

# EPHESIANS

## WEEK FOURTEEN

### • STUDY ONE •

#### BACKSTORY

Parents.

What comes to mind when we think about that word? All of us have either had a parent, been parents, currently are parents, or will someday be a parent. Some thoughts about that word can bring joy, sorrow, hurt, happiness, and for some unfortunate pain. It has often been said that our parents and our household atmosphere have had or will have some sizable share of influence on how we relate to God our Father.

In the section of text that we are studying this week, Paul is laying out a foundation plan on how to build meaningful relationships between husbands and wives. He then naturally goes on to explain how to build a household on that foundation. I find it interesting how Paul expounds on Biblical truths that perhaps were not part of in his own personal life. Although there is much debate, the Bible does not specifically say Paul was married, or even widowed. This lack of evidence has us assume that he likely was not married nor had any children. With that said, one could ask how could Paul teach on such a subject? I think in 1 Corinthians 7:32-40, Paul explains just how he can teach on the subject. Being deeply connected to his Heavenly Father, Paul experienced the heart of God and was divinely inspired by that relationship. I think that gives hope to all of us....even those who are single. When we strive to have a connected relationship with our Creator, He will reveal His attributes directly to us.

## SCRIPTURE

### **Ephesians 6:1-4** **Children and Parents**

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup> “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” <sup>4</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

## DISCUSSION

I recently had the chance to read Corrie ten Boom’s book, “The Hiding Place” for the first time. If you don’t know her story, Corrie and her family were Dutch citizens who chose to take part in the underground resistance movement. They helped house, transport, and move Jewish peoples away from the Germans during WWII. Unfortunately, Corrie and her surviving family were betrayed, and soon after, arrested by German police for their connection in the resistance. They were hauled off to prison first, and then later to a concentration camp.

What stuck out to me in reading this book was some of the remarkable wisdom modeled by Corrie’s father, Casper. I believe his instruction played a big role in why Corrie had no restraint on wanting to help and reach out to those who were unjustly persecuted.

On one occasion, Corrie shares her disappointment when her hopes of finding a husband had been wrecked. Karel, who was Corrie’s prospective husband and whom she exchanged countless love letters with, had left town to become a minister. While away, Karel had fallen in love with someone else and had come back to visit and share his engagement news. Corrie first learned of this news when Karel visited her doorstep with his new fiancée. This is what she wrote regarding her memory after this particular time of her life:

*“...suddenly I was afraid of what Father would say. Afraid he would say, “There’ll be someone else soon,” and that forever afterward this untruth would lie between us. For in some deep part of me I knew already that there would not--soon or ever--be anyone else.*

*The sweet cigar-smell came into the room with Father. And of course he did not say the false, idle words. . .*

*“Corrie,” he began instead, “do you know what hurts so very much? It’s love. Love is the strongest force in the world, and when it is blocked that means pain.*

*“There are two things we can do when this happens. We can kill the love so that it stops hurting. But then of course part of us dies, too. Or, Corrie, we can ask God to open up another route for that love to travel.”*

Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” Casper could have responded in a way that was not sensitive to Corrie emotions. Instead, he uses this moment not only to simply cheer her, but to push her focus towards the Heavenly Father. Corrie’s father quite possibly inspired Corrie to reroute her feelings of personal rejection and channel them into an awareness of others that are dismissed as inadequate.

## APPLICATION

When we are deeply connected to our Heavenly Father, instruction of who He is and what He is like comes freely out of us. As we grow and connect with our Creator, He will continue to make us aware of how He feels about His creation. Who has He put in our lives that He wants us to build wholesome and faith-based relationships with? How can we redirect a path or situation that on the outside seem dire? Can we respond in love rather than anger or degradation? All of us, whether we are parents or individuals, can strive to build and lay foundations that demonstrate the love of God in the lives of those we come in contact with.

In Corrie’s book, she writes about another life lesson she learned while she was still a child. On this occasion, she, her mother, and her sister brought fresh bread to a poor family who had just lost a baby. To Corrie, it was her first realization that death is tangible and it left her feeling physically cold and fearful. After they had returned home from their visit and had eaten supper, they continued with their normal bedtime routine. As always, father would come and tuck the her and her sister into bed.

But that night as he [father] stepped through the door, I [Corrie] burst into tears. “I need you!” I sobbed. “You can’t die! You can’t!” ... Father sat down on the edge of the narrow bed. “Corrie,” he began gently, “when you and I go to Amsterdam-when do I give you your ticket?”

I sniffed a few times, considering this.

“Why, just before we get on the train.”

“Exactly. And our wise Father in heaven knows when we’re going to need things, too. Don’t run out ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need-just in time.”