

Employees and Employers

Ephesians 6:5-9

12/1/02

Intro

- I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving.
- There's still plenty to do to complete the building. We'll make calls out to those who have signed up as volunteers.

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Before we go back to our study in Ephesians, I wanted to take a little bit of time and address Christmas. I myself find Christmas to be one of the best seasons of the year, and we all celebrate it in many different ways. But I wanted to discuss Christmas because it's important for us to respect each other as we decide *how* we will choose to celebrate. Some choose to have a Christmas tree, some believe it's wrong. Some allow Santa Claus as part of Christmas, others believe he should not be included, some buy presents, and others believe it only contributes to the commercialism of Christmas. Each one believes he is right.

The scriptures does address these types of situations in the book of Romans 14: 2- 23. Let each one be convinced in his own mind, but most important of all, please let us not judge one another for how we choose to celebrate. Each one is indeed convinced that his/her way is best, but let us "not tear down the work of God" for the sake of ...

I am of course speaking to Christians.

Illus – We sent Christmas cards out one year and received a letter back that they were offended that we included Jesus in our card. For us, that's the bottom line. It's Jesus, or there is no Christmas.

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This week we pick back up where we left off in Ephesians. We are under the verses that are a follow-up to verse 5:18 and 21. We have been studying different relationships where there is a specific submitting aspect. We've looked at marriage, parents

and children, and now in these verses we look at what God has to say about employees and employers.

These verses actually refer to slaves and masters, and indeed some historians have said that almost half of the population in the Roman controlled areas was slaves. Without making comment whether this practice is right or wrong, the Lord addresses how a person should behave as a Christian in either the role of slave or master. For some, this was the only way to provide for their families, and was in many ways similar to what we used to call company towns.

Praise God that this practice is almost completely non-existent around the world. Today, we see that these same principles apply to us as either employees or employers.

These then are the principles of mutually submitting in employee and employer relationships. (BTY, this reminds us to pray for those who are out of work, we need to stand together in prayer for each of them.)

I. Employees, be obedient to those who are your supervisors.

Illus – **This is a problem all over the world. I remember one of my first trips to Russia where we all were amazed at the lack of care that we saw in many workers. Finally, I asked someone about this and he explained it, "They pretend to pay us, so we pretend to work."**

A. Work in the sincerity of your heart as to Christ.

- Paul is saying that the way we work is a reflection on our faith, that the name of Jesus can be defamed if we slack in our work.
- Paul first says that we should work with sincerity of heart, *as if we were working for Christ*. That helps us understand much better.

Illus – we are to work as if we were working for Christ Himself!!! That is when the name of Christ is honored most, not by how much time we spend witnessing.

In China, there were drivers of rice trucks that would come in from the farms, drive across the scales, empty their load, and then drive back over the scales again. The problem was that some would put rocks in with the rice...

B. Let us not work only doing “eye-service.”

- What does “eye-service” mean? There are two different possibilities;
 - One is by working hard only when the supervisor is around.

Illus – I remember when I was in the restaurant business and went from cook to manager, I was able to see the difference from both perspectives.

Illus – There was a foreman in Africa who had many African nationals working under him. He found that they were afflicted with this same problem of “eye-service.” However, he was the proud owner of a glass eye and found that he could take it out and place it on a stump...

- The second meaning is that we can do “eye-service” by being double minded. It’s what Paul calls “men pleasing.”
 - This refers to people who play political games and pretending to be one way with the boss, but not meaning it at all.

C. The word *slave* is actually “bond-servant.”

- This has a very specific meaning in the Greek. It refers to being a servant by choice, from the heart.
- Paul says to, “Do the will of God from your heart.” What is the will of God here? Your work!!

D. Know that the Lord is the One who is the rewarder of those who are faithful.

II. Employers/ supervisors, do the same thing to them.

A. This is the point of mutually submitting.

- You should honor and respect those who work for you.

Illus – And Paul’s words apply here to supervisors; supervise as unto the Lord. How many managers have you had to work for that treated people disrespectfully? I’ve had bosses who literally yelled at me simply because I was the closest one nearby.

- The most effective manager is the one who listens to his people. They are the ones who are the most involved in processes. Listen and everyone wins.

B. Give up threatening.

- He is referring here to those who threaten to fire people, or some other form of punishment.

Illus – in the “old” days, employers used to be able to dock worker’s wages at their discretion. This was used as a constant threat over their heads.

C. Know that their Master and yours is in heaven.

- God is “no respecter of persons” as the scripture says; this means that is no favoritism with God.
- He is not impressed with riches, or power, or any such thing.

Illus – Some people believe they can separate their faith from their business. Some say, “I’m a businessman who happens to be a Christian;” how much better to say, *I’m a Christian, who happens to be a businessman.*

D. God is the One who will bring justice in each situation.

6. Do better quality work than they expect.
7. Be honest. This is one of the most important qualities of a good worker.
8. No surprises. Don’t withhold important information only because it’s negative.

Conclusion

There are several examples of those who were faithful to the Lord in their positions as servants and the Lord blessed them in great ways. Joseph and Daniel are two of the greatest examples.

The scripture says, “whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all to the glory of Christ.”

III. Keys to being a good and godly employee.

1. Work as unto the Lord.
2. Be a problem solver, not a problem creator.
3. Keep control of your attitude. Many employers find this to be one of the most valuable attributes because it’s contagious both ways.

Illus – The scripture says, “He who can rule over his own spirit is greater than the one who can rule over a city.”

4. Make their priorities **your** priorities; don’t come up with priorities that are not consistent with theirs.
5. Do more than is expected of you.