

CALL to PRAYER -

Pray for our business leaders and employers

Eph. 6:9 - Masters

Intro - God's book is remarkable. It is always relevant and never out of date ("living & active" - Heb. 4:12). While it was written FOR us it was not written TO us. That is, we are to understand it in light of the original audience. God spoke to and instructed them in their historical situation and the Holy Spirit now applies it to our situation. This section of God's instruction is about our work life. The economy during the society of the Bible was a *slave economy*. There was nothing unusual about it. Within the church there were Christian masters and Christian slaves. And the scripture teaches both master & slave how to live out the Christian faith in a slave society just like both rich & poor have Christian responsibilities in our society. We can apply the commands given to slaves & masters to our own *employment economy*, but we mustn't erase the original condition, or we will be in danger of misunderstanding God's instruction. The slave & master motif is important because that is how the Holy Spirit inspired it. These instructions for masters are a must to business owners & employers for it outlines God's will for them and how they are to do business and treat those under their authority. Class warfare between rich & poor is nothing new, but scripture penetrates this animosity with our Christian responsibility/accountability.

THE BIBLE AND SLAVERY

- It may surprise you that the Bible does not categorically condemn slavery.
 - In some cases it actually recommends it - (punishment for theft - Ex. 22:1-3...or pay off debt)
 - This is more humane than prison. (dignity of work & restitution)
 - 13th Amendment of U.S. Constitution (abolish slavery except for punishment for crime)
- The Bible regulates slavery and forbids certain forms of it.
 - After 400 years in slavery...given moral law (Ex. 20)...case law about slavery (Ex 21)
 - Man stealing & sex slavery deserves death penalty (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7)
 - Abuse of the slave was to automatically grant freedom for the slave - (Ex.21:26-27)
 - Runaway slaves were NOT to be returned to their masters (Deut. 23:15-16)
 - Jewish (citizen) slaves go free after 6 years. On *Jubilee* all *citizen slaves* go free.
- Philemon is a N.T. letter to a master about his runaway slave.
 - The Bible was written to slaves & masters. Must be understood in that context.
 - Eph. 6:5-8 - a Christian slave's responsibility 6:9 - a Christian master's ...

A MASTER'S RESPONSIBILITY

- Eph. 6:9 *"...do the same to them..."*
 - This is linked to 6:8 and how God will justly reward a person's work.
 - Masters must be just in their pay scale to their slaves.
 - Col. 4:1
 - *"The workman is worthy of his hire."* (Not to withhold what is fair)
 - James 5:1-5
 - A form of modern-day slavery. A boss told me, *"I've got to get me some Mexican's"*

- Bosses should not steal from employees by paying a low wage.
 - Half pay for full work is theft...just like half work for full pay is theft.
 - “Thou shalt not steal.” (Ex. 20:15)
- “Three type of employees - Lions, horses & dogs. Feed the lions, ride the horses, shoot to the dogs.”
 - Unequal weights and measures are an abomination to the Lord.
 - (Prov. 20: 10, 14, 23)
- Eph. 6:9 *“...give up threatening...”*
 - Masters (employers/managers) are not to be abusive or mean.
 - A master (boss) is not to be “*slave driver*” or “*lord it over*” those under him.
 - Ruth 2:4 (Boaz was good boss... cared for his own slaves and a foreign worker in his field)
- The rich are not to take advantage of the poor with predatory lending practices
 - Prov. 22:7
 - Usury laws - Ex. 22:25-27 (Deut. 23:19-20 - tariffs & interest on foreigners is fine but not to citizens)
 - Extreme case – used BMW – \$1000 down / \$ 590 month - 67% APR for 324 months (27 years)
 - The car dealer called it a “*Deal with the Devil*” (Moneywise article 10/9/24)

THE MASTER'S IMPARTIALITY

- ❖ Eph. 6:9c *“...their Master and yours...”*
 - All earthy masters have a MASTER they must answer to
 - The rich are accountable and responsible to HIM who gave them the riches.
 - Deut. 8:17-18
 - 1 Sam. 2:7
 - Job had the right attitude as a righteous and godly master.
 - Job 31:13-15
- ❖ Eph. 6:9d *“...no partiality with Him.”*
 - The MASTER is impartial and is not a respecter of persons
 - The rich sometimes get away with more than the poor...but not with the LORD
 - Job 34:18-19
 - God is an impartial Judge and will judge the rich for how they used the position and possession God gave them. (Job 34:20-22)
 - James 5:1-5 (much given = much required)
 - Rom. 2:11
- ❖ Since God is impartial, we should be too
 - James 2:1ff (we should not judge by outward dress or economic status) James 2:9
 - Christians are to live out this impartiality in life and in the life of the church
 - Gal. 3:28
 - 1 Cor. 7:22 (James 1:9-10)
 - A slave at work could be his master's pastor at church. (James 2:5)
- ❖ The different stations and lots in life are given by God to teach us something.
 - We mustn't edit out the slave/master motif in scripture. (important)
 - We are all responsible to God for where He has placed us. (master or slave)
 - The Kingdom of Heaven operates a little different than earthy one
 - The greatest are the slaves...and masters should remember that
 - Mark 10:42-45