

Lesson 5: A Goal of Work – Independence for the Glory of God

**Review** – What are the goals of work?

Provision – “...and not be in any need” (1 Thessalonians 4:12)

Giving – “...that he will have something to share with one who has need” (Ephesians 4:28).

**Today’s Goal**

Independence – that you would be more and more available for Jesus Christ your Lord

Note: Young adults should be increasingly independent of parents, but never fully self-sufficient (e.g. counsel).

No man is completely free—citizens under a government, creatures under God.

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 7:21-23

Independence is presented not as an absolute requirement, but as an *ideal*—a state to desire.

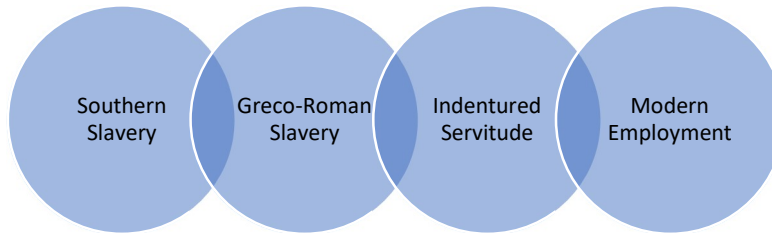
The context of this ideals is the *master-slave relationship* at the heart of most work environments.

**Slaves and Masters**

Master – the free man in this environment (cf. “self-employed” and “boss”)

Slave – the restricted man in this environment (cf. “employee”)

Historically, there have been varying severities of slavery and freedom:



Southern Slavery (Egypt)	Involuntary Start – kidnapping	Indefinite End – escape, emancipation
Greco-Roman Slavery	Involuntary Start – captured in war	Definite End – buy freedom (“freedmen”)
Indentured Servitude	Voluntary Start – colonial Virginia	Definite End – military enlistment
Modern Employment	Voluntary Start – sign a contract	Definite End – quit, unless contracted

Therefore, modern employment is a mild form of slavery: “You do as you are told, if you wish to keep this job.”

As a form of slavery, the commands in the NT “house tables” about the master-slave relationships apply today.

- Slave** Ephesians 6:5-9 – Obey with a proper attitude (“fear and trembling” and heart sincerity), as to Christ.  
 Colossians 3:22-25 – Obey in all things, not with “eye-service” but as to Christ, who will repay you.  
 1 Timothy 6:1-2 – Count your boss as worthy of all honor, and do not take advantage of a Christian boss.  
 Titus 2:9-10 – Show that “all faith is good” by not answering back or pilfering little things from the shop.  
 1 Peter 2:18-21 – Submit even to unreasonable bosses, for it finds favor with God to suffer conscientiously.

- Master** Ephesians 6:9 – Do not bully your employees (“threatening”), for you too have a Boss in heaven.  
 Colossians 4:1 – Give to your employees “what is just and fair” (e.g. in pay, cf. James 5:1ff; Philemon 18).

In Christ, both the master and slave duties are transformed and independence is encouraged (1 Corinthians 7:21-23):

1. A Christian’s identity is ultimately tied to Christ:  
 Called as a slave? You are “the Lord’s freedman” (verse 22)  
 Called as a free man? You are “Christ’s slave” (verse 22)
2. Even so, freedom is still better:  
 To slaves: “If you are able to become free, rather do that” (v. 21).  
 To the free: “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men” (v. 23).

Therefore, strive to be free and to stay free for Jesus’ sake:

Discover your vocation and seek training in it, working as an employee and saving your money for the training.  
 Define work broader than “having a job” by valuing self-employment and entrepreneurial businesses.

In everything, make yourself available to Christ *continually*—under His lordship, to the glory of God!