



Ephesians

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...not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, Ephesians 6:6

This verse continues to explain what was introduced in verse 5. Taken together they read –

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart...”

Paul is asking that bondservants be obedient “not with eyeservice.” It is a word used only here and in Colossians 3:22, and it appears to be a word invented by him. The use of it is to indicate someone who serves only when the eye of his master is present. When the master is out, he refuses to conduct his duties as he should. Paul says that this is inappropriate. Rather, a servant is to serve his master in the same manner as he would for the Lord, which means at all times.

He next says that they are not to be men-pleasers. This word is also found only here and in Colossians 3:22. It indicates someone who is willing to please man rather than God. The idea of both of these words is that a bondservant is to look to his duties to his master (whether he is a good master or a crummy one) as if he was actually serving the Lord. In so doing, he would be a responsible representative of the Lord in the presence of his master. This is explained in the next words, “but as bondservants of Christ.”

By acting as a bondservant of Christ even for his earthly master, he will then be “doing the will of God from the heart.” Paul connects the two duties to show the importance of right and proper conduct at all times.

As we have a different system of employment in the world today, we need to adapt that system to Paul’s words. Rather than masters, we have bosses. However, we are to treat our bosses with the same respect that the bondservant is called to for his master. We are not to be employees who perform with mere eyeservice, nor are we to simply be men-pleasers. We are to act as if we are reporting to Christ, making the most efficient use of our time under the employ of our employers.

Life application: In the world, it is so easy to fall in with the “labor union” mentality. The liberal attitude, both in government and in private industry, says that it is ok to not work to the highest standard of integrity and diligence. But the Bible tells us otherwise. If you act like a democrat in your work environment by failing to give your all to your boss, you are not acting as the Lord would have you to work. It is time to mature out of your self-centered work attitude, and to become a devoted, dedicated employee. And this is regardless of the attitude of your employer. If you can’t deal with him, then it is you who needs to find another job. Think clearly! Apply the Bible and its precepts to your life! Be honoring of the Lord through your employment.

...with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, Ephesians 6:7

Again, context needs to be maintained in order to see the progression of Paul’s thoughts – “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men...”

He last stated that the duties of the bondservant are to be carried out as if “doing the will of God from the heart.” He now elevates the thought to show that “from the heart” means that he is to have a proper attitude in that his service is to be done “with goodwill.” It is a word used just this once, and it indicates “with kindness” or “with enthusiasm.” It is directly connected to another word used in Matthew 5:25, translated as “agree with,” or “make friends with” –

“Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.”

The duties of a bondservant are to have this friendly and agreeable attitude because it is “as to the Lord, and not to men” that his work is actually to be done. We may have earthly masters

over us, but we are first and foremost servants of the Lord. It is to Him that we are fully accountable in all aspects of our lives.

Life application: Who do you feel you are serving when you go to work? A crummy boss? A greedy company? In the highest sense, you are serving the Lord. Therefore, perform your duties to the highest of your capabilities, knowing that He will reward you for your efforts in glorifying Him.

...knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free. Ephesians 6:8

Paul now moves from the admonitions of verses 5 through 7 into the thought of an expected reward for meeting those same admonitions. In these verses, he is specifically addressing slaves, or “bondservants.” He is showing now that regardless of worldly station, there will be no such distinction when standing before the Lord for judgment. This is reflected quite a few times in his letters, but the most notable is probably Galatians 3:28 –

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Though these differences exist in the world, the distinctions do not exist for judgment for those who are in Christ. We are all on the same spiritual plane, and we will all be judged by the same perfect standard. Understanding this, Paul says, “...knowing that whatever good anyone does.” This is a general statement, but it is given to bolster the many seemingly difficult admonitions for the slave of the previous verses. Put yourself in the place of a slave with a really crummy master, and read these words again –

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men...”

As you can see, it would be a tough thing to live out these words if your master (or your boss of today) was a tyrant. But the Lord is watching and He will reward even the slave who is faithful in adhering to His word. This is confirmed with the next words which say, “...he will receive the same from the Lord.”

The Greek is emphatic; it will happen. The wording does not say that he will receive the reward for what he does, but rather it says that he will receive the deed itself. In other words, there will be a like-kind reward. Paul uses a metonymy – a like-kind of payment – to express the completely fair reward for faithful adherence to the admonitions. And this can be expected “whether *he is* a slave or free.” At the judgment seat of Christ, all will be openly

rewarded for their deeds. Their status now has no bearing on what will be. It is a great comfort to know this because in this earthly system, some have easy lives and they seem to get all the good benefits of it. Some have difficult lives, and they seem to only get more trouble. But the faithful soul shall receive his reward.

Life application: We are given a sure promise in this verse. It is from the word of God which is faithful and true. Don't look at the temporary, but look to the eternal. Fix your eyes on Jesus and your heart on being obedient to His word.

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Ephesians 6:9

Paul spent four verses of instruction on what bondservants were to do and how they were to act while under the authority of their masters. He now gives one all-encompassing verse of instruction to the masters. Further instruction is not necessary because he says, "And you, masters, do the same things to them..." In other words, masters are given all of the same instructions as the bondservants in this one thought. Anything that can be made prescriptive towards the slave is to be taken as such for them. But they are given more instruction as well. This would replace those items which were specifically intended for the slaves in relation to their masters.

For the masters, they are to give "up threatening." In the Greek, there is an article before "threatening." It says, *tēn apeilēn*, or "the threatening." In other words, it was a customary practice of masters within the empire to threaten their slaves. Instead of, "Good morning Philemous," they might say, "Get to work or I will beat you." Instead of, "Bring me some yummy papaya salad Charliopolus," they might say, "Unless you want to be whipped, you'd better bring me papaya salad right now." Paul instructs them that they are no longer to threaten their slaves, but to understand that there is now a new economy because of their status as Christians.

And yes, this definitively shows that Christians were slave-masters. Paul never questions this, nor does he say it is an unnatural or inappropriate point in life. It was, and continued to be, a normal part of human existence. However, as Christians, these slave-masters were to know and understand that their "own Master also is in heaven." They, in fact, became bondservants of Christ when they called upon Him. Because of this, they were to consider how they wished to be treated by their own Master, and then turn and treat their slaves in a like manner. They were to be impartial to them because "there is no partiality with Him."

As these are prescriptions from Paul, then the slave-master who ignores them will be held accountable for his refusal to be obedient. It is no different for them to mistreat their slaves as it is for them to engage in immoral behavior. The standard is the word of God, and the standard demands adherence to what is laid down. The irony of the matter is that a

disobedient slave-master will certainly stand before the Lord and receive less eternal reward than a faithful and obedient slave! Such is the fairness of Christ who looks upon the hearts of men and rewards according to His infinite wisdom.

Life application: If you are a boss, the prescriptions of this verse certainly apply to you. You have charge over subordinates, and you are to treat them kindly and fairly. In this, you will be a responsible Christian and a faithful servant to your heavenly Master.