

Ephesians 6 (Part 1): 1-9 • Christian Relationships

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Ephesians chapter 6. We're going to take the first 9 verses. Follow along with me as I read them, and then we're going to pray to see what the Lord has.

It says, ¹ *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honor 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.” ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

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

⁹ *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.” (ESV)*

Let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for giving us your Word. And now, Lord, we humble ourselves to hear your voice today, that you might minister truth to our hearts and that we might be instructed and equipped fully to follow you and to live for you.

We ask that you would guide and direct our hearts in Jesus' precious name, amen.

We've been talking here about living the spirit-filled life and how it applies to various aspects of our lives. As we've mentioned many times, the apostle Paul took the first 3 chapters of Ephesians to talk about our spiritual blessings and all the wonderful things and ways that God has blessed us in Christ.

Now, here in these last three chapters, we're talking about just walking it out. We've learned that the walking-it-out process involves every aspect of life and all kinds of different relationships. The last couple of weeks, we talked about marriage, and we talked about the roles of husband and the role of the wife. But we never intended to just talk about marriage for the sake of talking about marriage because anybody can do that.

What Paul is doing here in this section, in this chapter, is he's talking about living your life as a Christian in such a way as to live it out loud and to reflect Christ in all that you do, including marriage. Husbands, reflect Christ to your wives. Wives, respect and reflect Christ to your husband and so forth.

Now, in these verses, we deal with just different relationships. For those of you who take notes, maybe this will be helpful. We'll put them on the screen for you so you can see the four areas that are covered here. It is:

- Children and their relationship to parents
- Fathers and their relationship to their children
- Bondservants and their relationship to their Masters
- Masters and their relationship to their servants

And we'll talk about each one of those. He begins here, in verse 1, speaking to the children, saying, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*” And it's a very simple command. It just means what it says: obey your parents.

It's interesting to me that the apostle Paul is addressing kids. Remember that he's writing this letter to the church. This is not a secular letter. This is a letter written to the body of Christ. And knowing that the body of Christ is made up of families, some of whom are small children or children of any age, he speaks now to those children and says, “*Children, obey your parents...*”

And it's not just here that Paul talks about this command to obey parents. It's also in the book of Colossians. Up on the screen, it says,

Colossians 3:20 (ESV)

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

This time the reason is, it pleases the Lord. And so, we look at what Paul is saying in this command to obey in the Lord, means first, the children should understand that in their obedience to their parents, they are obeying the Lord. And this is something that parents need to instruct their children in. They need to help their kids understand that their obedience to mom and dad should be as unto the Lord or as if they are obeying the Lord.

Now obviously, the assumption here is that children are being raised by parents who are actively teaching them to obey. Which, of course, as parents we have to do. We have to teach our kids how to obey. Have you ever noticed, parents, you don't have to teach your kids to disobey. They just know. They know that, I mean, it's wired into their Adamic DNA.

And I raised four kids along with my wife, and we never once had to say, no, here's how you disobey. No, we had to turn around and speak to them about obedience and what it meant to obey and why they should obey.

Obedience has to be taught to a child, and we need to remember that they're learning how to obey as small children, right? Parents, they don't have it down, and we shouldn't expect them to have it down perfectly. And when our kids disobey, we shouldn't give that look to people like I'm a rotten parent. We're all in the process. We're teaching our kids and so forth.

But again, the command for children to obey assumes here that a child is being parented properly. Just like the command for a woman to submit to her husband out of respect, it assumes that he's loving her as Christ loved the church. Right?

And so when we say to a child obey, there obviously, there's an understanding here that if a parent were to ever ask a child to do something that was illegal or immoral or just hurtful in any way, the command to obey is obviously superseded by a higher biblical principle, and that is to obey the Lord first and foremost.

That principle applies whenever the Bible talks about obedience, whether it's obedience to the government. Obedience to your boss or whatever, there's always a higher principle. We are never commanded to follow a directive out of obedience that is in direct violation of God's Word.

And we see that even in the Bible when the disciples were hauled in front of the Sanhedrin. And the Sanhedrin, who were the ruling community of Jews, told the disciples, to no longer teach or preach in the name of Jesus Christ, You'll remember what they said, well, judge for yourselves whether it's right to obey God or man, because we've got a command straight from the top. And we're

going to have to follow that one. So, sorry. (Acts 4:18-20) And it was done respectfully and so forth.

But that's a principle that applies throughout every course of life as it relates to this command to obedience. Now, obviously, puts a child in an incredibly difficult set of circumstances if they're ever being asked by a parent to do something that's wrong or illegal. But still, the principle applies.

Notice the reason that Paul gives for a child to obey here at the end of verse 1, it simply says, “...*for this is right.*” It's a right thing to do for a child to obey their parents.

But in verse 2, Paul goes on to speak of how obedience shows honor. Notice here he says in verse 2, “*Honor your father and mother...*” and that's what obedience does for a child. They're honoring their parents when they walk in obedience. And then he adds this, and this is interesting. This is, he says, “(*this is the first commandment with a promise*)...” And then he goes on to quote Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 8—16, rather, where it says that “³...*it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.*” By the way, that's not the whole verse.

But the point is, it's very interesting that Paul is quoting an Old Testament promise that is connected to the Mosaic Covenant. And he's giving it here to New Testament believers who are not under the Mosaic Covenant so we have to proceed carefully here because we are not under the Mosaic Covenant.

The Church has never been under the Mosaic Covenant. We're under a new covenant. Jesus referred to it at the Last Supper when He raised the cup, and He said, this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant that is being given to many or poured out for many, and so forth. (Matthew 26: 27-28) We're under a different covenant.

Interesting now that Paul connects or makes a statement about the Mosaic Covenant, related to the New Testament church and to believers. How are we to take that? Well, it would probably be helpful for me to show you that passage in Deuteronomy in its entirety. You can see exactly what the Lord was saying to the nation of Israel at that time, so on the screen:

Deuteronomy 5:16 (ESV)

“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

“Honor your father and mother (it says), as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

That's an interesting statement because here we see in Deuteronomy 5:16 that God gave a promise to Israel of the length of days connected to obedience and honoring one's parents, which was connected to the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Now, we know that as Christians, we haven't been given any land. Not one parcel. Israel was given land. Because Israel, you'll remember, had a physical covenant with God. Everything was physical related to it. They had a physical covenant related to the land.

There was the physicality of the blessing that God would bestow upon them for their obedience. I will bless you in the land. I will bless your crops. I'll bless your children. They'll both be fruitful. I will bless you against your enemies. They won't be able to stand against you. (Deuteronomy 28:2-7) It was all very physical.

In the Christian understanding of the covenant we have with God, it is not a physical covenant. It's a spiritual covenant. Do you guys remember way back in Ephesians chapter 1, Paul began this letter by outlining our spiritual blessings. Let me show you again, just by way of a reminder.

Ephesians 1:3 (ESV)

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with **every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places,*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (here's how Paul started this letter), who has blessed us in Christ (and I've highlighted there) with every spiritual blessing (and so where are our spiritual blessings located? They're not in Israel, they're) in heavenly places.”

You see, so, it's a completely different covenant that we have with God. It has different promises and different blessings.

The question comes up, why in the world does Paul quote a promise that's connected to Israel's covenant with God that had physical blessings. What did I

just shoot? Oh, okay. I hit something and it just careened right off the thing. Why does he do this? When it doesn't apply. You see, you have not been given a promise of long life if you obey and honor your parents. Israel did. Not you.

And the reason Paul is citing it here is simply to underscore the importance of the command and the emphasis that the Lord gave to it. He's not saying this promise applies to you. He's simply saying, see how important God considered this principle or this command to honor and obey one's parents under the old covenant that it came with a promise connected to it. It was very important to God. And he wants you to know that this was no small issue to God, to honor and obey one's parents and so forth.

Because the parent-child relationship was ordained by God, established by God, as a means and a very key element to perpetuating a strong and orderly society. Do you understand that? To raise one's children with the understanding of obedience to mom and dad and ultimately to the Lord, is the key to an orderly society. It is a chaotic society that emerges from bad parenting, and we're seeing it today. In fact, it is a characteristic of the last days. It is one of the characteristics of the last days. Let me show you this from 2 Timothy chapter 3. It says,

2 Timothy 3:1- 2 (ESV)

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents...

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (And then Paul describes) For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, and disobedient to their parents...

That's a hallmark of the last days and it's the days in which we are living now. We are living in these days. Where this disobedience to parents is literally the hallmark of our society.

The wonderful thing is that you as Christians have an opportunity to be, other as it relates to your parenting and your efforts with your children and that sort of thing.

Now, the command for parents, or excuse me, for children rather, to obey their parents and to honor their parents, always is balanced in the Word of God with the command for parents. And here particularly fathers, not to make it difficult for them to obey. Do you understand that? The balance has to be there. We

never talk just to women and say, 'wives, submit to your husbands, without also balancing that understanding, husbands, love your wives, and be willing to lay down your life for her. (Ephesians 5:22-25) That's the balance.

And if there's one without the other, you've got an imbalance in the marriage. Same thing as it relates to parenting. You can't have this command for children to obey their parents without also commanding this balance of understanding that parents, and particularly again, fathers here, need to be very careful.

Look what he says in verse 4. Read it with me. It says, “*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*” This is a great verse. It says, dad, don't provoke your kids to anger. And the reasons are obvious, an angry child grows up to be a rebellious child. And a rebellious child eventually grows up even more to be an angry parent. And it keeps the cycle going. And it's a horrible cycle.

The question is important to ask, what kinds of things provoke a child to anger? Well, obviously verbal and physical abuse. And we have to mention those just because they're so prevalent today. But they're illegal, and I will say that they are unconscionable for any man who considers himself to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, a man who abuses his children verbally or physically.

I can't even begin to describe how horrific that is in a home and what that does to children. But assuming that is not going on with any of you in your homes or families. What other things provoke a child that a father might do? Well, I'll mention just a few. I think one is— unreasonable demands can provoke a child to anger. Men can be, guys, we can be unreasonable sometimes, in our parenting.

For example, I believe it's unreasonable for us to have an expectation on a child not to act like a child. I think kids are going to act like children and I think we should expect them to act like children. I think with this unrealistic expectation that they're going to act like perfect, perfectly mature adults is unreasonable. And to do that is pushing our children into a place of anger.

And I'm not talking about when a child blatantly disobeys, you know what I mean? Sometimes you'll see a kid do something that's just obviously blatant and somebody will say, well, children will be children. No, no, if there's been a clear directive by the parent that the child has disobeyed, there needs to be correction and the child needs to understand what it means to obey. And that needs to be made clear.

I'm talking about when children just do dumb things because they're children. And they're dumb. Because we've all been kids and we've all been dumb. I have a lot of that going on even today. A lot of holdovers from my childhood, but kids do things and unfortunately they embarrass us sometimes, and or frustrate us, and we end up correcting them or disciplining them, and they're just being kids. And I think that's unreasonable.

Kids are going to spill their milk all over. They're going to be messy because they don't get the importance of having your glass in a place where it's not going to be hit while you're talking, sort of a thing like this. And so have you ever seen parents do that to their, they'll take their glass and they'll put it over here, and the kid grabs it and puts it back there, down there at the bottom of the table or whatever, and then, hey dad! And it's going to happen.

I used to tell my kids, hey guys, be sure and spill your milk, because then we were being obedient. See, whenever they would do it. But, um, I think we also provoke our children by being too critical and never showing the proper approval. In fact, I'm willing to bet there are some people right here in this room who grew up with a super critical parent, who never gave any kind of positive feedback, or at least rarely.

I'm talking about the father who ignores every A plus on the report card, only just to rant and rage over the one B minus without saying, hey, good job. Who never walked by the kid's bedroom but to criticize how it looks. I think another example is a father who refuses to respect his child's feelings even if he doesn't understand them.

Our kids have very, very deep feelings. And we can be guilty of provoking a child when we don't take that into consideration. I remember a number of years ago when Aaron was a little boy. I don't think he's here, so he's not hearing me today. But he was a little boy, probably three and, we'd put him and his sister to bed and I was loudly telling family stories. One of which was embarrassing to Aaron. He was like I said, he was a little boy at the time.

And I heard him crying in his bedroom. Didn't I feel like a jerk? And everybody heard him. And so I excused myself and went into his bedroom. And I said, what's wrong? And he just looked at me with those little, like, three-year-old eyes, and he said, you shouldn't have told them that. Busted! He was right!

But for just a flash, a fleeting moment, I thought about saying to him, listen, I'm the dad, you're the son, you don't tell me what I can and can't say, this is my home, you just stop being such a sissy and go to bed. I could have said that. But thank God I didn't. What I did do, is I said, you know what bud, you're

absolutely right, I shouldn't have told that story and I'm sorry. Would you forgive me? And you know what? That's another key, I think, to not provoking our kids.

Guys, be willing to say you're sorry when you've made a mistake, when you've done something you shouldn't do. I think that nothing provokes a child to anger more than a dad who never admits he was wrong, and never says, I'm sorry. I think we do it out of this weird sort of a warped sense of thinking that our kids are going to believe that we're weak or something, or maybe we're not the big superman that they thought we were. But I had lots of opportunities to make mistakes, and many times I did it big time, and it gave me opportunities to go to my kids and say, 'I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that.'

I remember one time with my oldest daughter, she was a teenager and I came home from doing whatever I was doing. I mean, I was pastoring this church, but I don't know exactly what I was doing at the time but it must have been some kind of a stressful day because I bit at her. She said something and I just, you know how we do guys, we just. I just get frustrated and I just go, howl.

And I remember she just looked at me, and she turned around and just walked into her bedroom and closed the door. I am such a heel so I went over to her bedroom, knocked on the door, sweetie, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that, would you forgive me? She said, it's okay, Dad. I said, no, it's not okay, otherwise I wouldn't have had to come in and apologize. So, would you forgive me? Never once did any of my kids refuse to forgive me. Never once. They always extended the most gracious and loving forgiveness when I apologized for things.

And I think what that does, guys, is it teaches kids that this Christianity thing that we've been talking about with them is real. It's not fake. It's made up of real people who make real mistakes. And when they make mistakes, they ask for forgiveness. Right? This isn't this isn't this facade of Christianity like I am Mr. Holiness himself and I never make mistakes, nor do I ever err. It's like, as parents, we have this precious privilege of showing our kids that we're fallible. I mean, they see it anyway. We might as well admit it and come to them humbly and ask for their forgiveness. Parenting is a pretty challenging thing.

Can I just also throw in, before we move on, that coming, it's not on the calendar yet, but coming up in November, we're going to be doing a new video series called The Art of Parenting. We've been doing The Art of Marriage for a number of years now. It's put out by Family Life, both video series, but we're going to start, and we're going to do The Art of Marriage too, probably February, something like that. But coming up here, like the first week in

November, and you'll be hearing about it here very soon, The Art of Parenting begins, and it's going to be amazing. So, stay tuned.

Paul goes on here, verses 5 through 9. He addresses bondservants and masters, saying, “*Bondservants, obey your earthly masters...*” Now, your Bible may say slaves instead of bondservants. And that word, slave tends to be one of those titles that makes us offensive, or it sounds offensive rather, and that really doesn't define what this person is. A bondservant is not a slave in the traditional sort of a sense. Let me explain. A bondservant was someone who had committed them self for life to their master, and they did so willingly.

Essentially, it's a servant who recognized that their master was a good guy, he treated him well, and I want to keep working for this guy and serving this man. And so he would communicate that, his desire to his master, and then his master would pierce the servant's ear, thus signifying that this person was now a bond servant, meaning that they had willingly committed their life and loyalty to that one master so that's a bondservant.

Now, we don't have bondservants today. But we have servants, we have employees, and there are principles here in these verses that apply regardless of the kind of service you do, whether it's in a job, whether it's in the home, whether it's in the church, alright? What we're going to look at here is we're going to see how these principles apply.

Paul says here, this person should obey their earthly leaders. And again, we don't call them masters. But whether they are an employer, whether they are a ministry leader, whatever it may be, he says, obey. And he even tells you how, with fear and trembling, which just means with the proper respect. And then he goes on to say, “*...with a sincere heart, as you would Christ.*” Isn't that interesting? As you would Christ. Serve as you would Christ.

In other words, your devotion to Jesus should be reflected in your daily service in whatever you do, whatever your job may be. You should be showing your devotion to Jesus by the job that you do in your work. Isn't that amazing? You know what Paul's doing here effectively? He's eliminating that line between the secular and the sacred.

We talk about, and when I mean sacred, I mean ministry. You hear people talk about their ministry. I have a ministry to children, I have a ministry to seniors, I have a ministry to shut ins or in nursing homes or I have a music ministry or whatever. And then they talk about their job, oh, well, I got my job, I got my... we'll try to be polite about it. My tent making, you know and I go do my job but then it's my ministry that's you know.

Paul says, you ought to be shining the light of Christ in every aspect of how you serve. Wherever you serve, your devotion to Jesus should be evident in the most mundane, everyday tasks that you perform. Isn't that interesting?

He goes on to say in verse 6: “...*not by the way of eye-service* (which is a literal rendering), *as people pleasers*.” And what he means by that is, not just when they're looking at you. How it is when the boss goes away, and then you're standing around shuffling your feet or whatever, and then the boss shows up, it's like, hey, let's get to work. And then he leaves again. Okay. Paul says, no, it should never be like that where you're only working when their eyes are on you. And here's why you're a heavenly master is always watching.

He's looking for that kind of devotion, that kind of zeal that you would use when your boss is present at all times. He says, not just as people pleasers who are earning brownie points, you are serving the Lord.

He goes on here and talks about how we should work, middle of verse 6, he says, “...*as bondservants of Christ* (how do you like that? Now he says, now you're a bondservant of Jesus. Here's how you ought to work), *doing the will of God from the heart* (working from the heart), ⁷ *rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not man...*” You're to work for the Lord, whatever your job is, you're to work for the Lord, right?

As if you're doing it for the Lord. I don't care if you're going through onions and picking out the bad ones and pitching them and whatever, or whatever your job might be. You're doing that as unto the Lord, right? Showing that level of devotion serving Him.

And then he goes on to say in verse 8, “...*knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord...*” There's a wonderful incentive for how you work, even when no one's eyes are on you, but God's are. You're going to receive back from the Lord when you do that good job, whether you are a bondservant or free or whatever, it doesn't matter.

And then Paul addresses masters, which in our case would be bosses, employers, ministry leaders. He says in verse 9, “*Masters, do the same to them...*” Meaning be guided by the same principles, be fair, be honest, kind, so forth. He says, “...*and stop threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there's no partiality with him.*” He says stop threatening those who are under you, which is to admit that there are times when people are given authority, and rather than being careful, they let that authority go to their head and they become a bully.

And you know what, frankly, it's kind of fun to tell people what to do. Pick up that mop, clean up that mess. I'll be over here sitting down having a coke, get to work. It can go to your head. The point is that even as a boss, you're still expected to reflect Christ. The Spirit-filled life is one that you bring everywhere.

Several years ago, I was chatting with a guy who at the time attended our fellowship, and he was a guard out at the prison. And he was telling me how there were times when he was talking to the inmates, that he had to speak their language. And what he meant by that is he had to use foul language with the inmates, in order to get their attention. And he paused after saying it.

And then he looked at me and said, what do you think? And I told him what I thought. I told him in no uncertain terms that I believed that his conclusion was not only wrong, it was unbiblical. And that it doesn't matter what he did or who he was doing it for or with, he was never free from his responsibility to live for Christ and reflect the love of Jesus to whomever. And that's the fact of the matter.

And again, it applies into marriage, it applies to child raising, it applies to every aspect of our lives. We are never free. You never get a free pass to be unkind or un-Christlike. Now, it'll happen from time to time, and when it does, that's when we go to the people who were, who saw that wonderful display of flesh, and we apologize. And we call it what it was. Hey, I'm really sorry, man, that was not Jesus, that was all me. And I need your forgiveness.

But the fact of the matter is, we always have a responsibility to shine the light of the work of Christ in our lives. Now, before we wrap up this section of scripture, I want to address what is for some the elephant in the room.

For others, you probably, it came and went and you didn't think much of it. But it's Paul's reference here and frankly the Bible's repeated references to that subject of slavery. Do you know, and this includes Christians, there are a lot of people who are very uncomfortable with the Bible mentioning slavery and not condemning it outright.

In fact, I have heard the Apostle Paul criticized for actually advocating slavery because he didn't come out and speak out against it and condemn it in the clearest terms. But the thing you have to understand about Paul's writings and his heart to the church is that social distinctions were not on his radar.

I mean, he recognized them. He made reference to them, but that's not the way he saw Christ because he knew that Jesus had abolished those social distinctions. And here's what I mean. He wrote this to the Galatians, the churches, or the Christians, rather, in Galatia. Let me put this on the screen for you from chapter 3, verse 28. He says here,

Galatians 3:28 (ESV)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Now what is Paul saying here? Is he saying that there's no distinction between men and women? No, that's something our culture is trying to say which is ridiculous. Paul knows that those distinctions exist. He's saying, in Christ, those distinctions don't matter. Are there still distinctions between Jews and Gentiles? Absolutely. In Christ, they don't matter. Are there distinctions between slaves and free? Sure, on earth, but in Christ, doesn't matter. It's a non-issue. That's the way Paul saw those things. It was a non-issue.

And so for him to address things like slavery, that wasn't his goal. It wasn't what he set out to do. The Apostle Paul was called to preach the gospel and make disciples. And that's all! That was it. He didn't feel like he had these, to be hugely politically motivated to bring about social change and to address social injustice.

Now, I'm not saying that's bad or wrong. And if that's something the Lord has called an individual into, which in many cases in our history, He has. It was born again Christians who fought against the slave trade both here in the United States and overseas in Europe and that sort of thing. And they did it because they had a conviction from the Lord that this was what they were to do. Hey, great, wonderful. That wasn't Paul's issue, that wasn't his goal, that wasn't his ministry.

And so you need to understand that Paul is not advocating slavery. And, I can, I'll, let me show you how his perspective is expressed in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7. He writes,

1 Corinthians 7:20-22 (ESV)

Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

“Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. (In other words, he says) Were you a bondservant (or a slave) when (you were) called? Do not be concerned about it.” He's not telling Christians that it's okay to be a slave. He's simply saying, you can still, even if you're a slave and you came to Christ, it doesn't matter. You're no less of a child of God.

In other words, you're not a second class citizen in the kingdom of God because you're a slave, it doesn't matter. Because in God's economy, there's no such, there's, there are no differences. Okay?

He goes on to say, and this is important because it's given parenthetically there. He says *“(But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)”* Meaning, I mean, he's saying, I'm not telling you have to be a slave, or you have to stay a slave. If you can get your freedom, great. Get your freedom. But just understand this. It doesn't affect your Christian standing in Jesus Christ. Okay? Doesn't affect it at all.

And then he makes the final point in this passage we have up on the screen *“For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant...”* in other words, as a slave when you came to Christ, you're *“...actually a freedman of the Lord.”* And if you were *“free when you were called”* and you came to know Jesus as your Savior, well... you're actually *“a bondservant of Christ”* anyway, so you see what Jesus is doing here?

It's what matters in the kingdom that really matters, and He's essentially telling you and I that earthly and worldly distinctions don't define us. Jesus defines us. The kingdom of God defines us. And frankly, that's the only definition that really matters in the end, amen