

Ephesians 6:5-9

Walking in the Spirit - Employees and Employers

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Some people who have a problem with the Bible – love to bring up passages like this –

A) To say that the Bible condones wrong behavior!

B) But that is simply not true – The fact that the Bible mentions things like Polygamy, slavery or murder

1) Is not a statement of approval but of the reality that these things exist in a fallen world.

“The Bible is brutally honest about the human story. It’s awkward, messy, and weird. Why? Because people are awkward, messy, and weird. So, of course there are things like scandal, adultery, sexism, violence, Slavery and war. Because that’s what people do. The Bible is true to life. It doesn’t gloss over our imperfections. Nor is it just a book of abstract philosophical ideas. It confronts us in the mud and mess of life. It’s about real people with real issues, insecurities, weaknesses, and flaws.”
Dominic Done. “When Faith Fails.”

The Bible shows us humanity at its worst!

A) But also shows how things can be restored and put back together in Jesus!

B) Jesus can take the worst situation and Redeem it and transform it – into something amazing

It is also worth noting that in the OT Jewish world Slavery was different than in our History

A) Slaves were viewed more as the work force

B) In the Old Testament, Israelite regulations freed slaves every seventh year

1) Slaves would work for 7 years and then they were free to start a new life

C) Or they could Choose to become a bondservant

1) Special mark

In the NT and primarily under Roman Rule – Slavery was quite a bit different than Jewish world

A) Historians tell us that at the time of this writing there were as many as 60 Million slaves, In the Roman Empire

B) Most were not “slaves” from their birth, or for their whole life, or because of their race)

C) The Slaves were predominantly made up of prisoners of war!

D) They would have been killed if that were not made slaves –

E) So in some eyes slavery was seen as an act of mercy

Now some people have scoffed at the idea there were 60 million slaves –

A) Because there were not even 60 million people registered in the Roman Population at that time

B) The answer is simple – Slaves were not considered to be people –

1) Therefore they weren’t considered to be a part of the Population

C) In Roman law a slave was not a person but a thing; and he had absolutely no legal rights whatsoever

Aristotle wrote "There can be no friendship nor justice towards inanimate things; indeed, not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as a slave. For master and slave have nothing in common; a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave."

Roman Historian Varro tells how the Romans divided the instruments of agriculture into three classes

A) The articulate, the inarticulate & the mute,

B)"the articulate was represented by the slaves,

- 1)the inarticulate – the cattle,
- 2)and the mute - the vehicles. Carts & Plows

C)But it is also worth noting that Slaves were not just used for hard labor or menial tasks

- 1)Slaves were also - **Doctors, teachers, musicians, actors, and secretaries,**

D)In the Roman empire - Basically everyone who wasn't of some Political or Royal descent

- 1)Could be a Slave

Roman attitude was that there was no point in being master of the world and doing one's own work.

- A)So Let the slaves do that and let the citizens live in **pampered idleness.**

B)The supply of slaves MUST never run out.

C)It was a huge part of the Roman culture!

To be clear, slavery in any sense perverts God's created intention for human beings

- A)Creation, which tells us all humans are made equally in God's image-Genesis 1:26

B)Creation is essential to consider because it reveals God's original intent for the human race!

C)Also reveals how God's plan was wrecked by sin

"The Bible unsettles us, offends us, and then it sets us free. It ruthlessly deconstructs our idea of what a holy book should look like; it's shocking, scandalous, enraging, flagrantly putting on display the catastrophic effects of sin. But if we keep turning the pages, we'll fall in love with a God of extravagant healing and grace." Dominic Done. "When Faith Fails."

The gospel is essential because it reveals the ultimate trajectory of God's redemptive work.

- A)The gospel **EQUALLY** values all of humanity – every race tribe tongue and color!

B)Jesus died for ALL sinners – slave and Free

C)The gospel, tells us God overcame racial and social/ religious divisions at the cross

D)Through the work of Jesus – God is now creating one new Humanity – all people all nations

- 1)Made one in Christ

E)A classic example of this reality is seen in the book of Philemon

Philemon owned a slave named Onesimus

- A)Onesimus stole from his Master and ran away

B)Somehow Onesimus ends up arrested and in a Roman Prison – meets Paul who is also in prison

- 1)Onesimus comes to faith in Christ

C)When Onesimus' sentence is up – and he is being let Go! – Paul sends him back to Philemon

- 1)This letter – we call the book of Philemon

D)Paul in the letter instructs Philemon to receive Onesimus no longer as a Slave but as a dear bro

- 1)Paul says – receive him as you would me

In other words, Paul dissolves the slave/master relationship,

- A)And erects in its place a brother/brother relationship,

B)in which the former slave is treated with all the dignity with which the apostle himself would be treated.

C)Thus, even before the actual institution of slavery is abolished,

- 1)the work of the gospel abolishes the assumptions and prejudices that made slavery possible.

D)So with that as a backdrop let's consider how Paul would instruct – Slaves and Masters

- 1)In this society where it was the norm and represented the work force of the time

What Paul says to Slaves and Master – gives us insight into Employee / Employer relationships

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, **as to Christ**; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

A) Bondservants – Employees be obedient to your masters according to the flesh!

B) Obedient = to listen to, be attentive to, be submitted to.

C) You have a boss – show him respect the position deserves – with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart,

1) Not phony

Why? Because you are working first and for most for Jesus, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

A) Christian employee's should be the best workers in any company – THE REASON:

1) Working for Jesus first and foremost!

B) NOT to be a man pleaser – Boss is watching – better work hard

1) Always remembering the BIG BOSS –

C) THE LORD IS watching – always doing best – not cutting corners etc.

This is why I believe that Christians should be the best and Hardest workers – every company

A) Might not be the most talented – but we should have the best Reputations -

B) We are Working for the Lord –

C) Whole new Approach – Don't just work for the paycheck – or work hard when the boss is around

D) Christians should be the Most loyal – the Most honest – Most trust worthy

1) Not cutting corners

D) I WANT TO PLEASE GOD – I WANT TO GLORIFY HIM!

1) Why I exist – He saved me grateful - Response

Colossians 3:22-24 ²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. ²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the

reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Amazing thought – Eternal reward... good worker!

A) We usually don't think along those lines – but we really should

B) See the Bible is clear we all are given a stewardship- we are stewards of something
1) Sphere of influence – resources – time –

C) Your occupation would also fall into that category

² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful – 1 Corinthians 4:2

D) You will be rewarded for being a good steward of what the Lord has placed in your hands!

So as an employee – We are working not for the boss – little B – but the BIG BOSS – JESUS

A) NOT AS men pleasers but as God pleasers

B) God is glorified when we are loyal, faithful and hardworking

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5:14-16

C) God is glorified in your work ethic – you shine for Christ – when you are a good worker – GOAL

The sad thing about this is I know some employers who tell me – never hire a Christian again.

A) Lazy – expect breaks - always talking – witnessing at work?

B) Not being a good steward –

1) Build relationships and talk with people are your own time

C) You can earn the respect to be heard by your boss or fellow employees – have a good work ethic

D) So first Paul addresses – Bondservants or employees

MASTERS – Employers

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. NLT

A) Treat your employees the same way – Respect dignity –

B) Don't threaten – that was a new concept – new idea – the heavy and normal

C) Paul is advocating a whole new way of approaching others – dignity and respect

D) We are all the same – in God's eyes

Colossians 4:1 Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. NLT

A) Once again the idea of stewardship is in play here

B) Not just a steward of a company or a project but you are a steward of the lives – under you.

C) The example that Jesus sets for all Leaders is that of Servant leadership

There was a time in Jesus ministry Mark 9 – Disciples were arguing – THE GREATEST
³³ Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” ³⁴ But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who *would be the* greatest. ³⁵ And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” Mark 9:33-35

Top down leadership was the norm in that culture even as it is in our culture.

A) You have a leader – he gives the orders – he sets the vision – he calls the shots – **the other people are there to serve and carry out his vision.**

B) That is Top down leadership

1) That is how it worked in that culture – and that is how it works in MOST PLACES day!

Jesus is not against leadership - Leadership is essential

A) But JESUS describes a different kind of

leadership

B) And What Jesus describes here can be applied in a Home- a Church – Your business – friendships

C) If you Get this: If you do - You will be someone others love to **work for.** – Others love to **work with**

Jesus says:

You want to be great? – You want to be first?

A) Servant leadership:

B) The word translated “servant” is *diakonos* (the word sometimes used to refer to a **table waiter**).

Marks of a good waiter / waitress

A) They are constantly looking to serve the people who they are taking care of.

B) Their eyes are always looking to try and anticipate what the people would need next. Waiter with ICE TEA example.

C) To have a heart of a servant is to always look for ways to serve people without them even asking for the help.

D) Matthew 20:28 – Jesus said about himself
²⁸ The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

A) Jesus took everything that He had – everything that He was – God in human flesh / Perfect...

B) He leveraged all of that – for the sake of others.

C) See the **Bible pictures mankind – all of us – as being in Bondage to sin / Satan**

1) Because - We all have sinned – missed the mark – fallen short of the glory of God

D) Sin left us in bondage: We are not sinners because we sin – we sin because we are sinners

1) Engrained in us. - Pride – addictions – anger – Jealousies – WHO WE ARE.

E) Fallen people – broken people – flawed Sinners

The Bible says that in that condition – we were doomed in our destiny – spend eternity in hell.

A) Plight of every man and every woman – because we have all sinned.

B)Philippians 2 Jesus humbled himself – He steps off the throne –

1)Leaves the place where he is worshipped

C))He lowers himself – and comes to earth as a baby..... man

He lives a perfect life – NOT to throw it in our face and say – SEE IT CAN BE DONE.

A)The whole thing is a rescue mission – The whole thing is about paying a ransom

B)He allows himself to be arrested – beaten – crucified – PAY THE PRICE – FOR US!

C)Gave himself a Ransom for Many – HE WAS the only one who could do that.

He leveraged all that He was – and all that He had for the benefit of others.

A)That is what a servant leader does. – You leverage your position, assets your power – benefit of others

B)You leverage your time, your resources, your talents, your position –

1)to help those you are working with – accomplish their goals.

C)New Amsterdam TV Show – HOW CAN I HELP

How can I use my position, my resources, my influence to help you accomplish your goals!

A)Servant leader seeks to come under others – make them Shine – make them better

B)You learn to do that and you will be someone others love to work for!