

Heaven in Your Job: The Role & Responsibilities of Employees and Employers

Ephesians 6:5-9

INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul wrote our text to show how Christian workers and bosses should treat each other. **Granted, it is addressed to slaves and masters, not to employees and employers.** And it is here that we need to address the elephant in the room, namely **slavery**.

Slavery in the Roman world was not the same as slavery in the American context. One of the differences is that there was a wide spectrum of experiences as a slave. **On one end,** the horrors and abuses that we hear and read about were real. Slaves were treated as mere possessions and considered human tools for any trade needed. **On the other end,** slaves were educated, sometimes owned their own property, and even owned their own slaves.

Slavery then was not the same type of institution as the Transatlantic Slave Trade that affected so many people and has a left a deep wound on our history. The slavery that existed in Paul's day was different from the slavery that we think of. It's very difficult to read a passage about slavery because our minds immediately go to the African slave trade from the 17th to 19th centuries. In fact, people have taken this passage and others to justify the slave trade. But the slavery in Paul's day is different from the one that usually comes to our mind.

How?

- It was _____.
- It was _____.
- It involved different _____.
- It led to economic _____.

Paul may not have issued a call to revolt but through the gospel (and his writings) he plants the seeds that would change social settings. Please don't miss this **truth: slaves and masters are sitting in church together!**

This letter would have been read by an elder and in Paul's mind sitting side by side would be slaves and masters. **That is rather remarkable.** One thing that is often overlooked by critics of Christianity is the extent to which the church has been the context and vehicle of massive social change. **No reasonable historian would question the fact that the early church was the most radically inclusive social body that had ever existed in human history.** Women were treated as full members and as equals, children were accorded worth, and dignity and SLAVES participated side by side with wealthy land owners. **The church should always be a place where the hierarchies of the world are left aside at the door as we sit together as slaves of Christ under the authority of His Sovereign Word.**

So, walking worthy of the gospel, walking in love, walking in the Light, and being careful how you walk (Eph 4:1; 5:1, 8, 15), not only affects our relationships in the body of Christ, in marriage, and the family, but also in the work life.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus does not automatically mean that you enter vocational ministry or that you isolate yourself in a Christian commune or that you radically alter your state of life or that your circumstances improved. Instead, the faithful evidence of Christ in our lives is to bear testimony, right where we are, of the gospel's power.

The effects of the Christian living in the Spirit's fullness include marriage, home, and our work.

I. A word to _____...that's _____
for you and me today, those under _____
structures (6:5-8)

Here's a helpful truth: **work is not ultimately about me getting someone else to do what I want but about me serving someone else in the name of Jesus.**

A. _____ (6:5a)

B. _____ (6:5b)

C. _____ (6:6a)

D. _____ (6:6b-8)

II. A word to _____...that's _____,
_____ for you and me today (6:9)

Grammatically it appears that Paul is here giving one command with two related motivations. The command is simply **this: stop your threatening! Be a servant not a tyrant!**

The same way that slaves served, masters were to serve in their areas of responsibilities. The same way that slaves did their work with fear and trembling, conscientious of pleasing Christ, so were also the masters to do. The same single-mindedness, the same kind of desire to do the will of God from the heart as in the slaves was to be in the masters. Masters were not to do their actions to get stroked by others but to do all to the glory of God.

So those supervising or managing or owning a business, likewise, are not to use their position to lord over others. Instead, you must treat those under you as though you were treating Christ. Speak to them as though speaking to Him. Show kindness to them as though showing it to Him. Exercise your responsibilities as though unto Christ.

Paul reminds masters, bosses, managers, and supervisors, ***“knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”*** You will have no higher status before Christ because of the title that you wear. **The field is level before His throne.** A day of answering—and reckoning comes regardless of your status. Don't throw away the glory of future hope and reward for the momentary, transient acts of office tyranny. Christ has more for us in the ultimate than any company in the penultimate. So, whether employer or employee, the Holy Spirit's fullness enables you to focus on the ultimate while taking care of the penultimate.

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? Here's a summary statement: **Our work lives testify to the gospel.**

Allow me to leave you with some practical truths from our study in God's word:

To those under authority structures:

- **Treat your managers or supervisors with deep _____.**
- **Do your work from the _____ and with a good _____.**
- **Don't perform _____ to make a good impression.**
- **Give God's will top _____ in your life and work.**
- **Let us remember that the Lord _____ us to do good work, _____ when we do them and will _____ all that we have done in Christlike manner.**

To employers, supervisors and all who manage:

- **Exercise the _____: treat others like you'd like to be treated. Set the _____ and not the _____.**

If you want respect, show respect. If you want sincerity, be sincere. If you want conscientiousness, you be the same. If you want pleasantness, model pleasantness. Promote the welfare of those you manage as you expect them to promote yours. Show the same interest in them and in their affairs as you hope they will show in you and your affairs.

- **Avoid _____.**

For all in authority positions, the crucial thing to remember is that you, too, are under authority. All managers are answerable to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself for every decision they make and how they treat their personnel. Every boss, supervisor, manager and employer is accountable to the Lord.