

Contra Mundum
Godly Relationships
Ephesians 6:5-9
July 5, 2015

...knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

-Ephesians 6:8

I. SLAVES TO MASTERS (vs. 5-7)

- Slavery was universal in antiquity. Every society practiced it and virtually no one questioned it (Florentius, *Institutes*—c. AD 150; *Between Slavery and Freedom* by W.L. Westerman; *Daily Study Bible* by W. Barclay).
- Slavery was accepted in Scripture, but never condoned (1 Cor. 7:23; Philemon 1; 1 Peter 2:18-19; Rev. 18:11-13).
- As children were to obey parents, slaves were to obey masters. They were to work for their master as if they were working for the Lord (Vs. 7; Col. 3:24).
- Christian slaves were to respect Christian masters (1 Tim. 6:2).

II. MASTERS TO SLAVES (vs. 9)

- Masters were to care for those under their authority, just as Christ does the church, husbands their wives, and parents their children (Eph. 5:25-6:4).
- Masters must understand that they too are slaves, as are all believers. Slaves were to be treated properly (Vs. 9; Col. 4:1; 1 Peter 2:16).

III. THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES (vs. 8)

- The gospel is at stake in our behavior (Gal. 2:14; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:4).
- Paul's first priority was always the gospel. Everything, including human joy, took a backseat to the proclamation of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:12; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:12-14; 2 Tim. 1:8; Titus 2:9-10).
- We work in this life for God, not for man. It is God who rewards our labors, and he does so impartially (Matt. 6:1-6; 16:27; Rom. 2:5-11; 1 Cor. 3:10-15).

KNOW: We are to serve others in authority over us with good will, knowing that we work for the Lord, not for men. We live before an audience of One, and we are to be intent on pleasing Him, not those around us.

DO: Work hard in all you do for the Lord.

Suggested Reading:

The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**Questions/Discovery Points for
Life Groups/Families**

Please read Ephesians 6:5-9

1. Are you concerned at all about the Bible not calling for the end of slavery, or allowing polygamy in the O.T., or other social issues not “in step” with modern ways of thinking?
2. Read Eph. 6:5-6 again. How might this apply to those of us who serve in an authority structure in the work place? What does this mean for those who have difficult bosses? Who work for less than they think they deserve? Who work in situations where they are trusted to do their work without being under the watchful eye of their employer?
3. How are we to understand rewards and lack of rewards in heaven for believers? Do we receive rewards, or is salvation the only reward we hope to receive? Will some saints in heaven “have” more than other saints? (See Matt. 6:1-24 & 1 Cor. 3:10-15).
4. If you own a business with employees or are given a position of authority over employees, what does our text for Sunday say to you?
5. How would you honestly answer these questions: What's more important to you, your happiness or the gospel? Your position now in life or your position in heaven?