

SERMON OUTLINE

In Ephesians 6:5-9 Paul concludes his teaching on mutual submission by giving 2 commands concerning the roles of slaves and masters.

- I. Slaves must obey your masters.
 - A. How?
 1. With respect (v. 5a-b).
 2. With a sincere heart (v. 5c).
 3. As you would Christ (v. 5d).
 - a. Negatively (v. 6a, b).
 - b. Positively (vs. 6b, c-7).
 - B. Why?
 1. You will be rewarded (v. 8a, b).
 2. Your social status will not affect your reward (v. 8c).
- II. Masters must treat their slaves well (v. 9a).
 - A. How? Stop threatening them (v. 9b).
 - B. Why?
 1. They serve the same heavenly Master as you (v. 9c).
 2. Your Master favors no earthly status (v. 9d).
(v. 9d).

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, August 27, 2017

Passage: Ephesians 6:5-9

Memory Passage: Ephesians 6:5-9 (Review 1:1-6:4)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Eph. 6:5-9:** Preliminary Considerations: First, the ESV update of 2011 changes the translation of the Greek word δούλος (*doulos*) from “slave” to “bondservant” in this and other passages. Though I agree that it is a difficult decision to make, with strong arguments on both sides, I disagree with this change and think “slave(s)” remains the best translation. As it is beyond the scope of this devotional to explain my reasoning, I will do so during the sermon on Sunday.

(b) Second, we have before us 2 important preliminary questions: “Does the Bible condone slavery?” and “How does this passage apply to us today who are not slaves or masters?” Again, we don’t have the room to fully explain the answer to these questions as I will on Sunday, but in short my answers are: “No, the Bible does not condone slavery. It assumes the existence of slavery and instructs believers how to live both as people under authority (slaves) and as people who exercise authority (masters),” and “This passage applies to us in our work relationships as employees and employers/managers because Paul addresses those who are under “earthly masters” (lit. “masters according to the flesh”).”

(c) Third, though our understanding of slavery is irreversibly informed by the slave trade in American history, it was a bit different in the first century (again, much more on this during our sermon on Sunday). Between 30-35% of the 1st century population were slaves, and they included vocations such as doctors, teachers, and accountants at one end of the spectrum and agricultural slaves (very similar to what we think of as slavery from our history in the US) and miners (the worst of all possible enslavement) at the other end. Slavery in the 1st century had no racial component. Those enslaved as POWs might have been of the same race, but they were enslaved because they were enemies, not because they were of a certain race. Slaves in this time would have expected to be emancipated after a certain period of time. **This is not an argument for slavery in any form, only a recognition of the differences.**

(d) Explain Paul’s description of slaves’ obedience being “with fear and trembling” (cf. 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil 2:12)?

(e) Explain what “sincere heart” obedience *does not* look like (“by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers”).

(f) Explain what “sincere heart” obedience *does* look like (“as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man”).

(g) What is the motivation Paul provides for slaves obeying earthly masters in this way (v. 8)?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Eph. 6:5-9.** To what does “do the same to them” refer (i.e. what are masters to “do the same” to slaves)?

(b) In what ways can/do/did masters “threaten” their slaves? What good would this do? What good would stopping this do?

(c) What is the motivation Paul provides for masters to treat their slaves in this way?

(d) What would have been the reaction of the 1st century church to these commands? In what ways would disobeying them affect the body life of the church? To ask it another way, in what ways would obeying them affect the body life of the church?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Eph. 6:5-9, Col 3:22-4:1, & Tit. 2:9-10.** Write down everything you learn in Col. 3:22-4:1 & Tit. 2:9-10 that further explains and helps apply Paul’s teaching in Eph. 6:5-9.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Eph. 6:5-9 & 1 Pet. 2:18-25.** Write down everything you learn in 1 Pet. 2:18-25 that further explains and helps apply Paul’s teaching in Eph. 6:5-9.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Eph. 6:5-9.** Consider all you have learned this week and write out 2 “job descriptions,” one for a Christian slave/employee/subordinate and the other for a Christian master/employer/supervisor. Ensure that each description includes at least 5 action points that are practical and easily applied. One example might be, “Employees, you must obey your boss at all times, not just when he/she can see what you are doing.”

DATE: August 27, 2017

PASSAGE: Ephesians 6:5-9

Slaves & Masters