no harm to others but only good and do not get drunk with excessive alcohol or partake in unlawful sex, adultery and orgies, do not lie, gossip, deceive, cause arguments, contentions, strife and divisions and such like things.

The 7th piece of armour is Praying at all Times in the Spirit.

The words, "Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (v18) is to always be in prayer, this does not mean to always be kneeling or praying in the closet etc., since no-one can give all their time to this type of prayer, rather it carries the idea of always being mentally in the presence of God and conscious that the Lord is with you whether at a religious meeting, at work, socialising or alone at home.

Supplication: carries the idea of begging and in this context means to make an appeal or a request (especially a request that binds oneself to a person).

Praying in the Spirit: is not as some religious leaders teach praying in a language they call tongues that no one understands not even the person praying, but rather in the Spirit means praying in righteousness, praying in Christ, praying in love, praying in truth and praying from an honest heart without pretence or hypocrisy it also includes praying for brothers and sisters in Christ as opposed to praying for selfish gain and to satisfy one's own selfish ambition.

A Practical Example: on the TV program the Amazing Race two Christian woman were beginning to fall behind in the million dollar race, so they prayed a prayer that went something like this, "Dear God please give our competitors cars a puncture or let them crash thank you in Jesus name"

This prayer maybe directed toward God and prayed in Jesus name, but it is certainly not a prayer that is being prayed in the Spirit, and clearly shows that these women have absolutely no idea of what it means to live in the Spirit.

The 8th piece of armour is to Always stay Alert.

The words, "To that end keep alert" (v18) are in the context of praying for our brothers and sisters so it carries two thoughts: -

1. Always be watching out for each other.
2. Always be mentally on guard to avoid temptations and the dangers of sin.

The 9th piece of armour is to, Pray for Each Other.

Finally the words, "Making supplication for all the saints" (v18) obviously means that we should all be praying for each other privately and together.

NOTE: this this also carries the idea that those in the family of Christ should always being encouraging, compassionate and kind to one another with a heart that is ready to quickly forgive.

Paul asks Brothers and Sisters to Pray for Him.

Ephes. 6:19-20 ----- ¹⁹and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

The mystery in this context refers to the following words that Paul wrote to the Ephesians earlier in this letter saying: -

- The mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph. 3:6)

Which was the: -

- Mystery hidden for ages and generations but is now revealed to all Jews and Gentiles in Christ since God has to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:26-29).

Mysteries: means literally means a secret it carries the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites. In ancient time's mystery meant something unknown, but only unknown by those who are not initiated. Like the Masons they have all sorts of mysteries, the initiated know them, but those outside the sect don't

When Jesus was alone with the twelve he said: -

- To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables" (Mark 4:10-11)

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wrote: -

- We (the apostles) impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory and which none of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, but as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—God has revealed to us through the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:7-10).

Both these verses show us that God reveals hidden and secret things to those who seek after Him and are faithful and close to Him, but the main focus of these verses is Paul's request that brothers and sisters would pray that God would give him boldness to proclaim the Gospel to both the Jews and Gentiles alike. Many young converts aspire to have Paul's gifts and ministry, though the desire is good I wonder if they realise what it cost Paul to be the outstanding ambassador for the Lord that he was.

To serve Christ Paul suffered: -

- Imprisonments, countless beatings (often near death) was five times whipped with thirty-nine lashes and three times beaten with rods. Once stoned, three times shipwrecked and left two days adrift at sea. On his frequent journeys he was in danger from rivers, from robbers, from the Jews, from Gentiles, in the cities, in the wilderness, at sea and from false brothers. He toiled long hours to support himself and to minister to others and suffered hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure and apart from all these there was the daily pressure and anxiety upon him for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

Even while writing this letter Paul is in chains (v20) is it any wonder he asks those in Christ to pray that he would continue to have boldness to proclaim the Gospel as Jesus was called him to do.

Paul's Suffering's Prove His Devotion.

Considering all the suffering Paul experienced and endured for God and the Lord Jesus Christ it clearly shows he was not in the ministry for his own gain since neither a self-serving person nor a fearful person would continue to endure such hardships and dangers in serving another in their own strength as Paul did. His sufferings clearly manifests the amazing power and glory of God that was working in his life and shows that God's love dwelling within by far superseded any form of selfish ambition, ego and pride and not only surpassed the riches and wealth of this world but also was far more precious than his own well-being and his own life (2 Cor. 15:23-28).

Paul sends Tychicus to the Ephesians.

Ephes. 6:21-24 ----- ²¹So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²²I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. ²³Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

Tychicus: (Tuchikos) means 'fortunate' (he was a Christian). Paul sends his friend and faithful beloved brother in Christ Tychicus to the Ephesians to tell them all about what's been happening in Paul's life and ministry and encourage them.

NOTICE: Paul's stunning and beautiful ending: -

Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the
Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our
Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

End