

Bringing God to Work With Me

Ephesians 6:5-9

Who is a "bondservant"?

**ESV** preface – "... doulos, ... a term ... that covers a range of renderings – either "slave, bondservant, or servant," --depending upon context. Further, the word "slave" as currently [understood] carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery in nineteenth-century America... In OT times, one might enter slavery voluntarily (pay off debt) or involuntarily (captured in battle, or judicial sentence). In the NT, bondservant is someone bound to service of his master, usually for a lengthy time, but who also might nevertheless still own property, achieve social advances, and even be released by purchase of his own freedom."

1. How can the passage apply to us today since Paul's instruction is for a context no longer, literally, present?

Eph 6:5-9 Bondservants ["doulos"], obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, <sup>6</sup> not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in *heaven*, and that there is no partiality with him. (ESV)

## Are there not many relationships today that are bound by agreements, rewarded by pay or volunteer?

## Modern day applications:

- 1. Employers ("masters") and employees ("bondservants")
- 2. Teachers and students
- 3. Organizational leaders and volunteers
- 4. Coaches and athletes
- 5. Government officials and citizens
- 6. Etc. Etc.

Is Paul endorsing slavery? How could he be since he also wrote these passages? Scripture is the best interpreter of itself.

- 1 Tim. 1:9-10 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the *ungodly and sinners*, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, *enslavers*, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, (ESV). [Not like 19<sup>th</sup> century chattel slavery in America.]
- 1 Cor 7:21-24
- Gal. 3:28-29

2. How does this passage instruct believers today, whether serving or leading? Am I really to "bring the Lord to work with me"?

Result, outcome, of being filled with the HS. V5:18, 21.

- A. Reframes work as worship. "As to Christ." v5.
- B. Reframes how I value my job and how I do my job. Heart-felt, best effort, with integrity. V5-6. Rom 12:1-2
- C. Reframes the One I seek to impress. It is the eye of Christ under which I serve. V7-8. John 7:18
- D. Reframes what it means to be the "boss." "... do the same to them..." v9.



• V7 rendering service with a good will as to the *Lord* and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. 9 And masters do the same thing... and give up threatening..."

3. What does it mean for those in authority to "do the same to them, and stop threatening"? V9.

## My authority:

- As unto Christ. I am "in-charge," on behalf of Christ.
- 2. My position is a gift from God, a stewardship.
- 3. The love of God in me is the source of truly caring about people from my heart (rather than seeing them as "pawns" to move around for my profit). Tough love?!
- 4. How I lead matters it is unto God. With integrity, respect, fairness with grace, without intimidation.
- 5. I am an instrument of good— a hand of divine favor. God sees and knows the intent of my heart. The Lord will judge me for my service.

- 4. What if my present place of service is with a "difficult" boss (or employee)? What should I do?
  - Eph 6:8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.
  - 1 Pet. 2:18-21



"Knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And masters do the same thing... and give up threatening..." Eph 6:9

Have you ever considered that having an overbearing, unfair boss, is actually worth it? God always "balances life"-- in eternity. Your eternal reward will redeem your present suffering! 2 Cor 4:17, 1 Pet 5:10

Eph. 5:28 ... He *who loves his wife loves himself*. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but *nourishes and cherishes it*, just as Christ does the church... 6:8 knowing ... this he will *receive back from the Lord*... (ESV)



## Call to Action:

- A. Will you choose today to change the way you are thinking about your workplace/classroom?
  Repentance is when we turn from our way to God's way. Will you do that today by reframing the way you think?
- B. Do you have any co-workers/classmates that you think you have responded to in an ungodly way? Gossiped about? Isolated from your "space"? Will you, likewise, choose to go the way of God so far as you are concerned in your relationships at work?

Leading as Jesus led – the opposite of intimidation, dominion, domination or preferential:

- Matt. 20:25-26 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,
- Jn. 13:13-15 "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. <sup>14</sup> "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.