

Ephesians Chapter 6

Parents and Children (6:1–4)

“Children’s duty to obey parents was ... taken for granted throughout the ancient world.”¹ What’s new here is how parents relate to their children during this process.

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

Children.... At this point, Paul is directly addressing children as he understands that the children of the church are in the church service while his letter is being read. He addresses them directly, not the parents. He tells them to obey, which is a word that means *hear* and then *do*. He tells them to do this **in the Lord**.

in the Lord.... Right from the beginning, Paul is making it clear that for the Christian, child rearing techniques are the teachings of Christ and his word—not the opinions and techniques of the world.

for this is right.... The first reason Paul give for obedience is that it is the right and normal thing to do.

“who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)”
(Romans 2:15, NKJV)

Paul understands that this obedience is “not confined to Christian ethics; it is standard behavior in every society. Pagan moralists, both Greek and Roman, taught it. Stoic philosophers saw a son’s obedience as self-evident, plainly required by reason and part of ‘the nature of things.’”²

Ephesians 6:2 “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise:

Ephesians 6:3 “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

Paul’s next reason is biblical. He quotes Exodus 20:12 to develop this point:

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12, NKJV)

In addition to obeying parents simply because this is natural law written in one’s heart, it is also divine revelation found in the Ten Commandments. This behavior “on the average and in the long run,” results in one’s *well-being* and *long life*—two blessings from God for this obedience. If the “prosperity” and “life expediency” of people that did this could be measured against those that dishonored and defied their parents, I do not doubt that there would be *a measurable difference in the prosperity and length of life*.

This brings to mind the measurable economic downturn now found in the millennials of this recent generation of young people who are more openly violating this command.

¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 402.

² John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 239.

They owe more money and save less money than the previous generations. The next question would be, what will be their life-expectancy?

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

This thought is found in Colossians as well.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” (Colossians 3:21, NKJV)

“What we do know is that parents can easily misuse their authority either by making irritating or unreasonable demands which make no allowances for the inexperience and immaturity of children, or by harshness and cruelty at one extreme or by favoritism and over-indulgence at the other, or by humiliating or suppressing them, or by those two vindictive weapons sarcasm and ridicule. These are some of the parental attitudes which provoke resentment and anger in children. How many ‘angry young men,’ hostile to society at large, have learned their hostility as children in an unsympathetic home?”³

As a result, many young people leave their home as early as they can and often do not look back on their family with any fond memories. In addition, they have no interest in caring for parents in their advanced years—they simply don’t like them.

bring them up or ***nourish***⁴.... The word “bring” falls far short of the meaning of the Greek word: “to raise a child to maturity by providing for physical and psychological needs....”⁵ The Greek word means to ***nourish*** and is a much better option and sets the stage for the meaning of the words that follow.

“For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” (Ephesians 5:29, NKJV)

The phrase to “*nourish them up*” implies greater care and attention to the details of their life. Much home rearing involves nothing more than to let them hang around till they are old enough to leave. That is the opposite of nourishing them.

training⁶.... Although the word came to include or mean discipline, its main point is *instruction*. Only if that fails is discipline necessary.

³ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 246.

⁴ *bring* ἐκτρέφω “...to *nourish*, rear, feed. To nurture, rear, to bring up to maturity....”⁴ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

⁵ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 463.

⁶ *training* παιδεία “...to instruct. Originally instruction of children. It evolved to mean chastening because all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening, correction.” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

admonition⁷ The root of this word is “mind,” which shows us the main idea. It means to reason with someone. Interestingly, a verb variant of the word is often used to mean counseling.

Addressing the three words mentioned here, **nourish**, **training**, and **admonition**, we see the type of emphasis required in child rearing. As stated, although **training** can and does address “discipline,” the steps leading to this end begin with communicating “*instruction*” and only when this fails does “discipline” enter the picture. The word **admonition** is again an effort to engage the mind in understanding. Christian child rearing—nourishing, training and admonishing takes a lot of time. This is something many parents will not give their children, and the result proves it.

of the Lord. All this, the nourishment, training, and admonition has its source in the Christian faith. It is not pragmatic or psychological; it is decidedly Christian.

Both the child and the parent are instructed in this passage but the harder assignments of given to the parent—nourish, train, admonish. Failing to do this is failing as a parent. Good parenting requires a lot of serious conversations, encouragement, and accountability.

Masters and Slaves (6:5-9)

Colossians 3:22-4:1

1 Peter 2:18-3:7

There are today about 30 million people in slavery in the world.

(<https://www.theclever.com/15-countries-where-slavery-is-still-legal/>)

Nigeria:	875,500
Guatemala:	138,100
Philippines:	401,000
Indonesia:	736,100
Iraq:	403,800
Yemen:	303,200
Dominican Republic:	104,800
Sudan:	454,700
Pakistan:	2,134,900
Democratic Republic of the Congo:	873,100
Russia:	1,048,500
China:	3,388,400
Uzbekistan:	1,236,600
India:	18,354,700
North Korea:	1,100,000

As a result, this passage in Ephesians is still pertinent to many in the world today. Of the 30 million people held in slavery, some will be Christians, and Ephesians 6 will be of great help to them.

In addition, “this passage may be applied in a broader sense to employer-employee relationships in the present time. Primarily, Christian employees should serve their

⁷ *admonition* *νοῦθεσία* “to provide instruction as to correct behavior and belief—to instruct, to teach, instruction, teaching.” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 414.

employers (believing or unbelieving) with fear, diligence, integrity, and goodwill. Christian employers should deal with their employees (believing or unbelieving) with integrity and goodwill and without threats. Both Christian employees and Christian employers need also to realize that they have a heavenly master to whom they are accountable for their attitudes and conduct. Furthermore, the behavior of both parties should be a testimony to the unbelievers with whom they work.”⁸

“Slavery seems to have been universal in the ancient world. A high percentage of the population were slaves. ‘It has been computed that in the Roman Empire, there were 60,000,000 slaves.’ They constituted the work-force, and included not only domestic servants and manual laborers but educated people as well, like doctors, teachers, and administrators. Slaves could be inherited or purchased, or acquired in settlement of a bad debt, and prisoners of war commonly became slaves.”⁹ In the first century, “although there were debates about how slaves should be treated (e.g., Seneca, *Ep.* 47), slavery as a social, legal, and economic phenomenon seldom became the object of reflection at all.”¹⁰ “For all his intellect and culture Aristotle could not contemplate any friendship between slave and slave-owner, for, he said ‘A slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave....’”¹¹

“... the life of the slave was grim and terrible. In law he was not a person but a *thing*. ... Varro, writing on agriculture, divides agricultural instruments into three classes—the articulate, the inarticulate and the mute. The articulate comprises the slaves; the inarticulate the cattle; and the mute the vehicles [tools]. The slave is no better than a beast who happens to be able to talk. Cato gives advice to a man taking over a farm. He must go over it and throw out everything that is past its work; and old slaves too must be thrown out on the scrap heap to starve. When a slave is ill it is sheer extravagance to issue him with normal rations.

“The law was quite clear. ... If the slave ran away, at best he was branded on the forehead with the letter F for *fugitivus*, which means runaway, at worst he was killed. The terror of the slave was that he was absolutely at the caprice of his master. Augustus crucified a slave because he killed a pet quail. Vedius Pollio flung a slave still living to the savage lampreys in his fish pond because he dropped and broke a crystal goblet. ... The slaves who were maids to their mistresses often had their hair torn out and their cheeks torn with their mistresses’ nails. Juvenal tells of the master “who delights in the sound of a cruel flogging thinking it sweeter than any siren’s song,” or “who revels in clanking chains,” or, “who summons a torturer and brands the slave because a couple of towels are lost.” ... It is against this terrible background that Paul’s advice to slaves has to be read.”¹²

But Paul speaks of slavery within the same context as he does of wives and children as a part of a normal household needing Christian insight.

⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*, vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 125.

⁹ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 250.

¹⁰ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 415.

¹¹ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 251.

¹² William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 179–180.

Here in Ephesians, Paul is addressing slaves personally; many were members of the church.

Ephesians 6:5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;

Bondservants or ***slaves***.... The Greek word translated *bondservant* means ***slave***. These are not two words one less severe while the other is more severe. “The word for “slave” comes from the word “to bind” and means a slave as distinguished from a hired servant.”¹³ “The strong Greek word *doulos* cannot be accurately translated in English as servant or bond servant....”¹⁴

be obedient¹⁵.... Obey.

“Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,” (Titus 2:9, NKJV)

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.” (1 Peter 2:18, NKJV)

“Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.” (1 Timothy 6:1, NKJV)

with fear and trembling.... We have addressed fear:

“submitting to one another in the fear of God.” (Ephesians 5:21, NKJV)

“Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects [fears] her husband.” (Ephesians 5:33, NKJV)

However, Paul’s use of ***trembling*** adds to the subservient relationship between slaves and owners. The legal nature of slavery may be the reason for the word trembling. Slaves were very vulnerable and were subject to much evil. But, perhaps *respect* and *reverence* are what Paul was saying.

“I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.” (1 Corinthians 2:3, NKJV)

“And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.” (2 Corinthians 7:15, NKJV)

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” (Philippians 2:12, NKJV)

¹³ Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 204.

¹⁴ *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version*. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009).

¹⁵ *obedient ὑπακούω*, “to obey on the basis of having paid attention to—‘to obey, obedience.’” Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 467.

Based on how the words were used elsewhere in scripture, *respect* and *reverence* appear to be what Paul is saying.

in sincerity of heart¹⁶.... Sincerity is, “In the NT used only in a moral sense as the opposite of duplicity meaning sincerity, faithfulness toward others, manifest in helpfulness and giving assistance to others. Equivalent to being faithful and benevolent.”¹⁷ “The word translated **sincerity** signifies “singleness,” from the word meaning “onfold,” as opposed to “twofold” or “double.” The thing enjoined is, therefore, the opposite of double-mindedness.”¹⁸

Duplicity, deceit, graft, and theft, and more were all common to slaves; Paul is opposing these attitudes and behaviors of Christian slaves. Being in the worst possible circumstances in life did not excuse one from embracing the virtues of the Christian faith and living honestly and sincerely in that state. “Christianity does not offer us escape from circumstances; it offers us conquest of circumstances.”¹⁹

as to Christ.... Their attitudes and behavior to slave owners were to be as if they were serving Jesus Christ. This is the highest possible standard that Paul could put before them to address their behavior.

Ephesians 6:6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

eyeservice²⁰.... ***as men-pleasers***²¹.... “...it is easy to visualize what he has in mind. He is thinking of a slave who will work hard only when the master is looking, like a secretary who types fast when the office manager is around but who talks most of the rest of the time, or a manager who is “out to lunch” except when the boss is pressing him for something.”²²

Christian slaves were to have one standard of work ethics independent of who was looking. Their goal was to please Christ, not men. However, in pleasing Christ certainly many slave owners would be pleased as well.

as bondservants of Christ.... Paul again returns to this point, serve your earthly master as if you were serving Christ—because you are.

Ephesians 6:7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

¹⁶ *sincerity ἀπλότης* “...single, not having an ulterior or double motive. Simplicity, purity, sincerity, faithfulness, plenitude....” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

¹⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

¹⁸ Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 206.

¹⁹ William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, The Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1976), 181.

²⁰ *eyeservice ὀφθαλμοδοουλία*, “Eyeservice, implying either service rendered only when one is being scrutinized or service rendered only for appearance sake (Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:22).” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

²¹ *men-pleasers ἀνθρωπάρεσκος*, “pertaining to causing people to be pleased, with the implication of being in contrast to God or at the sacrifice of some principle—‘pleasing people, men-pleaser.’” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 299.

²² James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 221.

goodwill doing service²³.... Showing “favor. Benevolence, goodwill....”²⁴

As can be imagined, doing bad-will was the norm. But Paul is not interested in the norm of the world. He is saying, you are Christians, now, act like Christians.

as to the Lord, and not to men.... And now for the third time, Paul makes the point, your work for the slave master is to be viewed as working for “the Lord.” Paul never deviates from this standard.

Ephesians 6:8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

whatever good anyone does.... As can be seen from this, they were expected to do good.

he will receive the same from the Lord.... Here Paul gives the major reason for this kindly behavior, the *coming eternal reward of the Lord for such obedience*. In Colossians, Paul adds the word *inheritance*.

“knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:24, NKJV)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10, NKJV)

“When Paul wrote these words, he was thinking of a heavenly reward only, since slaves were not normally rewarded in earthly terms. But the interesting thing is that rewards, whether earthly or heavenly, do matter and that he is not afraid to introduce this as a motivation. Put in economic terms, this means that a system that guarantees workers a due reward for labor is closer to God’s own way of operating than a system that does not. And it will work better!”²⁵

whether he is a slave or free.... “The additional words, ‘whether slave or free,’ show that all will be similarly rewarded. Social status at this point is immaterial, and none will receive special treatment or favoritism, for all are judged by the same criterion—that of works....”²⁶

Ephesians 6:9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

²³ *goodwill* εὐνοια “a state of zeal based upon a desire to be involved in some activity or state—‘zeal, eagerness, wholeheartedness.” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 296.

²⁴ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

²⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 221.

²⁶ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 453.

And you, masters.... Paul now changes his audience. Like husbands and parents in the last paragraphs, so masters have responsibilities as well.

do the same things to them.... The same high-quality Christian behavior is expected of masters, not just slaves. "...everything Paul said to employees also applies to employers...."²⁷ "...in other words, their attitudes, and actions, like those of their slaves, are to be *determined by their relationship to the same heavenly Lord.*"²⁸ Your behavior demonstrates your faith; Christians, slaves or masters, are to act differently.

Slaves are to serve with integrity, dedication, and goodwill—*masters are to possess those same behaviors* as well and treat their slaves with these same Christian qualities.

"Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." (Colossians 4:1, NKJV)

giving up threatening.... "Masters were not to intimidate slaves, as was often the custom, with threats of beatings, sexual harassment of female slaves, or threats to sell male slaves (thereby severing them from their families), for example."²⁹

In business in years past, but sadly still in practice today, there was a type of management identified as "management by intimidation." This is exactly what Paul is forbidding in their treatment of slaves, let alone in business.

there is no partiality with Him. "The Lord to whom slaves and masters are accountable is completely impartial. At the judgment bar of God, there is no 'partiality' or 'bias' with him. The higher social status that masters have gives them no advantage whatever. He does not allow himself to be influenced by appearances. No 'special deals' can be made with him."³⁰ Poor behavior by the master of his slaves will result in judgment by his Master on the last day. If anything, the master will be held to a higher standard.

"In conclusion, the instructions given in the household code are God's formula for the wise walk of wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves, and masters. Each of these groups of people must be *filled by the Spirit* in order to consistently carry out the exhortations given. Many of these verses emphasize selflessness, which results in harmony—one evidence of the Spirit's work."³¹ Remember, these are behaviors of Spirit-filled believers. A failure to embrace these instructions is evidence of a life not filled by God's Spirit.

"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the

²⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 221.

²⁸ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 456.

²⁹ Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*, vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 125.

³⁰ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 455.

³¹ Harold W. Hoehner, Philip W. Comfort, and Peter H. Davids, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Thessalonians, Philemon.*, vol. 16 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 125.

Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.” (Ephesians 5:15–21, NKJV)

The section of wives-husbands, children-parents, and slaves-masters were instructions on how a Spirit-filled person behaves.

Stand Against the Spiritual Forces of Darkness (6:10–20)

Put on the Armor (6:10–13)

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Paul has completed his discussion on the *wisdom* that characterizes the walk of a believer, Ephesians 5:15-21, and the *behaviors* that demonstrate a Holy Spirit filled life, Ephesians 5:22-6:9. The following is Paul's conclusion to the letter.

Finally.... This is Paul's last major section, his final thoughts in Ephesians.

be strong.... This translation is off the mark a bit. Better yet, ***be strengthened***, which "indicates that believers do not empower themselves...."³² We are unequal to the battle; in ourselves, we can't win it. Believers do not get strong by means of their own efforts, they must ***be strengthened*** "in the Lord."

"that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man," (Ephesians 3:16, NKJV)

in the Lord.... Their strength comes from an external source, *the Lord*.

and the power of His might.... Or "***by His vast strength***." Or, "in the vigor derived from his strength." The phrase "***power of his might***" in 6:10 and "***mighty power***" in 1:19 are the same in Greek.

"and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places," (Ephesians 1:19–20, NKJV)

We are to be strengthened with resurrection power. Ephesians 1:21 continues saying:

"far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." (Ephesians 1:21, NKJV)

This sounds very similar to some of what will now follow in Ephesians 6.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

There is a relationship between ***be strengthened*** in verse 10 and ***put on*** in verse 11. If there is no *put on*, then there is no *strengthened*. Both words come from *the same root* meaning *to put on something*. Verse 10 tells us to *put on* strength from Christ. Verse 11 tells us *how* we are to be strengthened; it is by *putting on **the whole armor of God***. "Syntactically, the imperative *put on the full armor of God* explains how the admonition

³² Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 461.

of v. 10, *Be strong in the Lord*, is to be carried out.”³³ If you neglect putting on the armor, you will fail in your strength, it is a necessary act if one seeks strength from God.

“This exhortation to put on God’s armor recalls the earlier instruction about ‘putting on the new self,’ which was *created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness* (4:24). Essentially, then, to ‘put on the new self’ is the same as donning the armor of God.”³⁴ The new self is armor clad.

the whole armor.... Which “can be understood as the armor that God supplies, his own armor which he wears, or even the armor that is God himself.”³⁵ The weapons believers are to don are truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer. The various pieces of this armor are the virtues or attitudes to be practiced by the believer.

that or **so that....** The reasons for putting on the whole armor of God now follows.

you may be able to stand.... The purpose of putting on the armor is to **stand**, a critical necessity in battle. The alternative is to fall before the enemy. This necessity of standing is found four times in this passage.

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11, NKJV)

“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.” (Ephesians 6:13, NKJV)

“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,” (Ephesians 6:14, NKJV)

“From 4:25 onward, the writer had elaborated on **putting off** the old humanity, and now the detailing of the armor to be worn can be seen as the writer’s development of the idea of **putting on** the new.”³⁶ So this is how we **put off** the old man, by **putting on** God’s armor. You cannot put off by putting off; you must put on instead. The put on displaces what was put off. What will you put on? It is laid out in this passage; it is the full armor of God, the virtues and faith of Jesus Christ.

against the wiles³⁷ or, methods, or schemes.... This is what you are standing and withstanding; the schemes of the evil one.

of the devil. “According to 4:27, Satan tries to gain a foothold and exert his influence over the lives of Christians through uncontrolled anger (v. 26) as well as falsehood (4:25), stealing (v. 28), unwholesome talk (v. 29), indeed any conduct that is

³³ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 462.

³⁴ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 462.

³⁵ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 463.

³⁶ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 442.

³⁷ *wiles μεθοδεΐα*, “crafty scheming with the intent to deceive—‘deceit, scheming.’” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 759.

characteristic of the 'old way of life' (v. 22)."³⁸ It is only with the full armor of God, that we will be able to stand against these temptations.

"Mention of the "schemes" of the devil reminds us of the trickery and subterfuge by which evil and temptation present themselves in our lives. Evil rarely looks evil until it accomplishes its goal; it gains entrance by appearing attractive, desirable, and perfectly legitimate. It is a baited and camouflaged trap."³⁹ But the wise will see it for what it is.

"Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—"
(Ephesians 5:15, HCSB)

"Dr Lloyd-Jones expresses his conviction on this matter in the following terms: 'I am certain that one of the main causes of the ill state of the Church today is the fact that the devil is being forgotten. All is attributed to us; we have all become so psychological in our attitude and thinking. We are ignorant of this great objective fact, the being, the existence of the devil, the adversary, the accuser, and his "fiery darts".'⁴⁰ Failure is not mental illness; failure is *demonic empowered sinfulness*—it is one of the devils schemes that packages his evil under the more benign term 'mental illness.'

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

"...the writer depicts human existence as under the influence of powers that work evil. Others tried to deal with these powers in various ways that included resignation to fate [it is what it is], magical practices [what's your sign?], and initiation into mystery cults [we need to go to church]. But this writer sees them as having been defeated by Christ, yet still attempting to make inroads into the lives of believers and to thwart the advance of the gospel before their final subjugation."⁴¹

For we do not wrestle⁴² against flesh and blood.... But we do! Paul, "is saying that our struggle is not *just* on that level. We do have a physical, visible struggle. But over and above that, over and above what we see, there is an invisible spiritual struggle going on against the devil and his forces. We cannot see the devil or his legions. Yet, as Peter says, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).⁴³ People often appear to be the enemy, but the real enemy is he who empowers them, Satan.

So, "our struggle is not with human beings but with cosmic intelligences; our enemies are not human but demonic. Paul's Asian readers were quite familiar with this fact. They doubtless remembered—or would have heard about—the incident of the Jewish

³⁸ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 463–464.

³⁹ Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 464.

⁴⁰ John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 265.

⁴¹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 443.

⁴² *wrestle πάλη* "It was used of the wrestling of athletes and the of the hand-to-hand combat of soldiers both of which required deftness and speed." Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

⁴³ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 226.

exorcists in Ephesus who were rash enough to try to dismiss an evil spirit in the name of Jesus without themselves knowing the Jesus whose name they used.”⁴⁴

“Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” (Acts 19:13–17, NKJV)

It is *evil spirits* that oppose Christ and us, his Church.

but against principalities, against powers [authorities], against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

principalities⁴⁵.... This word, *archē*, is used for what is *first* or *oldest* as in archeology, the study of first things, or monarchy, the first person of the kingdom.

Used here it refers to those that are among the oldest and most powerful created beings in the universe, *the demonic evil ones*.

powers⁴⁶.... This particular word translated *powers* means authority. God has temporarily given the devil the authority to do evil. He will one day withdraw that authority.

the rulers⁴⁷.... The Greek is made up of two words “world” and “hold” and means one who holds the world or rules the world.

“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” (John 12:31, NKJV)

“whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” (2 Corinthians 4:4, NKJV)

of the darkness of this age.... In God’s time, this age will pass, and that grasp on the world by the evil one will end. In the meantime, this world is in ***darkness*** to all things Godly.

⁴⁴ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 263.

⁴⁵ *principalities* ἀρχή “beginning, cause, authority....” Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 412.

⁴⁶ *powers* ἐξουσία, “freedom; ability; power; authority...” Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–), 9.

⁴⁷ *rulers* κοσμοκράτωρ “to hold. Lord of the world.” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

“having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;” (Ephesians 4:18, NKJV)

“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.” (Matthew 4:16, NKJV)

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8, NKJV)

spiritual hosts of wickedness [or wicked spirits] in the heavenly places.

Wickedness is spiritual, which means immaterial. Those that like to say, “I’m spiritual, I’m just not religious” need to remember that the devil is also spiritual. Although he is religious as well—he never misses a church service! In itself, being spiritual is no virtue; the question is: what spirit do you serve?

These are the forces against which the believer must contend.

Ephesians 6:13 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.

take up.... This armor does not strap itself on our bodies. We are called to action; we are called to consciously ***take up*** God’s tools for successful warfare. Doing so is an act of confidence and faith in God. To fail to do so shows indifference to God.

the whole armor of God.... Note, this is God’s armor, not ours, it is He who provides it for our safety.

In God, “All the resources are available for a successful resistance. These resources are divine and are summed up as the “*full armor*” of God, which is mentioned for the second time (cf. v 11). All that believers need to do is to “***take up***” the armor to appropriate the resources.”⁴⁸

that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.... It is this armor that keeps us on our feet in the evil day.

having done all⁴⁹.... Paul makes it clear that we must do ***all*** that we can—***having done all***. And if we do that—we shall stand and not fall before the enemy of our soul.

to stand.... The result of doing all that God asks is to ***stand***, to experience victory.

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors⁵⁰ through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37, NKJV)

⁴⁸ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 445.

⁴⁹ *having done all κατεργάζομαι* “to do something with success and/or thoroughness—‘to accomplish, to perform successfully, to do thoroughly.’” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 511.

⁵⁰ *more than conquerors υπερνικῶ* “...from *hupér* ... more, and *nikáō* ... to conquer, overcome. To more than conquer, utterly defeat (Rom. 8:37).” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

The phrase “more than conquerors” is “hyper-victorious” in Greek.

Standing with the Armor (6:14–17)

“Thinking of the imagery Paul uses for the Christian’s warfare in Ephesians 6, it would be proper to call Christianity a contact sport.”⁵¹

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Stand.... The word suggests “the stance of the soldier in combat, standing firm, resisting, and prevailing against the enemy.”⁵² This is now the fourth time Paul has used this word. Paul intends that we stand stout and stable in our war against evil and not wobbly and shaky in the conflict and for this reason uses this word repeatedly in this passage.

“Wobbly Christians who have no firm foothold in Christ are an easy prey for the devil. And Christians who shake like reeds and rushes cannot resist the wind when the principalities and powers begin to blow. Paul wants to see Christians so strong and stable that they remain firm even against the devil’s *wiles* (verse 11) and even *in the evil day*, that is, in a time of special pressure. For such stability, both of character and in crisis, the armor of God is essential.”⁵³

“For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 3:8, NKJV)

We now get to the actual pieces of armor. Soldiers are able to stand in combat because of their armor. Using analogies Paul identifies elements of our faith with Roman armor. The point is not the Roman preparation for war, the point is our preparation for spiritual warfare.

having girded your waist with truth.... “...girding one’s loins is a sign of readiness for service.”⁵⁴ To do this, the soldier would take the back border of his long bath-robe like outer garment, pull it forward and up toward his belt where he would then secure it with the belt around his waist, freeing his legs for combat.

The illustration is girding the waist, but the point is ***truth; what truth?***

“the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation....” (Ephesians 1:13, NKJV)

“... the truth is in Jesus:” (Ephesians 4:21, NKJV)

“...in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:24, NKJV)

“...Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor....” (Ephesians 4:25, NKJV)

⁵¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 244.

⁵² Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 447.

⁵³ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 275.

⁵⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 447.

“(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),” (Ephesians 5:9, NKJV)

“Let no one imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness if his mind is stored with his own theories or with the speculations of other people. Nothing but the **truth** of God, clearly understood and embraced by the heart, will enable him to keep his feet for a moment before these celestial potentates.”⁵⁵ It is to all of these **truths** in Ephesians that Paul requires we gird ourselves. With these truths, we free ourselves for the battle.

But a mind that is propagandized by the world with the idea of “*my truth*” and “*your truth*” and that all truth is relative has nothing to fight for. Indeed, what are we fighting about?

Like so many today, Pilate had no criteria, no standard by which to measure truth.

“Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.”” (John 18:37–38, NKJV)

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6, NKJV)

having put on the breastplate of righteousness.... The word **righteousness** addresses the state of being right with God; it is “God’s gracious initiative in putting sinners right with himself through Christ.”⁵⁶ It is that, and it is more for it requires that one do right in their lives, a holy lifestyle which God requires of all Believer. This breastplate “is an essential defense against an accusing conscience....”⁵⁷

Many Christians are taken out of the battle because of a defiled conscience—they have done wrong. A state of righteousness, God’s gift to sinners, puts man back into the battle. Sins committed sideline Christians, sins forgiven, and righteousness bestowed empowers them for battle. Embrace God’s forgiveness, put on God’s breastplate.

“For He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.” (Isaiah 59:17, NKJV)

Isaiah explains how the chief captain of the armies of God prepares for battle. He now officers us his own armor for this battle.

Ephesians 6:15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

⁵⁵ Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 216.

⁵⁶ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 278.

⁵⁷ John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 279.

The repeated command in this section is to stand. It is with our feet that we do so. And here Paul associates the gospel with that command. To shod or prepare the feet is by analogy to prepare ourselves with the good news of God's peace for sinners, to stand firm with the purity of the message of the Gospel. Compromise that message and you will quickly fall before Satan.

Shod feet are also what is needed to bring the gospel of peace to a world lost in sin.

*"How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
"Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7, NKJV)*

the preparation of the gospel of peace.... "The writer's emphasis is paradoxical. It is the appropriation of the gospel of peace that makes one ready for war."⁵⁸ In Christ, we obtain "peace with God the Father and peace between human beings, Jews and Gentiles, who were formerly at enmity."⁵⁹ But at that point, God's enemies become our enemies and his battle becomes ours.

Ephesians 6:16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

shield of faith.... "Here the term employed is ... the large shield, four feet in length and two and a half feet in width ... the first part of the Roman [armor] which protected the whole body."⁶⁰

to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. "...darts are unsought thoughts of doubt and disobedience, rebellion, lust, malice or fear. But there is a shield with which we can quench or extinguish all such fire-tipped darts. It is the shield of faith."⁶¹

⁵⁸ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 449.

⁵⁹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 449.

⁶⁰ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 449.

⁶¹ John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 281.



Pilgrim in his Battle with Apollyon

Apollyon: Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy to this Prince; I hate his person, his laws, and people; I am come out on purpose to withstand you.

Christian: Apollyon, beware what you do; for I am in the King's highway, the way of holiness; therefore take heed to yourself.

Apollyon: Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter: prepare yourself to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that you shall go no further; here will I spill your soul.

And with that he threw a flaming dart at his breast; but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.

Then did Christian draw, for he saw it was time to bestir him; and Apollyon as fast made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail; by the which, notwithstanding all that Christian could do to avoid it, Apollyon wounded him in his head, his hand, and foot. This made Christian give a little back; Apollyon, therefore, followed his work amain (with all his might), and Christian again took courage, and resisted as manfully as he could. This sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent; for you must know that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker.

Then Apollyon, espying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian, and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall; and with that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of you now. And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life; but as God would have it, while Apollyon was fetching of his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good

man, Christian nimbly stretched out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise."

And with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him give back, as one that had received his mortal wound. Christian perceiving that, made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us". And with that Apollyon spread forth his dragon's wings, and sped him away, that Christian for a season saw him no more."⁶²

Believing God, trusting God, having faith in God protects us against Satan's lies that would wound our souls, destroy our faith, wreck our lives.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

the helmet of salvation.... "What adorns and protects the Christian, which enables him to hold up his head with confidence and joy, is the fact that he is saved. He is one of the redeemed, translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. If still under condemnation, if still estranged from God, a foreigner and alien, without God and without Christ, he could have no courage to enter into this conflict. It is because he is a fellow citizen of the saints, a child of God, a partaker of the salvation of the Gospel, that he can face even the most potent enemies with confidence, knowing that he will become more than a conqueror through him that loved him (see Romans 8:37)."⁶³

the sword of the Spirit ... the word of God.... This was not the long sword but the short one. Paul envisions spiritual warfare to be up close and personal.

"He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength." (Revelation 1:16, NKJV)

It is the word of God that is our only offensive weapon.

"In opposition to all error, to all false philosophy, to all false principles of morals, to all the sophistries of vice, to all the suggestions of the devil, the sole, simple, and sufficient answer is the Word of God."⁶⁴

Two passages stand out that tell us about that Word:

"having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever," (1 Peter 1:23, NKJV)

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12, NKJV)

Taking up the Last Pieces of Armor (6:18–20).

⁶² <http://kenpulsmusic.com/pilgrimsprogress52.html>

⁶³ Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 219.

⁶⁴ Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 219.

And to the Word is now added the power of prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

“Putting on, taking up, and receiving God’s armor all require an attitude of dependence on God. Prayer for strengthening from God can be seen as a major way in which believers appropriate the divine armor and are enabled to stand.”⁶⁵

praying being watchful.... These are the two things that Paul is instructing believers to do.

These words in verse 18 do not start a new sentence; they are instructions on how to put on the armor of God or how “*to stand.*” You appropriate the armor and thereby stand by means of *prayer*, and you keep standing by *staying alert.*

with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.... What’s the difference with the first use of praying and this repetition ***prayer and supplication***? The word pray is the same word in both cases. It appears to be an effort to enhance the point; “pray begging God.”

in or with or by the Spirit.... “Even when we do not know *what* to pray as we ought, the Spirit comes to our assistance and intercedes for us with unspoken groanings that are perfectly in line with the will of God (lit. ‘according to God’, Rom. 8:26–27).”⁶⁶ To beg God through his Holy Spirit is to seek the power of His Spirit to make the point that we struggle to articulate well, to explain to God the dilemmas of our life. *The Holy Spirit takes up our cause.*

watchful⁶⁷ or ***staying alert....*** The Greek word for watchful literally means *to abstain totally from sleep.* Of course, the word is not used literally. It should be understood to mean *to be disciplined.* To keep yourself spiritually alert.

“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:34–36, NKJV)

I think watchfulness speaks of the discipline of prayer. This is the ultimate idea behind the word. Prayer can be very hard to do consistently; it is spiritual watchfulness, discipline, that helps one be consistent in prayer.

Ephesians 6:19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

and for me.... Paul received a divine appearance by Jesus Christ.

⁶⁵ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 452.

⁶⁶ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 485.

⁶⁷ *watchful ἀγρυπνέω* “*To abstain totally from sleep, to watch, wake, be awake. Spiritually, to be watchful and attentive to spiritual things....*” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

“But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” (Acts 9:15–16, NKJV)

Jesus revealed to Paul what the future held for him. Paul also received divine revelation to write much of our Bible. In addition, he was empowered to perform many miracles. And still Paul petitions the Ephesians to pray for him.

utterance⁶⁸.... Paul seeks prayer that he might speak with clarity the word, that he might speak the message of the word well.

the mystery of the gospel.... Paul has given us some insight into this mystery, God opening the door of salvation to Gentiles in addition to Jews. This message is his prayer request.

“how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,” (Ephesians 3:3–6, NKJV)

Ephesians 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

chains.... “To talk of an ambassador in chains is to employ an oxymoron. Normally an ambassador had diplomatic immunity and could not be imprisoned by those to whom he was sent, but prison chains now become the appropriate insignia for representing the gospel, the mark of the suffering apostle....”⁶⁹

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—” (Ephesians 3:1, NKJV)

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,” (Ephesians 4:1, NKJV)

boldly.... Now Paul adds boldness to the clarity of the word. A clear but timid message has little effect. A bold but confused is not better. Paul seeks to speak **boldly** and with **utterance** or clarity of message.

Final Greetings (6:21–24)

Ephesians 6:21 But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you;

⁶⁸ *utterance* λόγος “Intelligence, word as the expression of that intelligence, discourse, saying, thing.” Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

⁶⁹ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 454.

Ephesians 6:22 whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Tychicus will add to this letter his personal knowledge of Paul's imprisonment.

Ephesians 6:23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.