

ENCORE | Ephesians 6:5-9: The Biblical Work Ethic

- 01) Was Paul advocating slavery in this passage?
- 02) What is the best modern analogy to the slave/owner relationship?
- 03) How would you describe the attitude workers are called to in verse 5?
- 04) Did God impose work on mankind because of sin (Gen. 2:15)?
- 05) Would you say people today (generally) have a good attitude about work?
- 06) How do people (generally) view authority (their boss) today?
- 07) Is it okay for a Christian to be a complainer at work?
- 08) Who are you ultimately obeying when you obey your boss (v. 5)?
- 09) Read verses 6-8; what is to be your attitude as you work?
- 10) Read Colossians 3:17 and 3:22-25; what is to be your attitude as you work?
- 11) Is your paycheck the only "reward" you work for?
- 12) What is the most important principal for a biblical work ethic?
- 13) Specifically and practically, what can you do to be a better employee or boss this week?

Looking Ahead | Ephesians 6:10-17: The Whole Armor of God

Monday (v. 10) – This passage on the Armor of God may be the most widely recognized passage from the entire book of Ephesians. What does it mean to be strong in the Lord? What is the Armor of God? How do we put this armor on? These are some of the questions we are going to try to answer this week.

▪ Daily Bible Reading: Gen. 39-40; Matt. 21:23-46

Tuesday (v. 11) – Our experience confirms the teaching of this passage—that life is basically a struggle. Life rarely conforms to the rosy idealism of our dreams or to the romanticism of our songs. The explanation of this struggle lies deeper than we ordinarily think. The common view of our struggle has been that we are engaged in conflict against flesh and blood, against other men and women. But Paul says the battle is not against flesh and blood; it lies deeper than that. The basic problem is that this is a battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan and that people themselves are the battlefield. We as Christians are not called to retreat from this conflict but to charge headlong into the fray; how can we do this? The good news is full provision has been made “put on the whole armor of God.” You do not need to fear the battle for God Himself will arm you and He Himself goes to war with you.

▪ Daily Bible Reading: Gen. 41-42; Matt. 22:1-22

Wednesday (v. 11-12) – We see clearly from verses 11 & 12 that what we are talking about here is spiritual warfare. First notice the combatants in this warfare 1) “you” & “we” that is Christians 2) “the devil”, “principalities”, “powers”, “rulers of the darkness of this age”, spiritual hosts of wickedness.” He tells us “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.” Wow, that could be frightening. I have known or talked to many Christians who are frightened (some even terrified) by demons, evil spirits, ghosts, monsters, aliens and the like. We understand from this passage that spiritual warfare is real, so then we are in ever present danger of spiritual attack. You can understand why some would be fearful. Yet it is never God’s will for His children to live in fear (notice whenever a good angel or Jesus appears to someone the first thing they, usually, say is “fear not” or “do not be afraid”: Genesis 21:17; Daniel 10:19; Matthew 1:20; 14:27 28:5; Luke 1:13 & 30; 2:10; Rev. 1:17). How can we live in light of the reality of spiritual warfare and yet live totally without fear? I believe that question has been answered all along in the book of Ephesians as we have seen who God is and who you are in Christ. Consider just these few verses (Ephesians 1:3 & 19-23).

▪ Daily Bible Reading: Gen. 43-45; Matt. 22:23-46

Thursday (v. 13) – First he says put on the whole armor of God and now he says “take up the whole armor of God.” Is there a

difference to these two principals? He also tells us the purpose of the armor of God (which will help us flesh these principals out later) “that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.” Taking the context into account do you think the “evil day” is a specific day, or time, future or is he simply indicating that we need to be on guard against spiritual attack?

▪ Daily Bible Reading: Gen. 46-48; Matt. 23:1-22

Friday (v. 14-15) – Here we have the first three pieces of armor. The first we will call the belt of truth (we could call it a girdle more appropriately but that has a different meaning today). Think about the function of a belt today; why do people wear a belt? What then are the implications of our spiritual belt being truth? The second piece is the breastplate of righteousness. If you were a soldier protecting your heart, lungs and other vital organs was a life and death matter. How is righteousness a protection to us in spiritual warfare? The third piece of armor we will call the shoes of peace. The word “shoe” or what we “shod” our feet with could have widely varying connotations. The Roman soldier’s shoe was specifically designed for protection and to prevent slippage. In battle you don’t want to slip or fall down; that could have dire consequences, so the shoes were equipped with spikes much like athletic cleats have today. What would happen if one football team decided to wear dress shoes while their opponents wore proper cleats to the game? In what ways does “the gospel of peace” help you to stand in spiritual warfare?

▪ Daily Bible Reading: Gen. 49-50; Matt. 23:23-29

Saturday (v. 16-17) – Continuing Paul’s description of the full armor of God. The fourth piece of armor is called the shield of faith. The shield was a warrior’s primary defensive weapon. The Romans were masters of the shield, their shield walls and shield tactics were much of the reason they had such great military success. Notice Paul says that the shield of faith will protect you from the fiery darts of the devil. You can imagine as an army marched forward, defending bowmen could rain down on them with fiery arrows, the effects would be devastating. In what ways is faith our main item of protection against spiritual attack? The helmet was also a vital piece of armor. In what ways does “salvation” act as a protection for your mind? The last piece of equipment in our spiritual arsenal is the sword of the Spirit. When he says it is “the word of God” he does not use the word “logos” (written word or idea of the word), but “rhema” which means the spoken word. How is the spoken word of God our sword in spiritual warfare? (see 2 Cor. 10:3-6).

▪ Daily Bible Reading: Exo. 1-3; Matt. 24:1-28