

## Resisting the System: How to Live the Jesus Way

### Part 6: Family, Work, and Burnout: Is There a Better Way?

Ephesians 6:1-9

**Summary:** What if your most ordinary moments are actually how you challenge the system and reclaim your humanity?

#### Main Ideas:

Our lives and what we do with them matter.

The System tells us if we don't fight to matter more... we don't really matter at all.

Resistance begins in our relationships.

A life of submission destroys the System from the inside out.

Every member of the family plays a role in resisting the System.

Families resist the System by submitting to each other.

Mother Teresa: "If you want to change the world, go home and love your family."

In the Jesus Way, work becomes worship.

Holy Spirit-empowered submission is the only kind of power that transforms the world instead of adding to its pain.

It's in serving others that we finally discover who we really are

#### Invitation:

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill and guide you daily

Commit to submit: Use whatever influence you have to resist the System by submitting to others.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to, bothered, inspired, or confused you in this week's message?
2. What do you think is the difference between submission and being a doormat? How can you tell the difference in your own relationships?
3. Read Ephesians 6:4. In your experience, what are some ways parents accidentally provoke their kids?  
OR  
Read Ephesians 6:5-8. How do you typically view your job? What changes when you begin to see your work as worship?
4. What would it look like for you to submit in your job, family, or friendships this week—without losing your voice or value?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

---

#### Transcript:

**ME:** Have you ever wondered if any of this matters?

Like... does our life actually matter?

- The laundry. The carpool. The 9-5. The lawn mowing. The eye roll at the dinner table.

Some days, it just feels like we're living in a loop... and none of it's making a difference.

But one of the things I love about following Jesus is how he proved...

- Our lives and what we do with them matter.

Not just the spiritual stuff... not just what we believe or accomplish.

- But our morning conversations, our daily/unending chores, our overly long meetings... they matter.

**WE:** I know that can be hard to believe... b/c everything around us tries to convince us otherwise.

See, we've been talking these past few weeks about The System.

The power behind the scenes of our world.

- An invisible force that drives everything toward self-protection, domination, division, comfort.

We see it in the headlines about war and oppressive governments and systems...

But do you know where it usually shows up the most.... Those everyday, forgettable moments.

- At the dinner table
- In the conference room.

I see it happen pretty often around my breakfast table...

Before our family gets started for our day, we read through one of the Substack family devotions that go along with each of these messages.

- "Wow... pastor's family starts the day reading and discussing Jesus every morning. How holy and wonderful and peaceful. You must be really good parents."
- NOPE

You know what happens more often than not... Chaos.

- Short fuses go off, old fights brought back up, no one's listening, and I impatiently just want to get it done.

The System tells us...

- "Unless you control the room, you'll be controlled."
- "Unless you get what you deserve, someone else will."
- "Unless you fight to feel respected, you'll be forgotten."

It makes our marriages, families, friendships, and workplaces minefields ready to blow at any moment.

The System tells us if we don't fight to matter more... we don't really matter at all.

But that's the lie.

The true story of God has always said something different.

You are made in the image of God.

And Jesus came not just to rescue us from sin... but to invite us back into our true humanity.

To invite us to join his revolution.

- To remind you that your life matters. Your work matters. Your relationships matter

And... Resistance begins in our relationships.

It begins at home and then radiates out to our other relationships.

- One interaction, one conversation, one choice at a time.

This is what the Apostle Paul spent his life trying to explain, train, and equip people to do.

Around 60 AD, he wrote a letter to a group of JF's living in the ancient city of Ephesus.

A city steeped in the power dynamics and System values of the Roman Empire.

- Life was about authority and knowing your place in the hierarchy.
- If you had the power, then you should use people either for business or pleasure

And Paul tells these JF's it's time to start a revolution.

- Not through violence or even political influence...
- But through the love of Jesus... expressed through a lifestyle of mutual submission.

**Eph. 5:21** *And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*

Submission: Giving all of me for what benefits you the most.

Last week, we saw how he explained what this looked like in a 1st century Roman marriage...

- Today, he widens the circle and shows what resistance looks like in families and workplaces.

And just as these first JF's quietly subverted the Roman domination System... we can do the same.

How? Submission. A life of submission destroys the System from the inside out.

And it starts in our living rooms...

**GOD: Ephesians 6:1-3** *Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."*

See, you're not bad parents! It's the kids! If they obeyed, everything would be ok.

Not really. As we'll see... both kids and parents can dismantle the System in their relationship with each other.

- Every member of the family plays a role in resisting the System.

Paul is using a common Greco-Roman genre of writing called a Household Code to show how the Jesus Way is so different from what the System tells us.

The Roman Codes were built on the assumptions of a patriarchal society—

- The male head of the household had all the legal and social power over everyone else under his roof.
- Husband was expected to rule over his wife like a king over his people.
- The father had complete authority over the children.
- And the master had total control over his servants or slaves.

But Paul is turning this accepted wisdom on its head and showing how JFs are different...

Paul starts by addressing children—something the Roman codes never did.

- He's honoring the value of every person—no matter their age.
- Listen: No matter how old you are, you are part of the community of resistance.

"Children, obey your parents."

- Everyone throughout time and cultures will say, "Yeah, duh. That's what kids do b/c they are kids and we are adults and we know better and they have to listen to us."

But for JF's, the reason has changed.

Why does Paul say they should obey? B/c they belong to the Lord (Other trans... obey in the Lord)

- Meaning children don't obey their parents b/c it's just the way it is... it's not just blind obedience and rule following.
- They submit and obey b/c in doing so they are acting like JFs. They are, in a sense, serving God himself.

So Paul first addresses the action of obedience, but he goes deeper...

- He addresses the attitude behind the action... honor.

He says honor your mother and father...

- Not just doing what they say while they're in the room—but honoring their voice even when no one's watching.
- Not just hands that obey, but hearts that trust God gave you those parents for a reason.

When we obey and honor our parents, even when it's difficult, it starts chipping away at the grip the System has on our lives.

And kids listen... If you start resisting the System now—if you choose to follow the Jesus Way while you're young—it won't just save you from pain. It will shape you into someone who brings peace into every space you walk into

- You won't magically live longer.
- But in general, you will live better, healthier, and that will lead to a life that will keep you from destroying yourself.
- And if you honor your parents this way... Imagine how much they will be able to trust you with!

Now, for me, growing up, I thought that's where Paul stopped writing.

- That's what all the Sunday school teachers taught over and over
- But... Paul doesn't stop there.

**Ephesians 6:4** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.*

Roman codes told Fathers to rule with an iron fist. "Make them obey you!"

But Paul says something shocking at the time...

Just like husbands and wives live in mutual submission, JF parents submit to their kids, too.

- Not by relinquishing responsibility,
- But by giving themselves for the good of their kids through compassion and consistency.

Families resist the System by submitting to each other.

He says, "Don't exasperate your children, don't provoke them to anger."

Parents submit to their children by controlling themselves..

- Not lashing out emotionally, not controlling or crushing... but leading with compassion.

Sometimes the way we treat our kids makes it almost impossible for them to submit with honor to us...

We provoke our kids when we're inconsistent, controlling, shaming, or more concerned with how their behavior reflects on *us* than how it shapes *them*.

And instead of ruling them like a mini-tyrannical dictator... JF parents are called to submit to their children by bringing them up in the discipline and instruction that comes from the lord.

- Bring them up- nourish, form, shape.
- We show them what love looks like—not just with our words, but with our example.
- Not just focusing on rule-following... But knowing the goal is heart formation.

And through this type of parenting, you are resisting the System in every interaction.

Mother Teresa: "If you want to change the world, go home and love your family."

Paul will now widen the circle outside of the immediate family.

This next part has been tragically twisted throughout history.

But if we understand what's actually happening, we'll see that the Jesus Way subverts the System and rehumanizes every person—starting with our everyday work.

As we read this... remember Paul is writing to people in a specific cultural and historical moment.

- He is showing 1st cent. Roman JF's how this resistance as submission plays out the day after they read his letter.

**Ephesians 6:5-8** *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.*

For the 1st cent. Ephesians... none of this would be shocking.

About 20% of the empire's population was slaves.

- Either from Rome's military conquests / Economic hardship / or kidnapped by slave traders.

For people in the Empire, envisioning a world without slavery would be like us envisioning a world w/o electricity.

- It's what made the world run.

Some slaves had pretty cushy roles as household managers, while others endured some of the worst conditions possible.

- They were property, and their value depended on what they could provide their masters.

Listen... Paul is not endorsing slavery here.

- He is facing the reality of his time... in the 1st church there were JF slaves and JF slave owners.

But he is subverting the System here in a few ways

- And he is showing that even slaves can resist the System.

With no commission, no overtime, and no freedom, why would slaves do anything more than the bare minimum?

- Sound familiar?
- That's the System's way.

But the Jesus Way says... whatever you are doing, do it for Jesus.

- You aren't just the slave/employee of your boss... you belong to Jesus, so act like it.

With this mentality, even the most menial work becomes worship... a way to show the goodness and greatness of God and his love.

In the Jesus Way, work becomes worship.

B/c it's the HS in us who transforms it.

- It's not about faking energy—it's about asking the Spirit, "Show me what love looks like in this moment."

Slaves, didn't get to choose whether they worked. But they could choose their attitude—their heart, their effort.

They could settle for the bare minimum... like the system expects

- Or they could do something different...

- Something that said, 'I don't belong to my earthly master. I belong to Jesus.

What better way to show the difference Jesus makes than going above and beyond when you don't have to... when you know you might not even be seen.

Think about tomorrow—what would change if you saw your job not just as a paycheck, but as a way to bring the KoG to earth?

- Every meeting, every assignment, every interaction is a way to resist the System of the world and bring the love of Jesus to the world.

Remember telling someone... I think you might need to go into full-time ministry

- But Jon, I am doing this full time.

In Paul's world. Slaves being told to obey was normal... but what he says next was earth-shattering.

If you think slavery is horrible, it's b/c you have been taught to internalize what Paul says next... most likely not even knowing it comes from the Bible.

**Ephesians 6:9 Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.**

Masters treat your slaves in the same way...

- In what way? The MUTUAL SUBMISSION that is required in all JF relationships.
- Treat each other as you would treat Jesus himself.

Paul says: JF masters, submit to your slaves, because they matter just as much to your Master in heaven as you do.

God has no favorites. The same death Jesus died for you, he died for them.

- You both cost him the same amount... his life.

That's what it means to resist the System: using whatever influence we have—not for ourselves, but for others.

Ok, let's take a breath. That's a lot.

- Maybe you're wondering, "Will this even work in the real world?"
- In a world as loud, selfish, and dark as ours... does quiet submission actually make a difference?

And the answer—modeled by Jesus himself—is: 100% Every time.

Why? B/c it's not something we do in our own strength.

- The Spirit of God lives in every JF—and it's ONLY through His power that we live differently.
- He empowers the small choices,
- Shows us what love looks like
- And even gives us the strength to serve even when we're spent.

**Holy Spirit-empowered submission is the only kind of power that transforms the world instead of adding to its pain.**

**YOU:** So... what about you? What does all of this look like tomorrow morning?

What it most likely WON'T look like... is a huge dramatic change overnight.

- It won't look like immediate praise from those around you
- It won't look like an immediately easier life.

But it WILL look like peace, growth.

- Influence that doesn't come from a title/power... but from love.

It starts small and quiet... It's slow. It's daily. And it's intentional.

But it has completely changed the world.

- Brought down the System of the Roman Empire, and it has the power to do it again.

We can keep going with the flow, or we can start making a difference.

- We can start creating the world we want for ourselves and our families now.

So here's my invitation this week... 2 things. Simple. Small. And world-changing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill and guide you daily

- We don't have the strength to do this on our own
- So ask him to give you His heart, His power, His attentiveness to others.
- The same Spirit that transformed the first church is at work in you.

And then

Commit to submit: Use whatever influence you have to resist the System by submitting to others.

It can look like listening fully—with your kid, your spouse, your client—because Jesus listens to you.

- Thanking your barista by name, even when your drink was wrong.
- Choosing intention over performance in your parenting.
- Doing your job with excellence—even when your boss doesn't see it.

And for those in charge...

- Maybe it's letting go of control
- Or saying "I trust you" to the people under you
- Or giving credit instead of taking it...

**WE:** What if JFs weren't known for just trying to get by or fighting for their rights...

- But for improving every place and relationship they find themselves?

What if it wasn't just those on the margins who looked like Jesus...

But also the managers, the moms, the CEOs, and shift leaders, who used their power to lift others?



What if people thought we were crazy that we believe God died and rose again, but couldn't deny how well we loved them?

- "I might not believe what they believe.. But man, I hire every one of them I can...
- I love working for them.
- I hope my kid marries one of them someday."

What if we saw how we treated our families as beacons of God's love for the world?

- What would change?
- What could your future look like?

That is the life Jesus invites us to discover, enjoy, and share... together.

It's what we were created for from the beginning.

Submission doesn't erase us. It reveals us.

B/c... it's in serving others that we finally discover who we really are