The Book of Ephesians - Chapter 6

1. We are still in the WALK section, and will continue there until verse 10. There are challenges here. Let us confront them without blinking and without excusing or explaining them away.

2. Ephesians 6:1-4 Whole books and seminars have been birthed by these simple verses but let's not do that. Here are just general instructions about raising children.

    a. The first is a direction to children: honor your parents. It makes life easier. It's another way of saying "make level paths for your feet."
    b. The key here is the phrase "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" and the warning not to provoke your children to wrath. I happen to love the NIV's take on this: do not exasperate your children. Help them win. Help them be who God created them to be. Children are born discoverers so – let them.

3. Here we find the gift of submission entering in again. There are times to submit to the child – to their pace, to their ability, and to their wiring. It helps to remember the lists of gifts in First Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and back in Ephesians 4.

4. God loves variety and proved it by creation. Your children are not there for you, but for Him. He does not give us the child we want but the child He needs.

5. It bothers quite a few people that Paul did not rail against slavery and demand an end to all injustice. Instead, he said this: Eph. 6:5-9. There are several things in play here that we need to keep in mind. For a great number of people, service was the only way to stay alive, get fed, and have some measure of protection. We aren't trying to whitewash this and claim it is good; we are saying that the whole system was prebaked and it could not be ended without mass starvation, civil unrest, the breakup of families, and blood.

6. God designed a church that ended the system by the way His followers were to live. It is to our well earned shame that it took so long and that is likely because we were afraid to move at the speed of

the Spirit and we were far too quick to ally ourselves to the powerful – families, systems or nations. (the death of faith in Britain)

7. I refer you to the Book of Philemon and to the examples of many saints of the church over the millennia who moved to either free slaves or treat them as family.

8. And here we learn to move from WALK to STAND. My father was a difficult man on his best day, but he was not a cartoon. Only cartoons are all good or all bad (with the Jesus exception). He taught me many valuable lessons but chief among them was the **ability to stand alone**.

9. Standing alone is not fun. It is not easy. It can make you lose your job, your friends, your family, or your life. To be honest, it usually doesn't have a host of negative effects but you have to be willing to face the negative or you won't stand – alone or otherwise.

10. The world cannot stand (pun intended) someone who refuses to conform. Even nonconformists conform their particular form of nonconformity. The world will not get you or understand you if you walk like Jesus (drunk with the Spirit).

11. So, if you are going to stand, armor up. This is a spiritual battle, though there are physical elements to it. <u>Remember that the people you meet, even those who hate you, are not the enemy; they are prisoners of our enemy.</u>

12. Note that there is no backplate to your armor. There's a reason for that. What will help you stand? Truth (tricky one, that), righteousness (his, not ours, but don't get sloppy), a dedication to move where and when you need to move to find or make peace, faith, and remember that you cannot receive a mortal blow for you are saved (see chapter 1!). And that sword? Your weapon? Jesus, for HE is the Word of God.

13. Back in the 90s, there was a series of Jackie Chan films that showed artistry in combat. He used things around him to protect himself and to attack the attacker. It was all a bunch of fun (he was

no superhero) and he was choreographed to the nth degree but…fun. I want you to think of Jackie Chan when we read this bit. Eph. 6:18.

14. Look for openings. Look for what the Spirit sees. Stop. Open your eyes. Keep your head on a swivel. Pray with your eyes open. What does God want here? Where is the Spirit? Pray THAT way. Paul opens up a bit and has the grace to be vulnerable –C 6:19,20.

15. Admonition: Ephesians 6: 23-24.