

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

(9) Masters, do the same to them --- stop your threatening! --- knowing that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

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(21) So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

(23) Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

NOTE: This passage deals with slavery. Slavery was common in the ancient world, and the Jews were both slaveowners and slaves themselves at various times past. Commonly, conquered peoples from wars and battles were immediately enslaved by the prevailing country’s army. Slavery could not only be life-long from that event, but could also extend through a couple of generations. The Bible actually has a lot to say about slavery within the context of treatment and eventual liberation.

Like the one-chapter book of Philemon, the New Testament issue was often about how Christian slaves should continue serving their masters, some of whom were also Christians. Though “brothers & sisters in Christ,” their stations in life did not change. One was slave; one was master. It is the ministry of Messiah --- Jesus --- to “set the captives free” (Isaiah 61:1). That freedom was explained in the New Testament as setting us free from captivity to sin --- otherwise known as the “Good News” (Gospel).

In a slave-free society, concepts for master-slave interaction can be applied to boss-employee.

Think on these things:

- 1) Although the idea of being someone’s slave doesn’t appeal to anyone, what two commands are given in verse 5 to define what we do & how are we do it?

What? **Obey our earthly masters (employers?).**

How? **Respectful (with fear and trembling) of their authority, and with a sincere heart.**

- 2) When “compelled” (forced) to work for others, what makes it possible to serve sincerely (v.5)?

When I perceive that my work is always for Jesus Christ, regardless of who my earthly boss is.

- 3) How does Paul define “eye service” in v.6? (Hint: in today’s vernacular, we might this person is “brown nosing”.)

He defines it as ‘people-pleasing.’ (i.e., we only do the right things when people are watching).

- 4) Verses 7-8 define “doing the will of God from the heart.” With any master (boss) telling us what to do, how do we do the work/job with “good will,” and what do we need to understand about the Lord’s view on this?

How we view serving? **We work as serving the Lord, not men.**

What to understand about God? **God knows what’s going on in our jobs. When we do good things and do them well, v.8 says we will get back from the Lord the good we’ve given.**

- 5) What is a common problem for masters (bosses) identified in v.9? (See also Mark 10:42)

They tend to threaten their workers (lording their authority over them).

- 6) V.9, addressing masters, means Paul counsels a “Christian” master (boss). How can a Christian master “do the same to them” --- meaning slaves --- instead of being unreasonably demanding?

He can view his home and job site as places to honor God and do good for others. Also, his attitude can be one of “serving” his workers with kindness and support.

- 7) What final phrase from v.9 comes across as the “great equalizer” for slaves and masters?

There is no partiality with God. We all face the same expectations and accountability, whether boss or worker.

- 8) What is Paul’s purpose in sending Tychicus to Ephesus (vs.21-22)? Tychicus is first introduced to us as from Asia in Acts 20:4, and one of Paul’s companions for the third missionary journey. The next four mentions of his name relate to being ‘sent’ to various places and people (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; and Titus 3:12). How does Paul commend him in v.21?

Purpose? **Paul sent Tychicus to update the Ephesians on his situation and to encourage them.**

How commended? **Tychicus is a “beloved brother and faithful minister.”**

- 9) Paul’s benediction is in vs.23-24. It includes the concepts of peace, love, faith and grace wished for the Ephesians. How are we to love Jesus in return (the final phrase)? What does this mean to you?

We are to love Christ with an “incorruptible love.” Personal meaning may be something along the lines of a love that is sincere and lasting, expressing devotion and dedication to Jesus.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: