

The Christian Employee And Employer

Ephesians 6:5-9

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Lesson Aim: To continue our study on submission in family and work relationships and to understand the kind of employee/employer relationship that God desires for us to have. To encourage each person to be a “bondservant” of Jesus Christ, not out of compulsion, but willingly out of a heart that desires to love and to please Him.

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 according to verse 5? Why? (See **Titus 2:9**) What is meant by “*with fear and trembling?*” Is the slave to be obedient even to an abusive master? (See **1 Pet. 2:18-21**)
2. How does the Bible address the issue of slavery? Does the Bible speak out against slavery, or against it’s abuses? (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? Why was slavery so important to the overall welfare of the economy within the Roman Empire? Sometimes the poor were forced to offer themselves as slaves because of debts they couldn’t pay. (See **Exod. 21:2-6; Neh. 5:1-5**) What do you think life would be like in America today if people were forced into slavery because of unpaid debts (credit cards; homes; the national deficit; etc.,.)?
4. What modern relationship is the slave/master relationship most similar to in today’s economy? Why?
5. What does it mean to be a men-pleaser with eyeservice only (**vs. 6**)? Have you ever known a co-worker like this? In what way is it different to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ? What do you think would happen to our individual work ethics if we truly lived out our faith?

6. Webster's Dictionary defines vocation as: "1) A particular occupation, business, or profession; calling. 3) a divine call to God's service or to the Christian life. 4) A function or station in life to which one is called by God." What is "your" vocation (job) in life? Are you content with the vocation you are in? Do you consider your job as part of your ministry? In what way? How can you most glorify God in your current job or position? **(See Col. 3:23-24)**

7. Why is it important to remember we are doing our work "as to the Lord, not men" (vs. 7)? According to **1 Cor. 7:21-24**, how should people respond to the position they are in when they come to Christ? Is it wrong to better yourself and move ahead into other jobs? Why or why not? How should coming to Christ affect your relationship with fellow workers and your boss?

8. Sometimes working in an ungodly environment can be really tough. What promise does God give to the believer in verse 8 doing his or her best, even in a difficult environment at work? Have you seen favoritism among man? In what ways? Is there any favoritism with God?

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 according to verse 9? What is one reason verse 9 gives for masters (employers) to treat their slaves (employees) well? Why is this so important to the employer?

2. Why would the new Christian relationship between slaves and masters be uncomfortable 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)** This is an incredible illustration of "the doctrine of imputation". "Imputation" is a banking term that means, "to apply to one's account". How do these verses paint a beautiful picture of what

Christ did for us on the cross?

5. If indeed the ground is level at the foot of the cross, how should Christians in the various social ranks respond to each other in today's church? (See Gal. 3:26-28) How should Christians react 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 was a slave in the Old Testament to do if he loved his master and chose to be to be a bondservant for life? (See Deut. 15:16-17; Psa. 40:6-8) What does Paul refer to himself as in the following verses? (See Rom. 1:1-4; Tit. 1:1)
2. What does it mean to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ? Why should it be the desire of every Christian to be a bondservant of Christ? Have you made that commitment for yourself yet? If not, why not?
3. Make a list of some practical ways you can better serve Jesus Christ in the role of bondservant for life.

MINER'S CORNER – *Manna for today!*

- * The biblical principles for slave/master relationships lay the groundwork for employee/employer relationships today.
- * The way we do our work is a testimony either for or against our Christian faith.
- * The Christian worker should be the best employee in the business. The Christian employer should be the best boss, fair and honest in his or her business dealings and care of any employees.
- * Our vocation (*job*) is a calling from God and should be used for His glory.
- * The righteousness of Christ is "imputed righteousness" (applied to our account) through faith in Christ.

* Every Christian is called to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ for life!