

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 18

Family and Work

Ephesians 6:1-9

A. Family

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NIV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

1) a) i) Discussion question. In verse 2, apostle Paul instructs children to obey and honor parents, does it mean obey without thinking?

- Treat with respect
- Does not mean obeying without thinking
- Cannot be too dependent so cannot leave and cleave

ii) Discussion question. In verse 4, apostle Paul instructs the fathers to bring the children up "in the training and instruction of the Lord", what does this mean?

- Teach them what is right in the Lord
- How to think through issues with Biblical values
- Aim is to make them self-sufficient

iii) Discussion question. Does it apply to mothers too? (Refer to 2 Tim 1:5 to answer)

2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV)

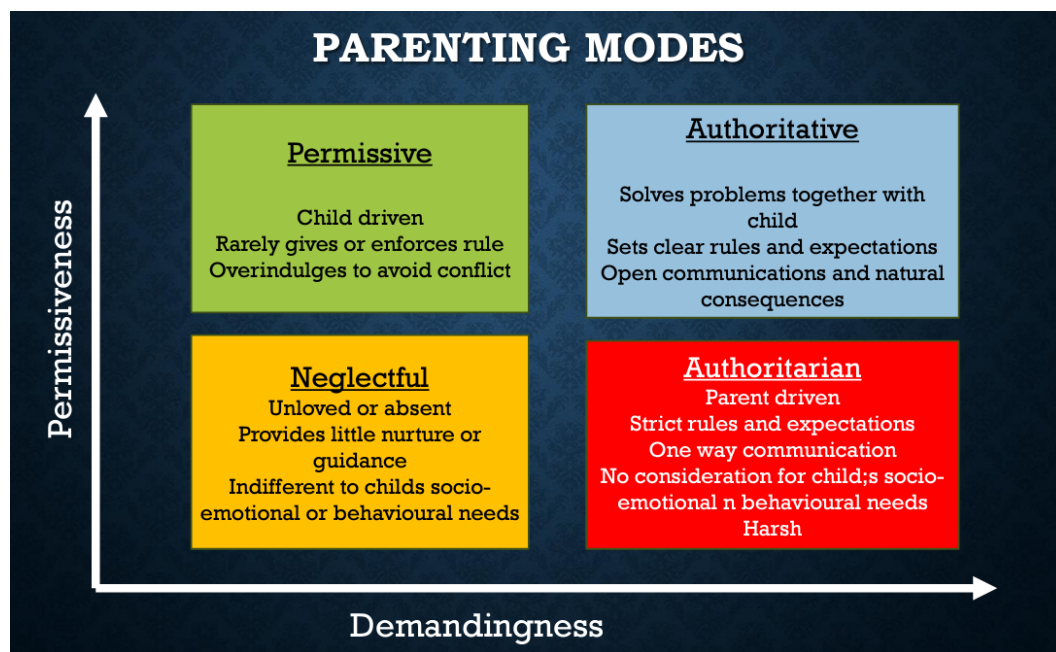
I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

b) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, fill in the similarities between Chinese Filial Piety (孝) and Biblical Piety.

Love and obedience towards one's parents
Submission to governing authorities
Respect for social hierarchy
The belief that such an attitude is divinely ordained

c) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, fill in the differences between Chinese Filial Piety (孝) and Biblical Piety.

Differences	
Filial Piety	New Testament Practice
Principle of harmony	Obedience is primarily directed towards God
One of the virtues that maintain social structure and harmony	Submission to all others - parents, spouses, governing officials- is an extension of one's devotion to God



d) i) Reflection question. Look at the four models of parenting modes, which one did you grow up in or which one did your parents use?

ii) Reflection question. Which model are you using for your kids or plan to use for your future kids (if any)?

iii) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture slide, fill in the consequences of each type of parenting style.

Permissive	Authoritative
Angry because they will clash with society's rules and expectations	Best adapted
Neglectful	Authoritarian
Angry, unloved, act out to get attention	Angry at being put down, rebel or dependant

B. Work

Ephesians 6:5-9 (NIV)

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

2) a) Comprehension question. According to the video lecture slide, why didn't Apostle Paul advocate for the abolishment of slavery?

- Emphasis-individual transformation then society
- Submission to authorities in government that upheld slavery
- Earthly Suffering cannot be compared to eternal joy in Christ
- Slaves would have converted for ulterior motives

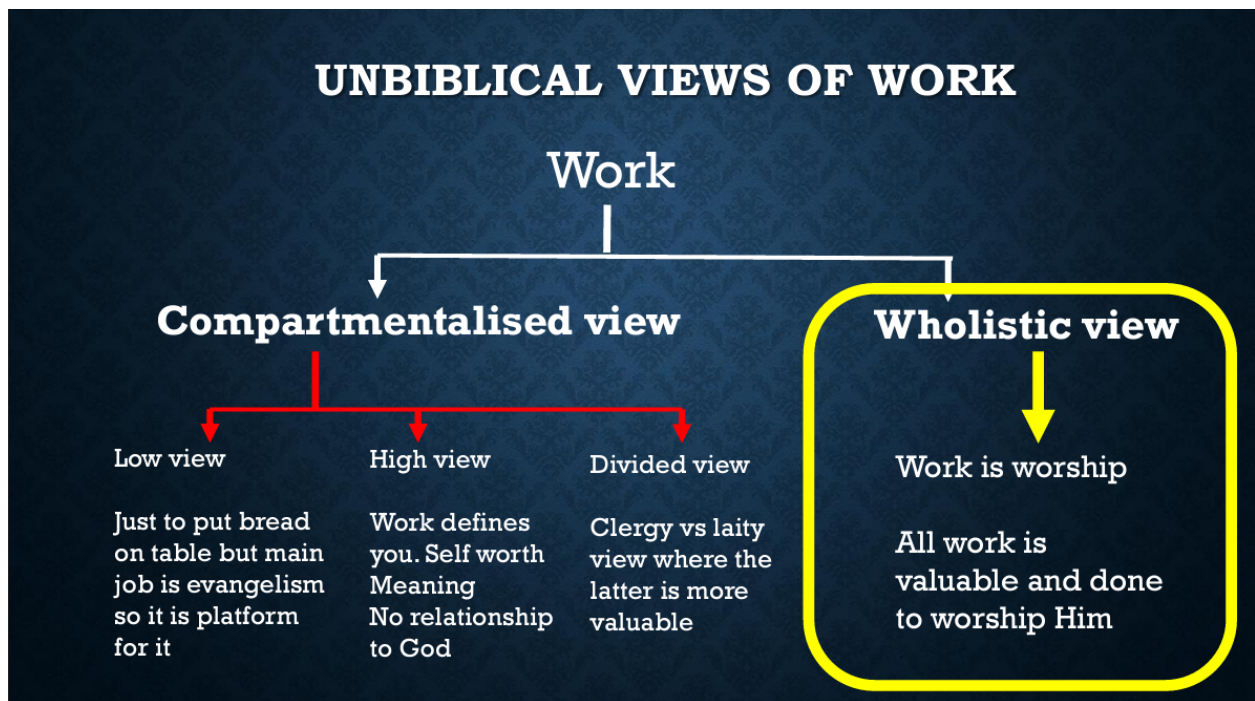
b) Comprehension question. According to the video lecture slide, what are the differences between Ancient Greek slaves and American slaves? Which one had more rights?

Ancient Greek slaves had more rights.

- Food and lodging and medical care provided
- Can be highly trained as teachers, doctors or philosophers, accountants, tailors, bakers
- Can be freed by vindicate, enrollment, or manumission
- The owner still has some minor claim on him for workdays

c) Discussion question. According to the video lecture slide, how does Christ redeem our workplace relationships?

- Liberating because your environment does not control you.
- Redeems and Transforms the service of work into the ultimate value
- Work is now important
- The reward is from God and not necessarily contingent on the manner of the boss or remuneration.



d) Reflection question. There is the Compartmentalised view of work: Low view, High view, and Divided view as well as the Wholistic view of work. Which one best represents your view currently?

Takeaway

In Ephesians 6:1-9, apostle Paul tells the Ephesian church that believing in Christ changes how we treat people at home as well as how we treat the work we do and the people whom we work with at our workplace.

Case Study

Case 1 – Family

Fah Mu Lee was a new believer when married a non-Christian. She has two kids with her husband. Then she came across Ephesians 6:1-4 in which children are to obey their parents and that the fathers should bring their kids in the instruction of the Lord.

She felt conflicted because the kid's father isn't a Christian, and the kids have to follow the father to the temple because they need to obey the father's orders. The husband allows the kids to go to Sunday school but not too frequently or else he always shows his bad mood to Mu Lee in other ways. Therefore Mu Lee drops the kids at Sunday school twice a week, then gradually once a week, then only on party occasions like Christmas Party or Easter party.

1) a) Discussion question. If you were in Mu Lee's shoes, what would you do?

b) Discussion question. Are the instructions to train the kids directed at parents or Sunday school teachers? Who bears the majority of the responsibility for this child to be trained and under the instruction of the Lord?

c) Discussion question. When does training and under the instruction of the Lord stop? When the child is 18 years old? 21 years old? When the child move out? Never?

Case 2 – Work

See Lay Eve works under a boss who micromanages and blames others for his own mistakes. When she cleans up other people's mistakes and shows her competence, she is rewarded with more work, but no increase in pay and appreciation. She realizes this after a while and starts working slower. However, she read Ephesians 6:5-9 and felt bad after a while because she wasn't doing her best.

She then watched a video on TikTok where an employee confronted the HR's comment on his drop in performance because of a system in the workplace that does not incentivize people to work hard:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@krisdrinkslemonade/video/7062142035893095727?lang=en>

She then felt inspired to quit and left her job to join a company that has a healthier work environment and a system that incentivizes those who work hard and are competent.

2) a) Discussion question. How does Ephesians 6:5-9 inform us on how we should treat our employers, employees, or colleagues?

b) Discussion question. How does Ephesians 6:5-9 inform us on how we should treat the quality of our work?

c) Discussion question. How should Christians think about employee rights?

d) Discussion question. Are Christians allowed to quit jobs?

e) Discussion question. What should we make of refugees who don't have basic employee rights in Malaysia?

f) Discussion question. Since Apostle Paul addresses both Christian masters and slaves in Ephesians 6:5-9. Should Christian companies have yearly performance evaluation forms for both the employees' performance as well as the employer's performance to show that both employees' and employers' conduct matter equally?