
Serving Our Workplace

It is such a temptation to separate our spiritual life from our work life. Sometimes we are deliberate about this, but I think that most times we simply forget to bring Jesus into our Monday through Friday. How does embracing the Jesus mission work into the everyday tasks and jobs that fill up our week? What does the Bible have to say about our response to the “bosses” in our lives or, if you are the boss, what does the Bible have to say to you?

Ephesians 6:5–9

⁵ Slaves, 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 servants 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 slave or free. 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.

Don't let the reference to slaves and masters through you off. Paul was not condoning slavery. He was simply dealing with a cultural reality of the first century (there were an estimated 60 million slaves at the time). This section of Ephesians really begins at 5:21 where Paul writes that we are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. He then goes on to teach how this applies to marriages, to children, to parents, and finally to the context of the first century workplace.

What Is My Mission as an Employee? (v.5-8)

In these verses we see that there is a right behavior (obedience), a right attitude (with fear and trembling), a right commitment (with a sincere heart), a right motive (as you would Christ), and a right diligence (not as eye-service or people-pleasers). Notice too that all of this is centered on Christ as being our ultimate Master or boss. Christ is mentioned in each of the four verses. Paul wants to make it clear that all our work, no matter how mundane, is for the Lord.

What Is My Mission as an Employer? (v.9)

Right away, Paul challenges these earthly masters to have the same mindset as the slaves, “doing the will of God from the heart”. The employer should seek to obey and please the Lord, understanding that Christ is his Master. The employer treats his employees in the same manner that Christ has treated him. He is just and fair, reflecting the character of the ultimate Master.

Discussion Questions

- 1) Of the five ways we are called to respond to our earthly masters, which one is most difficult for you? Why would you say that is?
- 2) What if you have an unfair or harsh boss...how do verses 5- 9 apply to that situation?
- 3) What if your job seems boring or not very significant....how do you apply these verse to your situation?
- 4) As a boss or a teacher, what would you say (according to these verses) that you are doing well? And what might need improvement?
- 5) As a boss or teacher, what are some practical ways to carrying out the command and perspective of verse 9?

Digging Deeper

As an employee or student or employer or teacher, what do think God is asking you to do in the next weeks or months as a response to the study of these verses? What do you need to adjust to get back on the Jesus Mission in your workplace?

Helpful Resources

BOOKS

[Taking your Soul To Work: Overcoming the Nine Deadly Sins of the Workplace](#)

by Stevens and Ung

[Work: A Kingdom Perspective on Labor](#)

by Ben Witherington III