

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Glorifying God in the Workplace

Let as many Bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

At the time the Apostle Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, half the population of the Roman Empire -- about sixty million people -- were slaves.

A) Some of them had been taken as prisoners of war by the Roman legions.

B) But Slavery at the time of Paul's writing was very different than what we are familiar with in U.S. History.

C) The slavery practiced here was tragically racist where as in Rome – anyone could be a slave –

1) It has more to do with Economics and Politics than anything else.

D) Some slaves were highly educated, literate men and women.

1) A few of them became secretaries to leading Romans dignitaries.

The Slaves were basically the working class of Rome

A) Slavery was for some preferred to freedom because of the security that came with it.

B) It is also worth noting that selling oneself into slavery was a means of gaining Roman citizenship in that day.

C) Even though a slave remained his masters possession, he could own property, including his own slaves.

1) A slave could also invest & save to purchase his own freedom.

D) Most slaves were free by or before the age of 30

Having said all of that the Bible does not condone slavery.

A) Passages like this sound as though slavery was accepted in the Bible

B) The Bible simply addresses Slavery as a known fact of the Society of the times

C) But here's what is interesting: although there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire at the time this letter was written, by the end of the second century slavery had widely disappeared,

D) That was largely because of the impact of Christian teaching and the influence of Christians throughout the Empire.

The church itself was a place where slavery was destroyed.

A) Paul said in Gal 3:28 *In Christ there is neither slave nor free.*

B) It was not uncommon for a master and a slave to go to church together.

1) where the slave would be **an elder in the church**, and the master expected to submit to the slave's spiritual leadership!

C) Such radical thinking was an offense to many, but glorified God and eventually destroyed slavery.

Now we don't practice slavery today – but we are a people who are under authority

A) First to God – then to the people that God has placed in our lives.

B) Big on that list is the people that we work for.

1) Self employed it would be the customers you serve

2) Work is a big part of our lives. Statistics indicate that the average worker who retires will have worked 90,000 hours of his or her life. That's 45 years of 40-hour weeks

C) And what Paul writes to the Slave in the NT is applicable to us today **in the Work Place**

1) It is God's desire that we would Glorify Him in the WORKPLACE!

C) Focus of our consideration this morning!

V.1 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.

In V.1 the Focus is on the Non Christian employer

A) Paul says treat your masters with Honor

B) **NLT – Full Respect**

1) Respect the position even if you can't respect the person.

C) **REASON:** That the name of God and His word may not be Blasphemed.

Paul wants them & us to see the bigger Picture:

A) Believers' attitudes and behavior in their daily relations at work affect how people perceive God

B) **Your Work ethic affects your witness!**

C) Some Christians have been described as being so heavenly minded they are no earthly good.

1) All they care about is Bible study, evangelism, worship and prayer.

D) They fail to realize that God wants them to function in Society in a way that pleases him.

British Scholar Phillip Tower tells of how he and some friends fell into the mindset that practical things really didn't matter.

A) He hadn't been saved long – **He was in the British armed forces**

B) **He and his new found Christian friends decided that they didn't need to concern themselves with the mundane rules & regulations of the military.**

C) Things like having their boots shined and their Uniforms pressed **seemed trivial**

1) So they neglected them

D) Here is what happened in his own words:

“ Our superiors quickly made a connection between our new faith and our sloppy appearance; suddenly our Christianity was in danger of being linked with our insubordination.” Phillip Towner

I heard about a employer who was becoming very frustrated with 2 employees who were Christians

A) All they wanted to do was stand around and fellowship all the time.

B) His patience came to an end when one of them went into the bathroom & didn't come out for 20 minutes

C) Over heard the one telling the other **“ I just had the greatest time – 3 Chapters of the gospel of John while in the John.**

D) That was it – They were gone – He didn't want to hire a Christian ever again.

Now those cases might be a little on the extreme but we have had people call the Church to complain about workers who have come to their home

A) IN the course of the conversation: **Christian and I go to CCV – They did lousy work !**

1) Or they didn't do what they said they were going to do. { **Didn't cost what it said it would cost**

B) Or they didn't complete their Job

1) That just grieves my heart – Reflects bad on me – reflects bad on the Church

C) Most of all it reflects bad on the Lord.

Your work is attached to your witness

A) People are going to frame their view of God – there view of Christians – w/ how your work!

B) As Christians our Light is constantly in view

1) But if you are a disrespectful lousy worker – It ruins your light.

C) But if you are a great worker – Respectful – Light shines bright and clear –

1) Happy to have you around – God is glorified

D) Students from here working at Vista Ice Box

1) Owner made a point to tell me – they are all great workers – So blessed! { Don't know if she is a believer

All experienced being in the Mts on a clear day: See bright blue sky -the stars at night — Praise the Lord

A) A good worker allows those he/she works with to clearly see the Lord

B) But we have also experienced driving down the MT into thick smog layer

1) Down into the Smog – Everything Fades

C) That is what happens when our **work ethic doesn't match our faith** –

1) It is like being down in the smog! – It totally gets in the way of anyone seeing the Lord.

So to those who are working for Non Christian Bosses – See the Big Picture

A) Your Work Ethic affects your Witness

B) V.2 The Focus is on having a Christian Employer

1) Point: **Remember that they are Brothers/Sisters**

And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

C) The word despise here can mean **to think little of them.** { Don't under Value them

1) Don't think little of them because they are brothers/ sisters in the Lord

See here is what can happen! 3 Problems

A) The Grace thing: Take advantage on the basis of Grace.

B) Late: they will be gracious to me he is a brother.

C) Personal stuff on Company time: They will be gracious.

1) Talking to long on the Phone.

D) Young guy in our Church in Oregon – His wife called him 10 times a day – HELLO

That is the grace mentality: Everything is cool because it is all about Grace -

2) Bro Problem: Similar - give me a break, cut me some slack bro!

A) Fully taking advantage of the fact that person is a believer.

3) The Lord is leading me Problem: Your Christian boss gives you an assignment – do something else

A) “ I just felt the Lord was leading me in this other direction Bro!

B) That totally contradicts the scriptures – See the HS is not going to lead you in a direction that contradicts those over you –

C) Scriptures say you are to Submit to them!

Don't take advantage of your Brother in the Lord – don't devalue their position – don't despise them

A) When they are hard on you for slacking don't cop an attitude - *I thought he was a Christian*

B) I know guys who have been so burned by this type of thing that they really think twice before hiring Christians –

C) That shouldn't be the case ! Our work ethic should be the best !

D) One thing that should motivate us according to what Paul says here:

1) We get to see a brother benefit for our Labor.

Now remember Timothy is the Pastor of the Church in Ephesus –

A) This isn't the first time that Paul wrote to the Ephesians about this issue. { Turn to Eph 6:5-8

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 eye-service, 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.

B) So To the Church in Ephesus Paul says Don't be a man pleaser!

C) Man pleaser is one who works hard when the Boss is watching.

1) But takes it easy when he is not watching

D) PE class doing Push ups! – Teacher looking

1) Not looking – rest

Don't be like that – That is a MAN PLEASER

A) You remember that God is always watching You.

B) According to Paul that is the Key !

1) Work for Christ – You are a worker for Jesus

Col. 3:23 - Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

Work is a physical effort with a spiritual dimension

A) Even though work is physical activity, it has a lot to say about our relationship to God.

B) It reveals our Character – our integrity and the degree to which we are submitted to the Spirit.

In Closing today – I want to come back to why the Bible doesn't really attack the subject of Slavery

A) Reason: Focus of the Bible was not on Physical Slavery or any other social problem

B) But rather the focus was on the Problem that was behind slavery and every other social problem – Sin!

C) See a person could be **totally free in a Physical sense** – And yet still be in bondage

1) **Bondage to sin – Guilt that comes with it.**

That is what the Bible is most concerned with – Seeing people get set free from sin / Guilt

A) That is why Jesus came – Set people free

B) **Some slaves to riches** { Hughes most miserable

1) Slaves to bitterness & unforgiveness

2) Slaves to Alcohol or Drugs

3) Slaves to Power

C) List could go on & on !

1) Africa – “Be Free brother – food, worry”

D) **Tony ex marine** – So bound up – Be free

Jesus says the same thing: I want you to be free

A) Social reform happens when – Spiritual reform takes place

B) Problems in our country: Not better laws & leaders – that helps some – VOTE

C) What we need is a **REVIVAL**

D) What we are about – seeing people be set free – one person at a time

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 8:35-36

.³⁶ Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

YOU TODAY!