Tread: **A Study in Ephesians – wk 11 – Priority Principles**

**The resurrection of Christ is the most powerful event in history. It re-directed the lives of everyone who heard it. The letters that make-up the NT – give encouragement to the very first generation of Christians.**

**Ephesians is one of those letters – written by Paul an Apostles of Jesus to a church he planted. Stand – Walk – Run in Christ.**

**Last week - how Jesus affects our love life and marriage. Today, 2 more areas where the rubber meets the road – family and work.**

**Before we jump into Eph 6 – a few things to consider.**

**FAMILY MATTERS: A word of caution**

**1. Godly parenting doesn’t guarantee godly kids**

**There is myth that if we do everything right our kids will follow Jesus. But that is not always true, there is no magic formula.**

**We quote this verse as a guarantee - Proverbs 22:6 Start children off on the way they should go, (give direction) and even when they are old (bearded - adult) they will not turn from it.**

**Btw - It says they will not leave (not return). This is proverb, not a promise = Statements about how life generally works. Wise sayings - If you do this there is a good likelihood, not a guarantee.**

**Genesis 1-3 (perfect parents Adam & Eve, with a perfect environment = Cain) Judges (samsons parents) 1 Samuel (Samuel), 2 Samuel (David), Ezekiel 18:1-20 (we will each to answer for our actions – not our parents),**

**There is a lot of unfounded pride (look what we did) and unfounded guilt (we broke our kids). The truth is – if we follow God’s word we are more likely to have kids that follow Jesus. Then Jesus steps in.**

**Don’t ignore the facts about your kids issues – don’t stick your head in the sand. Recognize the issues and deal with them. (Pr 20:11, Lk 6:43-45)**

**2. A good start is no guarantee of a happy ending**

**(Adam) 1 Cor 10:1-12 (Israel), Matthew 13:1-23 (four soils) (Judas)**

**Maybe have bible studies as a family, Sunday school, went to kids / youth camp, baptized at 7. in youth, you fast, pray - we’re good**

**Parents we must always be growing, striving to disciple your family.**

**The enemy is persistent and works to attack your family.**

**3. Our goal is not to hold on – but to guide through**

**To guide them through the stages of life and launch them out!**

**Well, I have good kids. We usually call our kids good – if they are easy (good baby = sleeps) Listen, nothing is easy about being a parent. FYI - Some of the difficult traits of a child – can make for dynamic adults.**

**With that foundation, let’s read - Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” 4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

**FAMILY VALUES: God’s Game Plan – Paul gives three principles**

**Children Obey: Principle - The Rule of the roof - (Col 3:20, 2 Tim 3:1-5)**

**Ephesians 6:1- Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.**

**Children, what does that mean? Does an adult have to do this?**

**Children (Teknon) dependents – food, support, shelter, school. Small child to anyone dependent upon parents for financial support - the Bible says - obey your parents. #Ruleoftheroof**

**As long you’re under my roof – you are under my rules. If I am paying the bills – you’ll follow my rules. That is Biblical concept. Even if you don’t like it. \*\* Obeying is not age based but dependence based.**

**You get the privileges of adulthood - when you accept the responsibilities of adulthood. Not an age marker - young adult.**

**A jump in age doesn’t guarantee a jump in “stage”**

**Age is a transition toward independence, it is not independence. The bible even suggests if you don’t like it… move out. Until then enjoy the benefits of being at home and follow the house rules.**

**BTW - we are called God’s Teknon. We are to be dependent on him, and we are to obey Him. Obedience at home reflects our obedience with God. Parenting is a lab that teaches children to submit to God.**

**A key to this for parents is in the third part, “don’t provoke your children to anger.” More on this in a minute.**

**When we will become independent adults – do we still obey?**

**Eph 6:2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”**

**\* Sons & Daughters Honor: P - We owe our parents respect & honor**

**Ex 20:12, Pro 30:17, Lev 20:9, Gen 2:23-24, 1 Timothy 5:3-4,8, Matthew 15:3-9**

**Quoting Ex 20, Dt 5 – the 5th commandment directed to all independent adults. We are all to do this regardless of dependence or age.**

**You are to honor them even if you are no longer under their roof.**

**We owe them respect and support – this does not mean we must obey.**

**There are some hyper control parents that need to understand this.**

**Respect - honor, esteem, listen, weigh words, recognize, appreciate.**

**Support - help w/needs, look after, be there when possible, honor = $**

**Sons and daughters - “Honor your father and mother” - You can still honor bad parents (with boundaries)– this is God’s will**

**The third command would have been controversial in their day - Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, (don’t exasperate - infuriate) but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

* **Parents: Don’t Exasperate, But Bring Them Up In The Lord**

 **(Matt 15:26, Proverbs 22:15, 1 Samuel 3:11-18)**

**As you seek to break their will - don’t break their spirit.**

**Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.**

**Parent - You are not perfect. Sometimes our pride pushes us, or anger get the best of us. Maybe some of your rules are stupid.**

**Things that can fluster / exasperate our kids & bring discouragement:**

**Double standards, hypocrisy, broken promises, expecting perfection, discipline without affection, living through them your desires or life, forcing your interests and habits, forcing God,**

**Children wants an authentic parent, not a perfect parent. Be weak, be vulnerable, own up to your mistakes. Never saying sorry - exasperates!**

**If we push them away – they will run away emotionally.**

**Apostle Paul then shifts to another sensitive area - Ephesians 6:5 Bondservants (slaves) be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart…**

**This is used to say the bible promotes slavery - but it does not**

**1 Timothy 1:8-10 – God does not condone slavery! It is called contrary to God’s word. Slave traders are right up there with murders.**

**Bond servant / Slavery - complex in Roman culture. 4 out of 10 people in the Empire were slaves. 2 million people. Some by choice (education / trade / land / loan) or by force (debt / conquered). Usually it lasted a set number of years. The issue here is closer to work life.**

**Paul is giving us a new outlook on work - think & live diff.**

**This is for all those who want to be independent… WORK.**

**Undercover Boss: 3 Things Christians Have To Change AT Work**

**#1 - Ephesian 6:5 Bondservants (employees) be obedient to those who are your masters (bosses) according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.**

**1. We have to change who we work for – BOSS**

**1 Peter 4:8-11, 1 Cor 7:17-24, Eph 2:10, 4:28, 2 Thess 3:6-13**

**TV Show Undercover boss. Working, serving, trying, learning. Some might have worked better or differently. He rewards the ones who worked their best not knowing he was the boss.**

**Col 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. / Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters…**

**We have a higher boss - not our manager, employer, CEO. If you’re a follower of Jesus, your boss is the LORD. We work for him.**

**This passage also tells us… Eph 6:5 (we must work with) …obedience… in sincerity of heart… 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers… (not just when being watched – not a kiss up) 7 with goodwill doing service… (doing your work well when no one is looking)**

**2. We have to change how we work – ASSIGNMENT**

**Since we are working for God – we work our best – doing our best – all the time. You work harder and better.**

**1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.**

**Jobs – Dry cleaners (alone) - in a warehouse (alone) doing my best when no one there. I never cut corners. Today I work alone most of the day. God was shaping me. How much company time are you mis-using (until the boss walks in)? Time to work differently. (School work)**

**Even bosses are to work better and differently - Eph 6:9 And you, masters, (bosses) do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, (your boss) and there is no partiality with Him. (don’t show favoritism – let their work determine it)**

**God is watching you, those people are created in His image. Valued and treasured. You will answer to Him for how you treat them. Remember - He is the real boss.**

**Jesus modeled this when he knelt to wash his disciples’ feet. You want to be great? Jesus told them - humbly serve – lead by example.**

**You want a title – pick up a towel.**

**3. We have to change why we work – REWARD**

**Matthew 5:12-16, Colossians 3:23-24, Hebrews 4:13**

**You’re not just punching a time card / clock – it’s bigger!**

**We work for eternity – called to be salt and light at school / work – called to make disciples – called to pass the torch – pass the baton.**

**Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.**

**That boring / mundane job - honors God, meets fundamental needs, and supplies resources to advance the kingdom.**

**When we give to ministry – that Job takes on an eternal value**

**Work fulfills God’s purpose in creation. It is an act of worship!**

**Before the fall and the curse - Genesis 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (God gave them an assignment “work and keep it.” 12X in Genesis 1–2 God makes something – he then makes Adam and says – here… make something.”**

**Work literally means “to develop” God gave Adam a responsibility, be a gardener who “develops” - not a park ranger who “guards”**

**Work is not a punishment. It is part of the original design.**

**Like Adam we are created to take the raw materials of the earth and develop them for God’s glory and the benefit of others.**

**Contractors take raw materials and use them to create buildings**

**Artists take raw materials, color and music and create art.**

**Lawyers take principles of justice and laws to benefit society.**

**As we do this, God himself is at work creating through us.**

**This does not necessarily mean you make a lot of money - we are most fulfilled when we are productive.**

**So, what do you do if you are in a job that is unfulfilling?**

**• Do it faithfully as an act of worship… it is helping someone…**

**• Consider there might be a distinction between your job and the calling God has placed in you. Your job becomes a tool for ministry.**

**Notice those words - We have a new Boss / We have a diff Assignment**

**/ We seek a better Reward - Christianity sets a new BAR**

**Some say, “Well, my boss is terrible. He doesn’t reward us or notice - never gives recognition.” It’s hard! But you’re not really doing it for him anyway. You’re doing it for God. That is real worship!**

**In these last couple chapters – God (through Paul) gives us**

**Priority Principles: Our list of Priorities**

1. **Our walk with God – care for it, nature it, feed it - #1 priority**
2. **Marriage - #1 earthly relationship – above all others, even kids**
3. **Children - Children follow spouse. Greatest gift, a healthy marriage**
4. **Work - Not understanding this can ruin a family.**

**Many homes are torn apart by work schedules, money goals, & workplace temptations. It is a priority – but not the top one.**

**Some might wonder – where does church? It does not fit, it envelopes.**

**Seek first the kingdom of God… (Matt 6:33) We are giving as a gift – to help you maneuver through all of these. Not an afterthought.**

**#1 earthy responsibility - Passing the Spiritual torch of the Kingdom**

**Not making money, be successful, a good citizen, achievements, traveling, sports, education, political position, or making history.**

**The great assignment of heaven is – make disciples, teaching them to follow all that I have commanded (Matthew 28:19)**

**Not worship or even prayer. These things are important and valuable tools. But they are not our assignment or end game.**

**You can worship all day – but are you making disciples?**

**You can pray for hours – but are you making disciples?**

**You can even make a lot of money – are you making disciples?**

**Passing the SPIRITUAL TORCH is our #1 responsibility**

**1st to our spouse – 2nd to our children / family – then 3rd – to others!**

**Truth is most people are not remembered with-in 50 yrs of death. Passing godly spiritual torch / legacy of life is eternal.**

**Next week the end - Paul knowing these things need prayer - ends with spiritual warfare and understanding the role of payer in our life.**

**There are real evil forces lying in the wait… ready to attack you and your family. What are we to do? Next week!**

**Prayer**

**\*\*\*Invite cards – at the door on**