

Message #33

I Timothy 6:1-2

I am totally convinced that one of the best ways we can help the church become a pillar and support of the truth of God is by being the best possible worker on our job that we can be. As we near the end, the faithful, hardworking, loyal employee will become harder and harder to find and if we choose to be that type of employee, we will stand out like a shining light for the glory of God.

I have been asked on a number of occasions what is the will of God for my life. One answer to that question is simple—take your job seriously and be the best worker you can for the glory of God (Eph. 6:5-6).

IF A CHURCH IS TO BECOME A PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH, IT NEEDS BELIEVERS TO MAINTAIN PROPER ATTITUDES AND WORK ETHICS ON THEIR JOBS REGARDLESS IF THEIR BOSSES ARE CHRISTIAN OR NON-CHRISTIAN.

One of the best ways to help build this church is for each person to be a hardworking, dedicated employee. If you maintain a proper attitude toward your employer and a proper work ethic on your job, you will stand out for the glory of God. God gives a person his or her job. God expects us to take our job seriously. It is a ministry assignment directly from Him.

CHARGE #1 – The charge to the employee who works for an unbeliever. **6:1**

According to Francis Lyall, there were three ways one could become a slave in the first century Roman world: 1) By capture; 2) By birth to a slave mother; or 3) By decision of self to become one (*Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, p. 29ff.).

The phrase “under the yoke” immediately gives us the picture of not becoming a slave by one’s own choice. The word “yoke” literally has to do with being in submission to some authority (Smith, p. 196).

The prepositional phrase “under the yoke” would seem to suggest that Paul perhaps had the forced slavery or captured slavery in mind. Lyall writes: “Entry into slavery as a result of capture was symbolized by requiring captives to pass underneath three spears lashed together to form an outline doorway. This required them to bow their heads and was called “passing under the yoke” (Francis Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, pp. 29-31).

The word “master” is a Greek word that speaks of one who is master or lord over someone in the sense that they have absolute ownership and uncontrolled power (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 103). In fact, we get our English word “despot” from this word—one who is an absolute ruler or tyrant.

Now Paul advised that if a person were a believer and were given a chance to become free from being a slave, he ought to do that (I Cor. 7:21). In other words, if God so worked so that the believer was given the option of being free rather than a slave, he ought to opt to be free.

The answer to that question is found in this verse—the slaves were to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor. That word “regard” is a Greek word that means the slave is to make a constant, continual mental calculation within himself that his master is worthy of all honor and respect. In this one context, believers are commanded to honor widows (5:3), elders (5:17), and now masters.

A slave in Paul’s day typically received food, shelter, clothing, expenses, and even a salary. When Paul says the unsaved master is to receive “all honor,” he means that nothing should be left out in honoring the unsaved master. It is the responsibility of the believer to give all possible honor due one who is the boss, saved or unsaved.

Question #1 - How do we honor an unsaved employer?

We don’t specifically get the answer to that question here; however, if we take a brief journey through the writings of Paul, we can begin to sense ways we honor an unsaved employer:

(Way #1) - We honor an unsaved employer by obeying him. Eph. 6:5a; Col. 3:22

(Way #2) - We honor an unsaved employer by our attitudes. Eph. 6:5b

(Way #3) - We honor an unsaved employer by our consistent, diligent work. Col. 3:23

Question #2 - Why do we honor an unsaved employer?

(Reason #1) - Because of the name of God. **6:1c**

When God saves us, His name is on the line in everything we do, including our work. If we prove to be faithful, loyal, obedient, hardworking, submissive employees, we make a great statement for the name of the Living God.

God makes His name known to lost humanity through us on our job. When people see we are hardworking, dedicated employees, it is a great testimony for the name of God. God hates sloth. He hates laziness. He hates proud rebellion. When you are at your school or on your job, or doing work in your home, remember God’s name is on the line.

(Reason #2) - Because of the doctrine of God. **6:1d**

The word “doctrine” indicates that systematic instruction and teaching from God’s Word was given by Paul. But even if a man were thoroughly schooled in doctrine but did not do his job faithfully and honor his employer, God’s doctrine will be dishonored.

Disrespectful attitudes and laziness on the job incapacitate evangelistic opportunity.

In fact, the word “spoken against” is the Greek word “blaspheme.” It is possible for us to blaspheme the name of God and the doctrine of God by not being the kind of employees we should be.

CHARGE #2 – The charge to the employee who works for a believer. **6:2**

If you were a slave and you came to Christ and then your master came to Christ, the tendency could be for the slave to use his position in Christ to try and minimize his position and responsibilities with his master.

This verse clearly teaches that there are differences in rank even among believers. A boss is a boss even if the employer and the employee are saved. There is absolutely no Biblical sanction whatsoever for insurrectionism on the job because of faith in Christ.

Responsibility #1 - The Christian employee must not be disrespectful to his Christian employer. **6:2a**

Responsibility #2 - The Christian servant must serve the Christian employer all the more. **6:2b**

The adverb “more” means the service should be at a superlative, exceeding level—way above and beyond the norm (*Lexicon*, p. 276).

If God grants us the privilege of working for a Christian employer, we should serve them at the highest possible level because we are actually partaking of the benefit of working for another believer, one beloved of God and by us.

No one who works for a believer should ever be slack in his work. Because that one is a believer, work should be done at the highest and hardest possible level.

Again, we cannot help but notice the primary responsibility of the minister to preach and teach. In spite of all the various views as to what ministry is supposed to be about, God demands His ministers be preachers and teachers.

What kind of employee are we? Is God’s name honored by our work?