

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

I. Ephesians: Nurture In Living Focused On God's Eternal Purpose For Christians

C. Nurture In Applying The Believer's Positional Truth To Life And Ministry

7. Nurture In God's Personal Spiritual Empowering For Godly Family Roles

(Ephesians 5:18-21; 6:1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. When Paul wrote the "Prison Epistles" of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon, the fact that he was in prison troubled believers, Philippians 1:12-13; Colossians 2:1-2; 4:7-8 and Philemon 22; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1672, "Introduction to the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians."
- B. To nurture his readers, and for them to nurture others, Paul urged them in Ephesians 5:18-21 to apply their positional truths in Christ to a godly walk via God's personal spiritual empowering, and he applied this directive to godly family roles in Ephesians 6:1-4 as follows:

II. Nurture in God's Personal Spiritual Empowering For Godly Family Roles, Ephesians 5:18-21; 6:1-4.

- A. By relying on the Holy Spirit to be under His control, what we previously learned is meant by the Spirit's "filling" in Ephesians 5:18, believers are to submit to one another in godly reverence, Ephesians 5:21.
- B. Ephesians 6:1-3 reveals that one *realm* of such submission is a child's submission to his parents as follows:
1. The (implied) dependent son or daughter in a home is to "(lit.) hearken at the door as a slave, obey as a subordinate," (*hupakouo*, Theol. Dict. of the N. T., v. I, p. 223-224) to his "parents" (*goneus*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 164), heeding both father and mother, Ephesians 6:1a.
 2. Such obedience was *dikaïos*, "righteous" (Ibid., p. 194; Eph. 6:1b), for Paul cited the Septuagint translation from one of the Hebrew Bible's Ten Commandments where God directed children to honor their father and their mother, the first commandment with promise, that it might go well with them and that they might live long on the earth, Eph. 6:2-3 in citing Ex. 20:12 and Deut. 5:16, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 677-678.
 3. Hence, the will of God for the offspring of parents who, regardless of their age as the offspring, are still living as dependents in their parents' home, is to submit to both of their parents, obeying them in the home.
- C. However, just as dependent children are to rely on the Holy Spirit to submit this way to their parents, Paul implied that parents must also rely on the Holy Spirit properly to relate to and to rear their children, Eph. 6:4:
1. In Ephesians 6:4a, Paul changed the Greek New Testament word for "parents" (*goneus*) used back in Ephesians 6:1 to *pater*, which word is most often rendered "fathers" in the New Testament though it can be rendered "parents" as it is in Hebrews 11:23 of Moses' parents; Ibid.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 640-642.
 2. Since we learned in the last lesson that husbands are to be the head in the marriage role (Ephesians 5:22-33), Paul likely meant to imply that though from the **child's** perspective he is to obey *both parents* as his *equal superiors* (Ephesians 6:1), from his **parents'** perspective (Ephesians 6:4), the **weight of leadership responsibility** as to **how** the children are raised falls on the *male head of household*.
 3. Accordingly, **both** parents, under the responsible *oversight* of the *male head of household*, are to **AVOID** the unedifying set of parental actions that "provoke to anger" (*parorgizo*, Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 496) their children, Ephesians 6:4a. The provoking actions might involve inconsistent or excessive discipline, ungodly conduct in a parent that leads a child to disrespect him or her and thus to be frustrated when that parent tries to exert parental authority over him, etc.
 4. Instead, under the responsible oversight of the male head of household, both parents are to **PRACTICE** the edifying deeds of "nourishing, rearing" (*ektrepho*, Ibid., p. 199; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 245-246) their children in the "discipline" (*paideia*, Ibid., Moulton & Milligan, p. 474) and the "admonition, warning, instruction" (*nouthesia*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 546) of the Lord, Ephesians 6:4b. Set against the bad parental behavior noted in Ephesians 6:4a, godly parenting would thus involve consistent, fair, clearly and lovingly instructed warnings or admonitions supported by certain, fair discipline to teach the child righteous thinking and behavior, all couched in good exemplifying in the parent's personal life.

Lesson: *Relying on the Holy Spirit's control, dependent children in the home must submit to both of their parents, God's will for them in that role, and parents under the responsible headship of the head of household must rear their children in the loving, upright verbal and applied discipline of God that is couched in their godly example.*

Application: *May we rely on the Holy Spirit for proper function in our role as the dependent child or as the parent.*