

Edgemont Bible Church
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1 Timothy 6:1-2

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Intro: work is undervalued in our society. About 705 of workers don't like their jobs. 90 % of them don't feel like getting up in the morning to go to work. The average worker is consumed with creature comforts, leisure, and materialism. His job is a necessary evil to get his indulgences. Unfortunately, this also describes many Christians and they need reminding of the importance of work and them doing it to the glory of God. God put Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them work. The curse of sin made work difficult. For the believer, work is a sacred duty. We are to see everything in reference to our relationship to God. Every legitimate job has intrinsic value because it is the arena in which believers live out their faith before a lost and dying world

XX. The Conscientious Christian Employee

A. Serving a Non-Christian Master

1. Day Laborers

- a. did much of the seasonal field work and part time work - Mt 20:1ff
- b. collected a daily wage - no work, no money
- c. after daily needs paid for, usually left worse off than a slave

2. Slaves

- a. permanently retained domestic work was done by slaves
 - i. they were
 - teachers
 - Managers - Lk 16:1ff
 - Cooks
 - artisans
 - ii. They became part of the household, almost like family
 - iii. Resembled the indentured servants of America's colonial era
- b. Acquired in different ways
 - i. prisoners of war - Num 31:7-25; Deut 20:10-14
 - ii. Could be bought - Ex 21:7; Lev 25:44-46
 - iii. Some sold themselves - Lev 25:39; Deut 15:12-17
 - iv. Others were sold to pay debts - 2 Kgs 4:1; Neh 5:1-8
 - v. could be received as gifts - Gen 29:24
 - vi. could be inherited - Lev 25:46
 - vii. others were born into the role -
 - viii. A system that was not perfect, but worked
 - abuses came from the evil heart of man
 - such abuses may be found in every system of employment
 - slavery, feudalism, communism, capitalism

c. OT

- i. never forbade slavery nor calls for its abolition
- ii. Carefully guarded the rights of a slave
 - couldn't be held for more than six years - Ex 21:2
 - could volunteer to stay Ex 21:5-6
 - enter slavery with wife and children, leave with the same
 - if abused by the master, was set free - Ex 21:26-27
 - religious rights were also protected - Ex 20:10
 - civil rights also

- if murdered, punishment was expected - Ex 21:20
- foreign slaves seeking asylum in Israel were to be protected - Deut 23:15-16
- economic rights also, including the right to own their own slaves - 2 Sam 9:9-10
- Israel had state slaves, similar to civil servants - Josh 16:10; Jdg 1:28; Ez 8:20
- iii. Guards the rights of a master also
 - if the master gave a wife to a slave, she could not leave with him until her time was up
- d. NT
 - i. Jewish slaves were similarly protected
 - ii. Were treated equal to the eldest son in the family
 - iii. Thus the saying, whoever buys a Jewish slave, buys himself a master
- e. Gentile slaves
 - i. didn't have it as good, but better off than day laborers
 - ii. Had daily food, clothing, housing, and a small salary provided
- f. Jesus and His apostles
 - i. didn't call for abolition
 - ii. Would have caused massive unemployment and social chaos
 - iii. Would have lost the true gospel message in social reform
 - iv. Christianity did help bring an end to abuses in slavery in the Roman empire
- 3. Slave.... under the yoke
 - a. not an abusive relationship - Mt 11:28-30
 - b. **doulos** - a slave, a person in submission to another person
 - c. no negative connotation
 - i. used of the Lord is the servant, doulos, of the Father - Phil 2:7
 - ii. used of believers serving God - 1 Pet 2:16
 - d. used about 150 times in NT
 - e. speaks of a believer's slavery
 - i. to his Lord - Ro 1:1; Gal 1:10; 2 Tim 2:24; Jas 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1; Jd 1; Rev 1:1
 - ii. To unbelievers - 1 Co 9:19
 - iii. To other believers - Gal 5:13
 - f. 2 main passages that display the meaning
 - i. The centurion needing his son healed - Mt 8:9; a doulos is obligated to obey orders
 - ii. The slave that worked all day in the fields and then came home to cook dinner for his master - Lk 17:7-10 - a doulos is required to perform duties assigned to him by another who is over him
- 4. masters
 - a. **despotes** - an absolute ruler ("despot")--Lord, master.
 - b. does not carry the connotation of harsh, cruel, abusive
 - c. deals with absolute unrestricted authority
 - d. used of the Lord - 2 Tim 2:21; 2 Pet 2:1; Jd 4
 - e. despotes and doulos go together
- 5. their own
 - a. implies some sort of personal bond

- b. clearly an unbeliever - see vs 2
 - c. not a spiritual bond, but one of duty
 - 6. count...worthy of all honor
 - a. **hegeomai** - to deem, consider, account, (be) chief, count, esteem, judge, suppose, think.
 - i. an estimate based on objective criteria, not emotions
 - ii. slaves were to have a correct assessment of their masters regardless of how they feel about them
 - b. masters with widows (5:17) and elders (5:17) are to receive honor
 - c. not financial support, but respect and dutiful service
 - d. 1 Pet 2:18-20 says even the harsh and unfair b/c they are superiors in the workplace
 - 7. so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed
 - a. the way we, as believers, live and work affect how people perceive God and His doctrine
 - b. those that live contrary to what the scripture teaches give reason for God and truth to be blasphemed or spoken against
 - i. laziness
 - ii. Insubordination
 - iii. Hostility
 - iv. Lenski - pg 232
 - c. Apostate Israel brought reproach on the name of God - Ro 2:23-24; Is 52:5
 - d. the NT covers the same problem in the church several times
 - i. Tit 2:1-5
 - ii. Tit 2:6-10
 - iii. 1 Pet 3:1-6
 - e. living right before a lost and dying world are prerequisites to proclaiming a believable gospel - Phil 1:27-28; 2:14-16; Php 2:1Pe 2:12
- B. Serving a Christian Master
- 1. those who have believing masters,
 - a. temptation of those with Christian masters, to expect special privilege
 - b. not uncommon for the slave to be saved before the master,
 - i. could be more mature in Christ
 - ii. could be an elder in the church overseeing the master
 - c. could lead to conflict if one forgets their place
 - i. 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. - Gal 3:28
 - ii. This does not negate racial, social, or sexual roles
 - iii. Therefore doesn't negate the need to honor their masters
 - iv. All in the church should follow the elder's example - Heb 13:17, does not carry over to the work place
 - 2. let them not despise them because they are brethren,
 - a. **kataphroneo** - to think against, i.e. disesteem:--despise. Lit to think down
 - b. believers are not to undervalue the authority of the Christian masters by treating them as equals on the job
 - c. b/c they are brethren, does not permit presumption or assuming special privilege

3. but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved.

a. if you would serve an unbelieving master well, how much more a believer

b. those that will benefit are brothers in Christ - Gal 6:10

c. two other passages Paul write about Christian slaves serving their masters from which we can glean some principles to apply to Christians on the Job - Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25

i. Christians are to serve obediently - Eph 6:5; Col 3:22 - submissive

ii. Believers are to serve their employers completely - Eph 6:5; Col 3:22 - doing whatever commanded, unless it violates what God says

iii. Believers are to serve their employers respectfully - Eph 6:5 - honoring those God puts in authority

iv. Believers are to serve their employers eagerly - Eph 6:5; Col 3:22 - serving volitionally, not under compulsion

v. Believers are to serve their employers excellently - Eph 6:5; Col 3:23 - serving to the best of their ability

vi. Believers are to serve their employers diligently - Eph 6:6; Col 3:22 - not putting on the show for the boss

vii. Believers are to serve their employers humbly - Eph 6:6; Col 3:23 - not showing off to ingratiate themselves to others

viii. Believers are to serve their employers spiritually - Eph 6:6 - all work is sacred and done for the glory of God

ix. Believers are to serve their employers eschatologically - Col 3:24-25 - eternal rewards will be affected by their job performance

4. Teach and exhort these things.

a. present tense verbs - continually teach

b. these principles are foundational to Christian living and evangelism

c. Paul writes

i. 1Co 7:21-22 Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.

ii. 1Co 7:31 and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.

i. We do not need to change the social order of the world by fostering rebellion

ii. By being compliant and obedient on the job, we witness to the transforming grace of faith in Christ