

## Work for the Lord<sup>1</sup>

May 28, 2023

Ephesians 6:5-9

*Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; <sup>6</sup> not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.<sup>9</sup> And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that <sup>[a]</sup>your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

**Ephesians 6:5-9**

The word “servants” undoubtedly refers to Christian slaves, but we may certainly apply these words to the Christian employee today. There were probably 6 million slaves in the Roman Empire in that day, and slavery was an accepted institution. Nowhere in the New Testament is slavery *per se* attacked or condemned, though the overall thrust of the Gospel is against it. Paul’s ministry was not to overthrow the Roman government or any of its institutions, but to preach the Gospel and win the lost to Christ. Certainly the results of his evangelism ultimately led to the overthrow of the Roman Empire, but that was not Paul’s main motive. Just as the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield resulted in the abolition of slavery and child labor, the elevation of women, and the care of the needy, so Paul’s ministry contributed to the death of slavery and the encouragement of freedom. However, he was careful not to confuse the social system with the spiritual order in the church (1 Cor. 7:20–24).

Paul admonished the servants to be obedient, with several good reasons. First, they were really serving Christ. True, they had “masters according to the flesh,” but their true Master was in heaven (Eph. 6:9). The fact that an employee and his employer are both Christians is no excuse for either one to do less work. Rather, it is a good reason to be more faithful to each other. The employee should show proper respect for employer, and not try to take advantage of him. He should devote his full attention and energy to the job at hand (“singleness of heart”). The best way to be a witness on the job is to do a good day’s work. The Christian worker will avoid “eye service”—working only when the boss is watching, or working extra hard when he is watching to give the impression he is doing a very good job.

The second reason is that doing a good job is the will of God. Christianity knows nothing of sacred and secular. A Christian can perform any good work as a ministry to Christ, to the glory of God. For this reason, the worker must do his job “from the heart,” since he is serving Christ and doing the will of God. There were tasks assigned to these slaves that they detested, but they were to perform them just the same, so long as they were not disobeying the will of God. “Singleness of heart” and “doing the will of God from the heart” both indicate the importance of a right heart attitude on the job.

Paul’s third argument is that they will be rewarded by the Lord (Eph. 6:8). In that day, slaves were treated like pieces of property, no matter how well educated they might be. An educated, cultured slave who became a Christian might receive even harsher treatment from his master because of his faith, but harsh treatment was not to keep him from doing his best (1 Peter 2:18–25). We are to serve Christ, not men. We shall receive our rewards from Christ, not from men.<sup>2</sup>

*Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. <sup>23</sup> And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

**Colossians 3:22-25**

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<sup>1</sup> Portion of Outline taken from Adrian Rogers

<sup>2</sup> Warren Wiersbe

## **The Problem**

Some see work as a necessary **evil** (Remember, work was not a result of the Fall but the way we work now is.).

Some see their job as their **god**.

Some see their job as escape.

## **The Proper Perspective**

Our job is one of our big mission fields.

Our job is one of the way the Lord provides.

*Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, <sup>7</sup> which, having no captain, overseer or ruler,<sup>8</sup> provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest. <sup>9</sup> How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep?*

**Proverbs 6:6-9**

We have been saved out of the world and then sent back into the world to witness to the world.

*“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.*

**Matthew 5:14-15**

## **The Practical Program**

See your job as a **partnership** with God.

See your job as a place of **service**.

Make enough to have your needs met, and then let God use you to meet the needs of **others**.

See your job as a place to **witness**.

## **Prayer Focus:**

**Am I working for the Lord?**

**Do I see my workplace as a mission field?**

**Am I realizing that God’s gifts to me are also that I can gift others?**