

“Your New You” Continued

The Family of God

Ephesians 6

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Jeff: Our Father in heaven, we are thankful for this day and for the time that You’ve given us to be together. We’re thankful for Your word. We know that it is a light to our path. We know, Lord, that it is indeed a wonderful and glorious gift for the comfort of Your church, for the well-being of Your people. And You immediately inspired it and You preserved it, and it is ours—Your word that we might open and read, that we might find Your will, that we might understand what it is that You have gifted to us—life in Christ. Father, thank You for Your Spirit and all that it tells us about Him.

Lord, as we gather together we thank You for so many things and for so many revelations to us in Your word, and for the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to these things. Father, we thank You for the book of Ephesians, for the way in which this letter has ministered to so many churches throughout the ages. We’re thankful for the way it ministers to us. Father, we certainly pray and ask that You will bless us in our study of it. We pray, Lord, that You will work in our lives, bringing conformity to Christ’s image day by day, forgiving us of sins and cleansing us from transgressions.

Father, we pray that You will be with Sig while he’s apart from us. And Father, we’re thankful for Christ Church opening things back up and for the invitation to return and to do it without restrictions or without the restrictions that once were. Father, we pray that You’ll continue to bless us as we seek to gather together again.

Father, we ask that You will be with Bruce as he continues to recover. We certainly pray for his wife as she ministers to him. And Lord, we certainly ask that You will grant him health and well-being, and certainly a spirit of contentment in the midst of all this. Father, we ask these things, all of them, in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Well, I want us to turn to Ephesians chapter 6, and we’ll read the entire chapter. But we’ll see if we finish today. Ephesians chapter 6, starting at verse 1. Listen to the word of God.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother.’ This is the first commandment with a promise: ‘that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land.’ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ—not by the way of eye-service as people pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ—doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will, as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or free. Masters, 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 with Him.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities,

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against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit and with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

“So 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. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, and that you may know how we are, that he may encourage your hearts. Peace be to you, 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.” This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: All right. So you know that we’ve been thinking about Ephesians in terms of an overview. So our overview has kind of moved in some ways into a deeper study and not just a mere overview. But these are basically the six lessons which have morphed into many, many, many, many more lessons than just six. But these are the six chapters that we’ve looked at thus far. We’re going to look at Ephesians 6:1-24 today. We may not complete it, but this is going to be the outline that we’re going to use to just work our way through the text. I’m just going to have a brief introduction. We’re going to talk about what it means to still be filled, and then the idea of dressing for success. And of course that’s the whole armor of God. So it’s a very simple outline, and yet there’s a lot here to think about and discuss. And I’ll leave some of that to you as to how much we’re ready to walk through with some of those details.

So first of all let me just talk to you about some introductory points. First of all you need to understand that the text we’re going to look at today goes back to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 18. And you remember that text. If you go back there this was the very striking text that told us: *“Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery. But be filled with the Spirit of God.”*

Now that’s an interesting text because remember that I said this. How is it that you can be filled with the Spirit of God? After all, that’s an imperative; it’s a command. You do this.

Now the question is, if that is a command, and the Holy Spirit of God is free, unencumbered by any human authority, how is it that you can fulfill the command to be filled with the free and sovereign Spirit of God who blows where He wills and does what He wills?? How is that possible? And this is one of those places where I said to you that we have to be thinking not in terms of extremes, but in terms of what the Scriptures say.

For instance we’ve talked about the past, here there’s a sense of quietism, that we just wait for the Lord. And then there’s the sense of activism, where we think that we can *carpe diem*—seize the day—and make things happen. And again it’s more in the middle

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than that. There’s a sense in which God who is sovereign ordains all these things, and yet invites human responsibility. And here is one of those places where he invites human responsibility. And without our human activity we become stunted as individuals.

What do I mean by that? Well, I want you to think about what it means to be filled with the Spirit of God. There are five participles in this text in 5:18 ff. And the five participles in this text tell us what it means to be Spirit-filled. In other words we looked at these, and we saw that it was addressing one another or teaching one another, singing and making melody in our hearts, giving thanks. And we looked at those four. And we looked at submitting with regard to the husband and wife. Today we’re going to look at that in regard to continuing on in the lives of children. But the idea is that these five participles tell us what it means to be filled with the Spirit of God. If you’re doing these five participles you are a Spirit-filled man.

And don’t ask me how it is that this can be the case, because there’s a sense in which God says, look. You who have My Spirit will have more of My Spirit if you do these things.

And here’s the way I understand it. Think about a little baby born into this world. A little baby born into this world has all kinds of genetic potential and all kinds of earthly potential. But that potential is going to be merged from that child when that child is given healthy food and exercise, and his or her mind is filled with good things and so on, so that they grow up bodily strong and mentally strong, right?—all of these things.

But think about it. This is my new intern for the summer, Clay Joseph. So you guys can meet him later on. How tall are you, Clay?

Clay: 6-4.

Jeff: Clay was actually supposed to be seven feet, but he ate Fruit Loops for too many years. (*Laughter*) But you see what I mean. If you don’t eat right and you don’t exercise, you’re not going to grow this way, (*normally*), but you’re going to grow this way (*stunted*.) There are going to be all kinds of potentials, but you’re going to realize that they are not going to be good potentials.

And that’s the way it is with the Christian life. There’s a sense in which God provides us with His Spirit. We have His Spirit. God says, look. You’ve been freed from the power of sin. Yes, there is still the corrupting influence of sin in your minds and you need to put that to death.

But think about it. When you do the things that God says you get more of His Spirit manifested in your life. And these are the things that He tells us to do. And these are just some of the things that He tells us to do. But He tells us to do these things so we’ll be filled with the Spirit. Yes; go ahead.

Bill McCoy: There’s a parallel passage in Colossians 3:16.

Jeff: Yes; that’s right.

Bill: Do you mind if I read it?

Jeff: Please do.

Bill: “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*” To me it’s saying that if you want to know what it’s like to be filled with the Holy Spirit you dwell in the word of God.

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Jeff: See, I would take a slightly different posture and say that you are filled with the Spirit. And if you want to realize that, then do these things. It’s sort of like having faith. Every believer has faith. But not every believer has strong faith.

It’s like “Pilgrim’s Progress,” right? In “Pilgrim’s Progress” you run into Weak Faith. And he just sort of trundles along in his Christianity. And he never experiences the fullness of the life that he actually has. He just sort of trips along until he gets to the Celestial City. He has faith. But through the exercise of the means of grace and other things he could have a fuller experience of his faith.

So I think that what we’re to understand here from the early chapters is that we have the Spirit of God. But we have a fuller experience of the Spirit if we do these things. Go ahead.

Bill: We talked about this before. We talked about maturity. And the only way you can

Jeff: You know, I kind of wondered about your first day back. *(Laughter)* Go ahead.

Bill: But it fits. To be mature you have to let the word of God dwell in you.

Jeff: Yes, I totally agree. And if you don’t do these things you’re not going to be a mature believer. It’s as simple as that. So remember that these are the things that stand in the background of our text, because our text doesn’t just start with chapter 6. Our text starts earlier; it starts in 5:18. This is what it means to be filled with the Spirit with these five participles—submitting to one another. And then we dealt with husbands and wives. And now we’re going to deal with these children. So submitting—wives, husbands, parents, children, slaves, masters. That’s where we are.

And so then submission becomes a way of life. Submission becomes a way of life. Now I want you to think about this. There is a sense in which everyone submits to someone. The very first people I ever had to submit to were my parents, right? But they weren’t the only people that I had to submit to in this life. And life is full of submission. And what the Scriptures are telling us is that there is always this idea of submission. And so we need to think about this. And we need to think about this in regard to our children. So let’s think about this in regard to parents and children for just a few minutes.

I want us to think first of all about not just any children. But I want us to think about covenant children. I don’t want us to think about the children in the world that don’t have believing parents. I want us to think about children with believing parents, because when believing parents have children, think about it. You nurture them and you tend them with the covenant promises of God, right?

So, you know, it’s sort of like a tree. They’re unstable at first, so you tie them down. And then there are all kinds of predators that seek to get to the bark. And the bark is not mature enough and it’s not thick enough to fend off those predators. And so you have to put those little white things on there. And if you don’t remember to take them off then they grow into the tree. I digress. *(Laughter)*

Anyway, you take those off at the proper time and the bark stands up. They’re able to withstand some of those predators. And then you have to prune them so they continue to go straight rather than go out wild—you know, that sort of thing.

And I think there’s a parallel here to covenant children. I think we need to be tending to our covenant children in such a way that we’re always helping them to help themselves. In other words, we’re helping them to learn to be filled with the Spirit of God by submitting to God.

How do we do that? Well, they have an obligation. “*Children, obey your parents.*”

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Now the thing that we need to understand is this. We need to understand that—well, let me put it this way. They need to hear under. *Hupokuo* is the word. Remember, this is the word that I told you about when we went through the parallel passage in Colossians the last time we were together. We looked at that word, and it means *to hear under*. I’ll transliterate it. *Hupokuo* means *to hear under*.

Now think about that for just a minute. Built into that word is the idea of submission. You hear under authority. And when you think about that I have a tendency to think that this is a very important thing especially for us today, because we have a tendency to be taught by our culture that we’re egalitarian, that even our children have authority that extends over our authority.

I don’t know if you’ve ever experienced this. I’ll never forget the first time I experienced this idea in our culture where my children have authority over me. It was quite startling. And actually it was in a frightening place.

We were in a hospital setting. And we were getting a surgery done for my son. And that was going to move into another major surgery. But we started with the first surgery. And we were in the doctor’s office and we were talking about the surgery. And the doctor stopped me. And he said, “The thing that we need to realize here, Jeff, is”—and let me think now. That boy would have probably been between eight and ten years old. And he said, “The thing that we need to realize is that this guy is in the driver’s seat.” Okay; I didn’t realize that. This guy is in the driver’s seat.

Okay. Well, my son looked at me like “I’m in the driver’s seat.” I mean, he did! We got out of that hospital. And every time we’d go for a visit leading up to this surgery my son would say, “Dad, you need to remember that the doctor said that I’m in the driver’s seat.”

And you know, I would tell him. I would say to the doctor that I’m the head of our home, and so on and so forth. (*Laughter*) But then it came to the day of the surgery. The day of the surgery came. And the doctor looked at my son and he asked him. He said to my son, “Do you feel any pain? Do you experience any pain?”

Well, I knew what the doctor was asking. “Should I give you any kind of local pain anesthetic during the surgery?” And my son gave the dumbest answer that I heard anybody give. But guess what? He was nervous; he was around ten. And obviously he’s not going to give a good answer.

So I said to the doctor, “Yes, he experiences feeling pain from head to toe.” And the doctor looked at him and then looked at me and said, “He probably doesn’t have any pain.” That’s what he said. And then he walked out of the prep room and he proceeded to cut my son open and not give him any kind of pain medicine during the surgery.

And my son woke up in a screaming mess. And I waited because I was a passionate father. I waited for a few days. And we were sitting out on the porch. Maybe it was a week-and-a-half after the surgery. And I was sitting out on the porch with him, and I said “Son, I have a question for you.

He said, “Yeah, Dad.”

I said, “How does that driver’s seat feel?”

“Yuk!” That was the cure for the driver’s seat. (*Laughter*) Because do you know what I’m going to tell you? It’s nice to have authority. And it’s nice to have authority when it doesn’t matter. But when authority matters it’s nice for somebody else to have that authority.

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And that was the way that we got things situated in our home. Sometimes things aren't always as stark as that. And sometimes it's really difficult for kids to hear under us. Sometimes we can draw down on those experiences that we've had elsewhere with our kids. And we can pull them up into other circumstances.

For instance I remember when my own son was about seventeen, and he was ready to get out. And I sat him down and I said to him, “Son, let me just refresh your memory.” We went back and we thought through that whole scenario. And then I said to him, “Now you need to hear under me. You need to listen to me while you're here.” And I said, “If you do that things are going to go really smooth. I know you want to be out. I want you out because you want to be out. You want to be out. And yet if you clash with me, then we're going to have difficulty while you're here. But if everybody sticks to their roles while they're at home, then we're going to have a much more peaceful transition.”

And you know, he got that. Not every kid gets that. Not every kid understands that they need to abide in their role. And that's what we talked about early on—what is a role and thinking according to those roles.

And our culture doesn't help us as parents in that regard. But this is what we need to do. We need to help our kids, to help them to obey or to hear under us. And that just comes with training, doesn't it? We need to be teaching them that sort of thing.

And here is the catch. We need to be telling them that it's not because I say so. But it's because you live in a certain sphere. In other words, as a baptized child you are part of the covenant. And as part of the covenant maybe you're not the littlest disciple among us. But I am tasked as your father and your mother, we are tasked with training you up. And so there's a sphere in which you live and move and have your being. And it's called being in the Lord.

So that's the idea. You are to obey the Lord. And when you obey us you are obeying the Lord. And sometimes that's a really difficult thing for the kids to bear. And here is the kicker. Sometimes it's most difficult for them to bear when we as parents use it as a manipulating tool, because we can. And that's why we need to be very careful about how we use the Scriptures and our commandments to our children, and how we repent of what we do wrong. All of those things and more enter into training them to obey and hear under us.

You know, they're more likely to hear under us, for instance, when we hear under Christ, visibly so. And we repent of it when we fail to hear under Him. We show them how to do this.

So I think that's really important. I think we have to get that ourselves. And I think that when we get that ourselves we help them. But I think that one of the things you've got to remember is this. And you know, this is one of those things where some of you guys are past your parenting age. And you're never past your parenting age; you're in your grand-parenting age. Sometimes we enjoy it too much. At least I'm not there yet. But I noticed that my parents enjoy the grand-parenting stage too much; you know what I'm saying.

Let me give you a chart that has helped me over the years to think about this. When your children are very young you need to be more of an authority. When your children get older you need to be more of a coach or an influencer.

Now let me tell you the difficulty. The difficulty is in how this actually happens, how it actually works out, because as your kids grow this (*authority*) decreases. And as they

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grow this (*role of influence*) increases, to the extent that your authority becomes less and less and less, but your influence becomes more and more and more.

Now that’s difficult. That’s not as easy as it sounds, because there’s a tendency in many parents who care to maintain authority like this throughout. And that’s not helping your child.

Now there are some parents who do really well at this (*influence.*) But the children want to hang onto this (*authority.*) And why? Because they’re not ready. They’re not ready to step out into the world. They’re uncertain, and so they want to cleave to your authority because it gives them the feeling of safety, which is why, as we decrease in authority, we always need to be putting our kids in positions where they have to act. And they have to make decisions for themselves and we have to be supportive, and so on. And this is one of those things that I think is just absolutely vital for us to understand as parents of kids, in order to help them along.

Let me give you one more thing before I move on or before I open this up for a second. It’s this idea of “obey in the Lord,” or that we are “to train up our children in the instruction of the Lord.” And this is called a subjective genitive, which could be translated “the Lord’s instruction.” In other words, this kind of construction helps us in that it’s not us conjuring. But it’s our children being instructed by the Lord through us. In other words, it’s the Lord’s instruction that we’re providing them with day to day, and so on.

I think that’s an important thing. In other words, I think that we are to raise our children in such a way that they look over our shoulder and see the Lord. They’re in the sphere of the Lord. They do this in the Lord. They receive the instruction of the Lord. These are things that are happening, and this just needs to be sort of part and parcel of the atmosphere in which they live. This needs to be the air that they breathe, and so on. What kinds of questions or thoughts do you have before we move on? You’ve been an exceptionally quiet group. (*Laughter*) Except for the new guy back there. I knew it; I knew it! Go ahead.

Bill: I’m never quiet. It’s interesting. You’re really talking about someone maturing. And often we have, whether it’s our kids or officers in the church, they don’t want to grow up.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bill: How do you address that?

Jeff: The kids don’t want to address it?

Bill: Or the adults in the church don’t want to grow up.

Jeff: Adults in the church don’t want to grow up.

Bill: Yes.

Jeff: Well you know, I actually think that there are two different problems there. First of all let’s take the kids. You hear about kids who are in their early 20s. We talk about adulting, right? Do you know what that is? Clay, you can correct me if I’m wrong in my understanding of adulting, because you’re closer to this generation than I am. But this adulting thing is when kids who are actually adults that aren’t acting like adults do things that are adult-like. And so they talk about forays into adulting. But then they retreat back into their adolescence. Would that be a fair characterization, or is that wrong?

Clay: No, I think that’s the idea.

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Jeff: So I actually think that comes from parents who are helicopter parents or protective parents—parents who are sort of not allowing their kids to have those experiences that parents typically allow to produce maturity in them. In other words, it’s sort of like the parent who’s always holding on, holding on, holding on. And then when it’s time to send them to college they went up and it’s like sugar dropping to the ground. They’re not ready for it, right?

You know, the best advice that we ever had would be in this sense. My son was in a wheel chair; he is in a wheel chair. As parents of a handicapped child we did a lot of that. Up until he was about six years old or seven years old we did a lot of that sort of hold-on kind of stuff. And we ran into a guy that was a wheel chair basketball coach at a college. And we started visiting with him, talking with him, and became friends with him.

And what happened was that he watched us; he observed us. And he told us quite frankly, and we’re thankful for it to this day. He told us quite frankly. He said, “If you continue to parent the way you parent, your kid is going to go to college. And if you send him to where I’m a basketball coach, what he’s going to do is that he’s going to come to me and he’s going to expect me to be his mom. And he’s going to be back to your house before the first semester is over.” And so he said, “You’d better change your ways.”

And we did. And that was hard. But you know what? It was a gratifying experience when in high school he was in ROTC and wanted to go on trips and go on overnights and stuff like this. And he sort of caught his wings and was able to sort of go. And that was really encouraging.

But you should have seen this. It wasn’t just with us because we had a handicapped child. Parents today do that sort of thing. And I think it’s more of a parental concern. I think that the reason why kids are in the boat they’re in is oftentimes because of the way that their parents are treating them. And I think that then moves into the question of why it is that so many people are so immature in the church today. And I’m not going to answer that; I’ll let you answer that. *(Laughter)* And how to deal with that problem.

You know, I think that’s an open question. But I think that it’s really one of those questions that is actually not typical of any one church, right? There are churches with very mature believers and there are churches with some immature believers.

Bishop Rodgers: One helpful thing is that the pastor refuses to do everything.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely.

Bishop: And if you don’t pick it up and it needs to be done, and they don’t pick it up, then it doesn’t get done.

Jeff: It just doesn’t get done.

Bishop: It has a great impact on this.

Jeff: Clay, this is Bishop Rodgers. So you might want to take that down in your notes. *(Laughter)*

Brave Man: I think Bishop Rodgers hit it right on the head. I see it with my own children. I always say that if they can program computers, they can figure out how to put dishes away. *(Laughter)* You easily get frustrated and you always want to do it for them. And then you’re like no; I’ve got to let them do it. It might be terrible the first time or the second time that they do it. But I think that’s what you have to do.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely.

Brave Man: And you have to do it in the church.

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Jeff: Yeah. You know, when you think about that, it’s like you said, right? It might be terrible the first five or ten times they do it. But they’ll catch on. And you know, there’s a good spiritual lesson there, right? And I think we really need to be careful with this, because I think that sometimes we as parents can expect perfection from our kids—perfection in terms of obedience, perfection in terms of performance. And if you really put that back on us and say, “Am I a perfect child before the Lord, my Father?” *(Laughter)* “Is my performance perfect before the Lord God, my Father?” You know that the answer is no.

Now you know, I can still have that ideal for myself and I can have that ideal for my child. But when I begin to act as if they ought to meet that ideal every time, and then become really upset and even enraged at times that they’re not, then I’ve got a real problem. I’m holding them to a standard that I’m not able to live up to myself. It’s a real problem. You’re right; it’s a great analogy for this. Does anybody have anything else before we—Yes?

Bishop: Well, one of the reasons that pastors do more than they ought to is that they’re afraid they’ll get fired, because a lot of vestries are counseled to actually believe that they are paying the pastor to do everything. It has to be modeled.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bishop: With the whole model, when they take up the new calling, you should make that clear right at the beginning.

Jeff: Absolutely. You know, I’ll tell you what, it’s amazing to me. When I have seminary students ask me to take a look at this website or look at what this church is looking for and so on, sometimes you read what a church is looking for and it’s not at all what you think of as a pastor. You know, I’ve always said that a pastor does three things, right?—the three P’s—*poinetics*, which is the Greek word for shepherding; you have to have three P’s. *(Laughter)* Preaching and praying. Those are the three things that a pastor does. And when I start looking at a website that’s looking for a team leader or a facilitator or something like that I start to get a little nervous.

There was actually a time where I looked at a number of websites for different students. And there was one where I had to come back and say, “Preaching is not even mentioned as sort of an expectation.” I wouldn’t even think that this would be one of those places crossed off my list, right?

Jim Hamilton: What were the three again, please?

Jeff: Pastoring, preaching, praying. Yes?

Bill: During the Reformation they came up with a saying called “the priesthood of all believers.”

Jeff: Uh-huh.

Bill: In the Catholic Church in Rome the ministry of the church was all wrapped up in the priests.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bill: To me the priesthood of all believers means that everyone in the congregation has a ministry. It’s not for the paid professional to do everything.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bill: It’s common for the paid professional to do everything. If a loved one is sick in the hospital he’s expected to go visit him.

Jeff: Yes, that’s right.

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Bill: If you send an elder most people would leave the church. *(Laughter)* That’s the way it is.

Jeff: Yep; that’s right.

Bill: So we’ve turned it completely around from the Reformation to go back to this paid professional who does the ministry of the church.

Jeff: But I actually think that the rationale for it is more like the Bishop has said. For instance, back then the rationale for it would have been that the sacramental life is the saving life, right? So I participate in the sacramental life in order to be saved. And who is it that has temporal authority over the sacramental life? It’s the priest, right? So there’s a sense in which the priest is a very pivotal, important, significant figure in this whole process.

But today, nowadays, yes, it’s priest- or pastor-centered, but not necessarily because of the view of the medieval church of the sacramental life, and not only its importance but its necessity. Today it’s this is your job, buddy. You know what I mean? And if you’re not doing this, or the kinds of things we expect you to do, then you’re going to be out on your ear, you know?

Bishop: Right.

Jeff: I mean, let’s face it, right? If you’re pastoring and preaching and praying, two of those things are very much less visible. I mean, no one is going to see you praying, right? And they’re going to see you preaching once a week, maybe twice, depending on the type of church you’re in. So those kinds of things are lacking visibility. And so the thing that people will see you doing most is shepherding the flock. And think about how many eggs they put into that basket with people. And then it doesn’t necessarily depend on if I’m really shepherding the flock well. In the eyes of many people what really matters is, is he a social person? Is he a people-oriented person? Does he get along well?—that sort of thing. Do we like him? And those kinds of things, even though they may be appealing, are really the farthest things away from good shepherding, right??

Bill: He has to be a psychologist.

Jeff: Right. Okay? All right. You know, I find it interesting that we’re not anywhere near the amount of discussion where we were when we were talking about husbands and wives. *(Laughter)*

Anyway, I’m going to move past some of this. Notice, for instance, the practical reason for this injunction to obey. And it’s the commandment of promise, right? “*That it may go well with you, and that you may live a long life in the land.*” In other words, when you think about it, there’s the promise of long life for those who are obedient in the Lord.

Now I want to be careful to say that that’s not a formula that if you put it into practice you’ll get the right kind of result. You know, there are a few people who are righteous and die early. This is a general principle, not a mathematical equation.

The other thing is this: *the obligation of the parent*. Remember that when we looked at Colossians the last time we were together we noticed that twice the husband was told, “Don’t be harsh to your wife and don’t provoke your children.” I think that’s interesting because I think that’s the kind of thing that Paul was cued into. He understood that men can do that sort of thing. We can be that way to our wives; we can be this way to our children. This is something that we need to struggle against.

And so we are not to provoke them. We’re not to call forth from them some response that we’ll get to in just a minute. That is an ungodly response.

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Now the interesting thing (and I’ll just remind you of this), is that when you go back to Colossians 3:18 ff., remember there that I said to you that when you look at this word that’s in Colossians, one of the things that you realize is that it’s one of these words that looks like two words put together. But I’m not really sure about the etymology of it. But the two words that are put together are first of all an asking or an interrogation, and then a pattern. That’s what the two words mean individually. You put them together and it really is a striking thing.

Again, I don’t know if this is the exact etymology of this word. But if it is, there’s this idea that we provoke our children by this repeated pattern of interrogation or questioning that provokes them to wrath. And I just haven’t had time to do more work on that. But it is interesting, if that’s the etymology of the word, that it kind of fits what we sometimes do as dads, right? We get this sort of interrogation way about us, and we continue to dig deeper and deeper and deeper until it produces wrath in our children.

Now this is the interesting thing; it provokes them. But I wrote this down. There’s a word—*orgidzo*. And this is kind of a striking word. And it’s a striking word because we actually get the word *orgy* from this word. But it’s interesting because this word actually means sort of that frenzied wrath. So when the New Testament talks about the wrath of God sometimes it uses the word *orgidzo*.

This word here in this text is *paraorgidzo*. In other words, we can produce or provoke or call forth or initiate in our children a raging, wrathful response. And it’s our fault. We’ve caused that in our parenting. And that’s not saying that they don’t have responsibility for themselves; they certainly do. But we need to take ownership of the fact that sometimes, when we see the worst in our children, it’s because they see the worst in us. And it’s as simple as that.

So we need to take care. We need to put off provocation and put on the instruction of the Lord. This just goes back to the way of sanctification that we’ve thought about earlier.

Now I’ll tell you what. We’ve got about five minutes left. And I think I’d rather talk to you about something I was going to talk to you about. And it’s basically a simple distinction that I think we need to keep in mind.

And I think that oftentimes distinctions are lost. For instance, when we talk about a condition or estate we ought to actually talk about those in synonymous terms. Theologically those have been distinguishable terms in the past. For instance one could be in a condition of sin. But one is only in the estate of guiltiness if there is a judge present. So a condition can describe your actual situation. But an estate describes that condition or that situation in the presence of a judge. So no judge, no estate, okay?

Now oftentimes we think about a condition and an estate together as one term. We think about the condition of Christ and the estate of Christ, and so forth. . But *condition* and *estate* are distinguishable terms other than theologically.

Two terms that we often think synonymously about are these: ethics and morals. We think to ourselves that ethics and morals are the same thing. And that’s not true, right? These are two distinguishable terms.

And if I could simply put it like this, for instance, an *ethos* was a dwelling place. It was like the stall of a horse. This is where the horse dwells, you know? It’s immovable; this is where his house is, right?

But *morals* describe the changing ways that a society behaves. The mores of society change; they drift. And so when we think about ethics we are actually thinking about how

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things ought to be. When we think about mores or morals we’re thinking about the way things are.

And so when we think about the changing morals of our day, we as believers ought to want to get them back to an ethos, a Biblical ethos. That’s what we ought to want to do.

Now I realize that distinction in some ways makes no earthly difference in our situation. But when we have categories in our thinking they oftentimes help us to be able not only to think through some of the problems of our day, but they actually help others to think through the problems of the current day. For instance, when we talk about ethics or morals, there is somebody who says, “Well, there are no ethics or morals.”

We can say to them, “Well, wait a minute.’ There is an ethos that everyone has. And so the Biblical ethos is this, right? We realize that the morals of the day are far from this ethos. But we can move society back to this ethos by, for instance, instruction in the Lord. Instructing our children in the Lord is one way that we can begin to move back to an ethos of Scripture.

Jim: Both can be good or bad. Something could be unethical or it could be ethical. Something could be immoral or moral.

Jeff: Yes. That really goes with the shape of seeing the words as synonymous. I mean, there can be a bad ethic, right? For instance, if you’re in a part of the world where it’s okay to cheat and steal and lie and those kinds of things and that’s ethical, that’s a bad ethic, right? That’s certainly not a Biblical ethos. And so we certainly always want to pull people back to a Biblical ethic or a biblical ethos.

Bishop: It seems to me that it’s now moral to say that a man and a man can get married.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bishop: In our culture, if you don’t agree with that, then they really accuse you of being immoral.

Jeff: Yep.

Bishop: And get passionate and in your face. Whereas, if it were an ethic we would say no. That’s not God’s intent and therefore it’s wrong.

Jeff: Yeah.

Bishop: So we have the culture actually accusing us of being unethical.

Jeff: Yeah. And actually we are immoral according to their morals.

Bishop: Right.

Jeff: But our morality is rooted in an ethic. And it’s a lot different than theirs.

Bishop: Yes, it sure is.

Jeff: Yes?

Bill: My daughter graduated from a Christian school where they would read the Bible and study the Bible every day. That was part of the classroom training. And the pastor where the school was held came in one day and asked a question. “How many of you believe that homosexuality is wrong?”

Jeff: “How many of you believe that homosexuality is wrong?”

Bill: And how many do you think raised their hands?

Jeff: (*Unclear*)

Bill: Nobody raised their hands, because what they heard outside the school had more influence than what they heard inside.

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Jeff: Yes. Well, this is what I’ve said to you before. It’s the whole business of weighing and viewing things—looking at everything in terms of spheres, right? So the idea is, think of a guy who is on the construction site, and somebody yells, “Board!”, right? We think of that as a noun. But on the construction site that’s an imperative. “Bring me a board!” It could be anything really. It could be any number of radical constructions. But I said that the idea in that sphere makes sense.

And so in the world of science there’s a certain way of speaking that makes sense. And in the church there’s a certain way of speaking that makes sense. And we seem to realize what sphere we’re in; our kids are learning that really well—that we’re in the sphere of the church and we talk in this way. When we’re in the sphere of the school we talk this way, and so on. Sometimes it’s not as clear as that. Even in a Christian school it gets a little blurry. But that’s really what’s happening. Our children have learned the secularist way of understanding different spheres.

Jim: With respect to the law, abortions are legal. Whether or not they might be ethical or moral is another matter.

Jeff: Yes; it’s the same thing. It goes back to that whole idea.

Jim: The law says it’s okay.

Jeff: Okay. So the next time we’re together we’ll finish up the chapter, and then we’ll start on something else. I haven’t figured out what that will be yet. Let’s pray as we close.

Father, thank You for this day, for the time You’ve given us. Lord, thank You for children and for the joy that they are. And Father, we are mindful of the fact that a quiver full of them is indeed a sign of strength and joy in the life of a family. We are also mindful of the fact that through providential events some families have not been able to have any children, and we recognize that as well. We also recognize that the joy of the Lord is still able to be experienced even in a home where it’s just a husband and a wife. And Father, we pray that You will continually make Yourself our joy. And we pray that that we can help not only our children to experience that same joy, but our grandchildren as well. Father, we ask now that You’ll send us forth into the day with Your blessing and Your word in our hearts. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.