

“The Christian Employee And Employer”

Ephesians 6:5-9

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Teaching Aim: To continue our study on submission from an employee/employer perspective as it relates to the slave/master relationship in the Bible. To encourage every believer to be a “*bondservant*” of Jesus Christ, not out of compulsion, but willingly out of a heart that desires to love and please Him. To see each Christian do his or her best at work, realizing it is the Lord Jesus Christ we are working for.

Part I: Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters (Eph. 6:5-8)

1. A bondservant is a person bound to service without pay; in other words, a slave! What are bondservants commanded to do in **verse 5**? Why? (**See Titus 2:9-10**) What did Paul mean when he instructed the Ephesians, “*with fear and trembling?*” According to the Bible, are slaves to be obedient to their masters even when they are abusive? Why or why not? (**See 1 Pet. 2:18-21**)

2. How does the Bible address the issue of slavery? Does the Bible speak out against slavery or does it remain neutral on the subject? (**See Ex. 21:16,26,27; Lev. 25:10; Deut. 23:15,16**)

3. What percentage of the population within the Roman Empire were slaves? (See Commentaries) Why was slavery so important to the economy of Rome? Sometimes the poor were forced to offer themselves as slaves because of a debt they could not pay. (**See Exod. 21:2-6; Neh. 5:1-5**) What do you think life would be like in America if people were forced into slavery today because of unpaid debts (credit cards; homes; the national deficit; etc.,)?

4. What is the slave/master relationship similar to today? Why? How is the employee/employer relationship different? What are some differences between capitalism and the economy of the Roman Empire? Which economy would you rather live under?

5. What did Paul mean when he encouraged the Ephesians not to be “*men-pleasers with eyeservice only*” (vs. 6)? Have you ever worked with a co-worker who only did their best when the boss was present? How is this different from being a bondservant of Jesus Christ? What do you think would happen to the Christian’s work ethics if we really believed that Jesus is our boss, and we are working for Him?

6. Webster’s Dictionary defines “*vocation*” as: “1) *A particular occupation, business, or profession; calling. 2) A divine call to God’s service or to the Christian life. 3) A function or station in life to which one is called by God.*” What is your vocation (or job) in life? Are you content with the vocation you are in? Do you consider your job, whatever that might be, to be a ministry from God? How have you used your job to minister to others in the past? What are some ways that you can better glorify God through your current job or ministry? (See Col. 3:23-24)

7. Why is it important to remember we are working “*as to the Lord, not men*” (vs. 7)? According to 1 Cor. 7:21-24, how should people respond to the job they are in when they come to Christ? Is there ever a time when a new Christian should quit his or her job? Is it wrong to better yourself by moving up the ladder into other jobs? Why or why not? How should coming to Christ affect your relationship with fellow workers and your boss?

8. Working in an ungodly environment can be tough on any Christian. What did God promise every believer in verse 8 who is doing his or her best to remain a godly example in an ungodly work environment? Have you ever had to deal with favoritism at work? If so, how did it affect you? According to the Bible, is there any favoritism with God? (See Rom. 2:11; Jam. 2:1-9)

Part II: Masters, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (Eph. 6:9)

1. According to Aristotle, “*slaves were no more than living tools.*” Is this the biblical view of slaves according to verse 9? What is one reason verse 9 gives for masters (or employers) to treat their slaves (employees) well? Will both employees and employers have to answer to God?

2. Why do you think this new relationship between Christian slaves and masters was uncomfortable at times within the early church? **(See Gal. 3:26-29)**

3. What book of the New Testament deals with the conversion and return of a runaway slave? Why was it crucial for the Apostle Paul to intervene in this crisis? What kind of a relationship did Paul have with Philemon and the church that met in his home? **(See Philemon 19)**

4. What did Paul offer to do on behalf of Onesimus? **(See Philemon 17-19)** The Book of Philemon is a wonderful illustration of *“the doctrine of imputation.”* *“Imputation”* is a banking term that means, *“to transfer from one account to another.”* What can we learn about the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ from these verses? What *“double imputation”* is required for our salvation?

5. If the ground is level at the foot of the cross, how should Christians of various social rankings treat each other at church? **(See Gal. 3:26-28)** How should believing employers and employees treat each other while on the job? **(See Col. 3:22-25)**

Part III: Being a Bondservant of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; Deut. 15:16-17; Psa. 40:6-8)

1. What could a slave in the Old Testament do if he loved his master and desired to be a bondservant for life? **(See Deut. 15:16-17; Psa. 40:6-8)** What did Paul refer to himself as in the following verses? **(See Rom. 1:1-4; Tit. 1:1)**

2. What is meant when we say someone is a bondservant of Christ? Why should every Christian desire to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ for life? Have you made the commitment to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ? If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

3. What are some ways that you can glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by being a better employee or employer?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna for today!*

- The biblical principles for the slave/master relationship lay the groundwork for our employee/employer relationships today.
- The way we perform at work either testifies for or against our Christian faith.
- The Christian worker should be the best employee at any company; he is ultimately working for Jesus Christ.
- The Christian employer should be fair and honest in his or her business dealings and in the care of any employees.
- Our vocation (*or job*) is a calling from God and should be used for His glory.
- The righteousness of Christ is an "*imputed righteousness*;" it is applied to our account by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Every Christian is called to be a bondservant (a willing servant) of Jesus Christ for life!