

## Going Deeper with the Sermon

Kevin Eph 6:1-9

"mutual submission"

### **Kingdom of God ... the Kingdom of Right Relationships** (JV Talor)

In the NT this primarily meant walking together in mutual submission, which is the idea behind our give way signs. As followers of Jesus we are called to give way to one another.

We are continuing to explore the way Paul has brought this call to mutual submission into the midst of the day to day. He has been looking at the primary relationships in 1<sup>st</sup> cent Ephesus and challenging his readers to apply this principle to those situations. **5:21; 22; 25; 6:1;4; 5; 9**

Our task as 21<sup>st</sup> Cent followers of Jesus is to allow the same challenge to influence our primary relationships. Our situations may not be the same as theirs but the principle remains the same.

In contrast to the nature of the relationship between a husband and wife, which we looked at last week, parents and masters are to be obeyed by their children and slaves. These later two relationships are different in essence. Paul has introduced a level of authority not present in the previous relationship. Obedience is a stronger word than submission.

Not all of us might be a husband, a wife or a parent but all of us are children. The amazing thing about what is going on here is that this letter would have been read out at the public gathering of the Christian community. The children were there. Apart from anything else this highlights that in a culture where children and particularly girls were of little significance within the Jesus community they were as important as anyone else. This is the community of him who said, let the children come to me, and whoever welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me. **Gal 3:28**

Paul puts forward two reasons why children should obey their parents. Can I just emphasize it in case you missed it, the word is parents.

**1** ... it is right ... it makes sense. As we observe nature it is obvious. Parents have learnt some stuff along the way.

**2-3** ... If you want life to go well for you as a person honor your parents. In the OT the promise was for material prosperity and long life in the promised land but reflecting the NT transition from physical Israel to spiritual Israel Paul injects the word earth.

The NT outworking of Biblical promises acknowledges that the Kingdom of God is within you. And so when we read the phrase, "go well with you", I don't think Paul was thinking as we do as 21<sup>st</sup> cent western materialists in terms of wealth and comfort, but rather who we are as people. We will avoid much grief if we honor our parents.

As was the case with husbands and wives this means we will need to do some homework. To honor is to respect ... choose to comply ... avoid degrading or insulting ... treat with consideration. **Why don't you sit down with a piece of paper and ask God to show you if you have dishonored your parents. And it could be that you will need to confess sin and apologize. It is never too late.**

Similarly it could be that we as fathers might need to do some homework also. Within the context of applying the principle of mutual submission in the relationship between parents and children Paul focuses in Vs 4 on one party ... fathers ... **4**

- Exasperate ... irritate; stubborn; not listen ... Col ... do not embitter
- Goading your children into a state of perpetual resentment

A.S Wood ... *The gospel introduced a fresh element into parental responsibility by insisting that the feelings of the child must be taken into consideration. In a society where the father's authority was absolute, this represented a revolutionary concept*

Fathers are encouraged to bring them up ... same as **29**

As was the case last week we as men are being called to step up and take responsibility. Be involved. Australia has been described as the land of the absent father. Can I say that as I observe this current generation of fathers that is no longer the case. You young dads are doing a great job. Keep it up.

The emphasis here is bringing children up in the training and instruction of the Lord. The two words Paul uses remind us that parenting has both a negative and a positive dimension. There will always be a "don't do that" as well as a "let me show you something". It can't be all one or the other, it is both.

We see also that the primary responsibility for the spiritual development of children lies with parents and in particular fathers.

### **Deut 6:4-9 ... By the way there is something here for all of us ... Choose to be a spiritual parent**

Paul continues the theme of mutual submission and looks at the relationship between masters and slaves. Now there are valid principles that we could explore from this portion of Scripture relating to the modern workplace but we will need to come back to this and do a series on work.

Jesus – the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves

### **Questions for reflection**

1. Reflect upon what your experience has been in your family? What did you learn from your parents?
2. What do you think it means to honour your parents?
3. Is there anything from this sermon that is particularly challenging you?
4. Who are the children that God has given you to bring up? (whether spiritual or biological) How do you take on board that responsibility?