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HOW DOES A CHRISTIAN ACT ON THE JOB?

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 63
EPHESIANS 6:5-8

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EPHESIANS 6:5-8 "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

In this passage we now go to the business world where the majority of you work every day. If you are a believer, whether you are an executive or an employee, this passage was written for you. I believe this really applies to every person who is employed in any capacity, from the newsboy who throws the paper, to the highest paid executive.

We begin with the word "servants" and the greek is "hoi douloi" and it means "slaves."

Seven Points On The Word "hoi douloi"

This is a vocative plural of the greek noun "doulos" meaning slaves.

1. The word "doulos" originally applied to slaves in the Roman Empire. Christian slaves often worked for unbelievers at the time when Paul wrote this.
2. While slavery was a great evil in the Roman Empire of Paul's day, Paul did not become side-tracked by condemning slavery. Never once in the New Testament do the writers condemn slavery. In Philemon Paul discussed various aspects of slavery because he was writing about a run-away slave, Onesimus. Paul never did deviate into the social gospel. Paul did not advise slaves to seek their freedom, rather he stuck to deeper truth.
3. Paul dealt with more basic issues. He dealt with the slaves of his time by giving them doctrine to live by--and the same doctrine applies to those employed in our time.
4. Even under conditions of slavery, believers could have inner happiness and other characteristics that helped them function in the church age.
5. Whether slave or free in the Roman Empire, every believer functioned under grace perception.
6. This passage applies just as much to the twentieth century as it did to slaves and workers in Paul's day.
7. In this passage we have the result of grace perception, the mental attitude which comes from being an obedient servant. This applies to the worker who works for someone else.

All believers are in full-time Christian service, and while you are on the job, the work is sacred. Your job and your work as a believer means you are in full-time Christian service, and you are in a job that is just as sacred as the job of the minister or the missionary.

About One-third of your time

You spend about one-third of all your living hours on your job. What should be your attitude toward this important segment of your time? You are told the same thing here that God told the right man and the right woman. You are to have two main attitudes.

"Be obedient" comes from "hupakouo." "Hupo" means to be under authority and "akouo" means to listen, or to concentrate, and these two words together came to mean "obedience." Keep on being under obedience and this is your duty as a Christian worker. If this admonition of Paul had been followed by our government and by our Supreme Court, we would be far better off today as a nation. An employee owes obedience to his employer. This means SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY. For business to survive, there must be the idea of authority. Christian labor must recognize the right of management to set the rules and call the shots. This means working under company policy as a part of my full-time Christian responsibility. The effective function of twentieth century industry depends on the recognition of the authority of management. Management is the brains and the key to industry. There would be no labor without management and too often labor forgets that. Management, whether it is good management or bad management, does not give the laborer the right to "goof off" in any way. Whether you are under good management or bad management, it is the same. You have no right to waste time and stand around idle while you are supposed to be working on the job. (One reason highway construction is so high today is that about half of the time laborers stand around and "goof off" and fail to give an honest day's work. Hence the sign "SLOW MEN WORKING.")

If you take a job, do it as unto the Lord and be obedient to the authority of management. This obedience is toward those "who are your masters." The word is "kurios" in the dative plural and it is used of management in contrast to laborers. According to the flesh means according to the norms and standards of the flesh.

"With fear" and the word is "phobos" and it means respect, respect for authority. We saw this word back in Ephesians 5:33 with respect to the attitude a woman has for her right man.

Two Most Important Attitudes

In addition to this word "phobos" translated "fear" which means respect for authority, we have the word "tremos" which is translated "trembling." This doesn't mean you are to shake every time the boss walks by. It means you are to give your maximum to your job. Neither of these words means fear. One means respect for authority and the other means maximum effort, both mental and physical. No goofing off at any time!

Most companies have recognized the drudgery of daily work and have allowed "breaks" in the middle of the morning and in the middle of the afternoon. A break is a legitimate thing, but as a believer, you are not to distort them or abuse them. One of the principles under which we work all the time is self-discipline. Management recognizes that efficiency is increased by fair play and by right treatment of the employee. But as a Christian, we are not to abuse or misuse fair treatment from the employer. Anyone who uses a job to loaf or goof off is not worthy of that job. Self-discipline on the job is absolutely necessary so we will not abuse the privileges given us. So the word for "fear" means respect for authority and the word "trembling" means self-discipline so you can produce at your maximum.

A Most Important Mental Attitude

To accompany these two words we have just studied, we have a third concept which is really a mental attitude. "In singleness of your heart" is a prepositional phrase and it means a mental attitude based on the doctrinal truth in your mind. With the two characteristics we have studied above, plus the right mental attitude, you then have the basis for success and achievement. "Phobos" and "tremos" mean minus mental attitude sins on the job and this "singleness of heart" spells out that attitude. "In singleness" is from "en" which is a preposition plus the instrumental and it means "by means of" singleness of heart. "Aplotes" is singleness and it means integrity of mind, it means simplicity, it means devotion to truth and right and hard work. This is when the norms and standards of your mind keep you in line and prevent mental attitude sins from wiping you out. Now you may have some worker, and, as far as his ability is concerned, he is a genius. But mental attitude sins have wiped out his effectiveness. This "aplotes" means that he puts guards around his ability and will not allow false norms or standards to come in and disrupt his effectiveness.

Illustration--Suppose the job is to keep a warehouse clean. He understands his job and he is devoted to it. But mental attitude sins come in and before the day is over, he has wiped himself out. So the word "singleness" means integrity on the job. The word heart is "kardia" and it refers to the norm and standard lobe of your mind. You can develop in your job by your natural I.Q. but it takes doctrine in your mind to develop the spiritual I.Q. and these are the norms and standards which will carry you over the long pull of the years. This is why so many companies have found that if a person is a genuine Christian, he is better on the job and a better job risk than one who is not a Christian. The word "heart" is a genitive of source, and it refers to your frame of reference, and this frame of reference is the storehouse of your character and from this frame of reference, you exhale loyalty, integrity, character and devotion to hard work. The more truth you learn, the more devotion you can give to your job, and you can really do your work as unto the Lord. This makes it possible for the Lord to promote you. Through your perceptive ability, you know what your job is, but it takes integrity and Christian norms and standards for you to put that know-how into production. Now that is what "fear and trembling and singleness of heart" really means.

Get This Meaning

So this verse really says this--"Those on the job should recognize the authority of management, according to the flesh, associated with respect for authority and by giving your job the utmost, by means of the singleness of integrity of your heart." This means the believer on the job has soul involvement with his job. Every facet of his soul is involved.

1st--Self-consciousness This means self-discipline on the job. This means concentration on the job.

2nd--Mentality

This has to do with perception on the job and the other is the divine attitude toward your job which keeps you minus mental attitude sins.

3rd--Volition

On the job you make volitional decisions comparable with the company policy. These decisions are consistent with the fact that as a believer you are in full-time Christian service and you are doing your job as unto the Lord. Your will is involved and your will is dominated by your determination to do your job well.

4th--Emotion

This is an emotional attitude of doing your job so you will please the Lord at all times. This is COLOSSIANS 3:16-17 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Emotion is residual doctrine responding to God with your maximum effort on your job.

5th--Conscience

This means that you have convictions about what is right and wrong and you take those convictions into your daily work and you give yourself without reservation to your task. As an unbeliever, you were a sorry worker. You learned how to goof off and smile at the boss and you learned how to be two-faced and do all kinds of sneaky things. You now have substituted new norms and standards for your old ways of life and you just can't do those things anymore. Formerly your old sin nature defeated you every day but now you are in control and you do your daily work as unto the Lord. If you have mental attitude sins such as jealousy or hatred or bitterness or pride, these attitudes will cause a short circuit and you can't perform as you ought. It says, "As unto Christ." So your job is a job as unto the Lord and this involves the daily inhale of truth from the Word of God.

EPHESIANS 6:6 "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;" Here is your character, your stability, your challenge. "Not with eyeservice as menpleasers" Eye service is from a long word, "ophthalmodoulia." We get the word "ophthalmology" which means the branch of medicine dealing with the eye and this means an "eye-slave." This is to do your job to attract attention, to call attention to yourself. We are not to please men, but to please the Lord. Remember, it is God who promotes, and if he doesn't promote you, you haven't been promoted. And if God promotes you, then you will enjoy the job. "Menpleasers" is one who tries to please people at the expense of company policy. This is the one who plays politics on the job regardless of character or integrity or norms and standards.

The Believer Ought To Be The Best

The believer ought to be the best worker, the hardest worker, the most fruitful worker and the most faithful worker you can find anywhere. But if you have mental attitude sins or you overload the circuit with emotion, then you need a circuit breaker so you can rebound and get back in fellowship. If you are a sorry worker, constantly goofing off on your job, lengthening the coffee break just to waste time, then don't let anyone know you are from Immanuel Church or that I am your pastor. You have not been so taught here.

"Doing the will of God" is a present, active, participle of "poieo" and this means that doing the will of God is the pattern and norm of your life and this is the only plan you will ever have for your daily work. "From the heart" is "ek psuche" and it means from your soul, from every facet of your soul.

Correct Translation

Look at what this verse really says--"Not according to the standard of working to attract attention, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, constantly doing the will of God, the plan of God, out from the source of your soul."

EPHESIANS 6:7 "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:" This kind of work we have outlined in the verses above is to be accompanied with good will. The word is "eunoia" and it means good thinking. If you think God's thoughts on the job, you can "do service" unto the Lord.

EPHESIANS 6:8 "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." The word for good here is "agathos" and this means divine good. So, no matter what your job is, it is divine good. If you are a Christian, your work is "divine good." And every single worker, no matter who he is or what his job is, if he follows the guidelines given in these verses, he will receive rewards from the Lord.