

Hey Guys,

If we have not met my name is Cole Simpson, I am on our lead team excited to get to be with you tonight. This week we are going to continue in our series of Ephesians, specifically continue to look at the different relationships Paul dives into in chapters 5 and 6 of Ephesians.

We started with wives and husbands where Paul talked about the call for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and the importance for wives to respect their husbands. Then last week Ant talked about how Children should obey and honor their parents and how parents should discipline their children but not provoke them. This week we are going to talk about the relationship between employees and bosses.

In each one of these relationships Paul is teasing out the principles of authority and submission.

This is coming out of the foundation set in Ephesians 5:21

21 [submit] to one another out of reverence for Christ.

As believers in some relationships we will have authority, and in others we will be called to submit. Paul whether he is talking about Children, husbands, or parents is less concerned with how the other person is handling themselves and more concerned with how we who call ourselves believers handle ourselves in these relationships. Our we, as Christians, being faithful with what we have been given, whether that is authority or submission.

I am in a bit of a unique spot today, because we loved this topic so much that we decided to preach on work and Christians in the workplace for 6 weeks starting in two weeks. We are going to hit topics like:

- Calling
- Sabbath
- how your work joins God in redemption

I get to intro our work series, continue our ephesians series, and finish our little mini series on Christian relationships. No pressure.

And with that lets talk about this specific relationship between employees and bosses:

Ephesians 6:5-8

5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters

Now some of you just went, what, how are we going from bondservant to employee and from master to boss. But when this passage talks about slavery what it is referring to and what we think of are totally different systems.

Slavery in the Bible was not based on race, it was most often based on war, my people conquered your people so now you are our slaves, or debt, I owe you this money so now I will work for you to pay off the debt.

- Slaves most often received a wage, and you could work your way out of or buy your way out of slavery
- Slaves were seen as fully human
- Slaves could own property

This relationship is much less like a master slave relationship we are familiar with and much more like the relationship of a boss and an employee, not a one to one, but there are many parallels.

Condemn slavery. Paul or the Bible is not and does not affirm slavery. The history of our nation is one of the greatest acts of sin committed against a specific people group in the history of the world. And as a nation we are still paying the price for the sins of our forefathers and their complete disregard for the imago dei.

Lets dive into the passage.

5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, **6** not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, **7** rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, **8** knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Paul tells employees:

1. Obey and respect your boss
2. Work for Christ not for you

Obey and respect your boss

5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

Fear and trembling = respect

This is such an interesting command to me. Because I don't know about you guys but I want to add onto this verse, obey and respect your boss as long as....

As long as they treat you fairly

As long as they are competent

As long as they respect your time outside of work

As long as they have earned my respect

As long as....

But that's not what Paul says, No he says listen to and respect your boss as if they were Jesus. As if they were Jesus.

Paul is more concerned with our actions than the actions of those in authority over us.

Did I ask about them? I am asking about you.

Growing up I had this habit of blame shifting, good for me I never struggle with that now. No but seriously I was pretty good at arguing, hard to believe, and often when my mom would ask me a question I was very good at very subtly putting the blame on someone else. Whether it be a teacher, a sibling, my mother. Eventually my mom would start cutting me off and say **Did I ask about them? I am asking about you.**

I imagine Paul looking at me, at us, when we want to caveat ourselves of listening to our bosses, when we want to tell him why this should not apply to us, and say **Did I ask about them? I am asking about you.**

How does this play out for us in our jobs?

Eval (unfairly treated, God cares about you more than your boss)

What does the Bible command you to do?

God is sovereign, he is working on your boss, in fact for some of us I think whenever we are triggered and get angry at our boss we would be served to pray for them, pray that God would reveal himself to them, but God's primary concern with you, is not your boss, it's you. Are you honoring God with your work, let God take care of the rest.

Work for Christ not for you

with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, **6** not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, **7** rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, **8** knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Paul is freeing you up with how you look at your job. verses 5-8 give us a new framework to look at our jobs. Because primarily **you work for Jesus, and not for man.**

Questions to consider as an employee:

- 1. What is my primary motivation for work?**
 - **Promotion, paycheck**
 - **Sincere heart**

- 2. How does my work reflect on the kingdom of God?**

Working for the Lord means you serve whole heartedly even if your boss is terrible

Ephesians 6:9

Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Paul then shifts his focus from the employee to the boss and says two things:

Paul tells Bosses:

1. Honor your employees

Honor your employees

In the same way that Paul instructs employees to remember that their boss has been put into authority over them he tells employers to remember their employees are humans with souls not just work units. He uses the phrase “do the same to them”

Paul is not saying that employers should submit to or obey their employees in the same way that they should obey him but what he is saying is whatever your expectation is on your employees, that is the expectation you should have on yourself.

“If the employer expects the workers to do their best for him, he must do his best for them. The master must serve the Lord from his heart if he expects his servants to do the same. He must not exploit them.”

- **Warren Wiersbe**

Another way to say it is: **If you follow Jesus, there should be definitive moments where your leadership looks different than someone who doesn't.**

Graciously, compassionately, with kindness, not to be served but to serve, First shall be last type stuff. Greatest in the kingdom

As a manager supervisor your posture towards your employees should be treating them with honor and dignity and respect. we should be treating our employees, not like just cogs in the machine, but as people with souls. People with stories and hurts and baggage and joys and fears. If you are in a position of authority at your job, does your posture towards your employees reflect that mentality? How often do you ask your employee the simple question “how are you doing?” and listen—*genuinely wait to hear their answer?*

Paul goes out of his way to say his to show no partiality towards them, or don't play favorites.

I don't pretend to know everything about managing employees, I own a shaved ice business, not exactly rocket science. But here is what I try to do to make sure I am thinking about my employees correctly:

Posture I try to have as a boss:

1. I give the benefit of the doubt

- I try hard not to assume motive
- I lead with questions
- Would rather be too soft then to hard

2. I ask what could I have done better

- Plank from my eye before spec from brother's eye

3. I pray for them

4. I show grace (and sometimes I still have to fire people)

- **Grace to one cannot be condemnation to the many**

Lets go back to verse 8:

8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

... knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven

Regardless of our position Paul tells all of us:

You will give an account for your work

God is our authority and you will answer to Him

The truth is, regardless of our jobs, real estate, pastor, mom, nurse most of us will work some form of job for 40 or so hours a week for probably 40 or so years of our lives. That's not including commute, parties, let's be honest. In Charlotte it's probably closer to double that.

That means on the low end about 1/7 of our lives will be spent working.

If you take out sleep, and maybe spending time with family, we will spend more time working than basically everything else we do in our lives.

The reason Paul, the reason God cares so much about your work is that God cares about your time. God cares about how we as believers are leveraging our lives for the mission of God.

Your job is one of the greatest mission fields of your life.

That means we need to start looking at our jobs, our coworkers with an eternal perspective. The way you do your job matters because it says something about the God you serve. The call of the Christian regardless of situation is one of love, patience, intentionality and forgiveness and the idea that this would not include our jobs is nonsensical.

- Start asking why God has you where he has you
- Start asking for opportunities to talk about Him
- Stop seeing your job as a means of fulfillment, and instead start seeing it as a means of witnessing and discipleship

God is less concerned with your passion and more concerned with your faithfulness

God in heaven is in control, he is our master, and he is working all things together for our good.

Gospel frees us up to be faithful, trust where God has us, and not put our identity in our work.

Let's pray.