

THE NEW HUMANITY OF JESUS THE CHRIST:

MEDITATIONS IN THE HOLY APOSTLE PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE EPHESIAN FAITHFUL

SLAVES, OBEY:

**A VISION OF THE SPIRIT-FILLED, TIME-REDEEMING, CHRIST-REVERING EMPLOYEE
(EPHESIANS 6:5-8)**

I. Introduction

II. (Spirit-Filled) Slaves, Obey Your Earthly Masters (Eph 6:5-8)

- A. "Slaves, obey your earthly masters" (6:5).
 - 1. Who were slaves?
 - a. Slaves were people bonded to others—slave-owners.
 - b. Slaves were the property of their owners and had few rights.
 - c. Slaves were the work force of the ancient world.
 - d. Slaves were an accepted part of ancient Greco-Roman society.
 - 2. Slaves must obey (6:5).
 - 3. Slaves must obey their earthly masters (lit. "lords according to the flesh").
 - 4. Slave must obey in three ways.
 - a. They must obey "with fear and trembling."
 - b. They must obey "with a sincere heart."
 - c. They must obey as they would Christ.
- B. Slaves, obey not as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ and God (6:6).
 - 1. Paul is elaborating on what it means to obey from as to Christ.
 - 2. To obey as to Christ is not to obey solely to impress the earthly master.
 - 3. To obey from a sincere heart is...
 - a. to obey to please Christ himself.
 - b. to do the will of God from the heart.
- C. Slaves, obey by rendering service as to the Lord and not to man (6:7).
- D. Slaves, obey knowing that you will be rewarded by God (6:8).
- E. Why does Paul not condemn slavery?
 - 1. It's not a sin to be a slave.
 - 2. It was impractical to call for slavery to end right away.
 - 3. Slaves could go free in time.

- F. But God has transformed the status of the slave.
 - 1. The Christian slave is as much a child of God as the Christian master.
 - 2. The Christian slave has all the rights and responsibilities of a child of God.

III. Spirit-Filled Living in Evil-Filled Days—For Employees

God does not want Christian employees to waste their days serving their employers as eye-servants and people-pleasers. Instead, he wants us to offer up our jobs, whatever they may be, as holy services to the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants us to find Christ Jesus in our work.

- A. What Ephesians 6:5-8 does and does not mean.
 - 1. It does not mean that we cannot reason with our earthly employers.
 - Employers today are not the slave-owners of yesterday.
 - 2. It does not mean that we cannot look for better jobs.
 - 3. It does not mean that we must be consumed by our work.
 - The super "on-the-ball" worker may also be a people-pleaser!
 - 4. It does mean that we must consciously serve Christ in the work we are given.
- B. But why is it so difficult to discern Christ in our daily work?
 - 1. It's because we simply refuse to see Christ in our work.
 - 2. It's because our employers are soooo un-Christian.
 - 3. It's because the nature of our work is soooo "sub-eschatological."
- C. But those are the same issues that ancient Christian slaves would have faced.
- D. Ephesians 6:5-8 requires employees to see...
 - 1. that God hides himself in our ordinary work.
 - 2. that God is present regardless of who our boss is.
 - 3. that God uses our work to help others in the larger scheme of things.
 - 4. that God uses our work to point others to him (Mt 5:16).
 - 5. that God is not ashamed of our ordinary work because he is Lord of all creation.
- E. The way to see God more clearly in our work is through prayer.

IV. Good News for Lazy Slaves and Lousy Employees