

# (Ephesians) Worship Revolutionizes the Workplace

by Jeff Noblit

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*The Bible teaches that worship in the workplace is about honoring God and His truth in the totality of your life, including your work.*

**Duration:** 1:19:57

**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:5

**Topics:** "Workplace"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of obedience in the workplace. He encourages believers to obey their earthly masters sincerely and without hypocrisy. The speaker also addresses masters, urging them to treat their employees with compassion and goodwill. The sermon emphasizes that both employees and employers will be held accountable by their Master, who is God. The speaker references Ephesians 6:5-9 and other Bible verses to support his points about obedience and the future reward believers can expect from the Lord.

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## Transcript

Turn to Ephesians chapter 6, we come to actually the third aspect of the social order that Paul addresses and Paul is here purposing and in effect doing this. He's getting it set aright in our thinking. First of all, he began talking about the marriage relationship, that part of the social order.

And then he talked about the parenting and parent-child relationship, that aspect of the social order. And now he comes to what the scripture calls masters and slaves because slavery was so prominent in the ancient Greco-Roman empire. Not that the scriptures condone it, but the scriptures are just pointing out that no matter where you find yourself, you can be a Christian and you may be a man's slave, but you can be the Lord's free man in that context.

And so we can take these principles and parallel them directly over to the employer- employee relationship or the management-labor relationship. And how he shows us a unique perspective here that I call worship that revolutionizes the workplace. Worship revolutionizes the workplace and it does.

Now when you talk about worship, a lot of folks think about what we just got through doing and singing and that's a wonderful aspect, corporate praise and singing to our God. And like Martin Luther told us that

the preaching of the word is the highest form of worship. And it is right now we're worshipping.

I'm proclaiming God's truth. You receive it and affirm it and that's giving God glory. That's worshipping.

But also worship has to do with the totality of your everyday life. It's reverencing and honoring God and his truth in the totality of your life. That's worship.

And so he's talking about how we worship in the workplace. Let's look at it together. Ephesians chapter 6 beginning in verse 5 and going through verse 9. Slaves be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling in the sincerity of Christ as to Christ.

In the sincerity of your heart rather as to Christ. Not by way of eye service as men pleasers but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service as to the Lord not to men.

Now that's the third time. As to Christ verse 5. Slaves of Christ verse 6. As to the Lord verse 7. Now look at verse 8. Knowing that whatever good thing one does this he will receive back from the Lord. There he goes again whether slave or free.

Then he shifts gears and talks to masters and masters do the same things to them. Revolutionary thought in this day. And give up threatening knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven and there's no partiality with him.

So over and over he says as to the Lord as to Christ or in the Lord or from the Lord. What is he talking about? He's talking about this is all about God. And Christians truly must go into the workplace worshipping.

Well how do you do that pastor? This is exactly how you do it by following the biblical principles that he gives us here. So once again this is the third aspect of the social order that Paul sets aright. He's talked about marriage.

Talked about the parent-child relationship. Now the work environment. Our management and labor relations.

The point Paul is making is that God's structure for a sane and proper society is not eliminated by Christianity. It's illuminated by Christianity. Very important phrase.

The illumination of truth comes into this social structures. These structures of authority that we're supposed to function by to tell us how to properly function within them. One of the points Paul makes throughout this portion of scripture is that liberty in Christ does not liberate one from God-ordained structures of authority.

We are so weak on authority in America today and we're so weak on honoring authority in the American church. It's like we have this liberal view of things and this liberation of ourselves whereby we're not to answer to anybody and submit to anybody and my goodness you give me the tiniest little reason I can rebel against God-ordained authority whether it's my parents or my my wife or government authority or church authority whatever it is. And in the early church a lot of people because they enjoyed the great liberty they had in Christ they were throwing off all the structures God had ordained and Paul said no you can't take the liberty of Christ as a permission slip to throw off God-ordained authority.

Liberty in Christ frees you within structures of authority not from them. Liberty in Christ does not remove the headship of those over you that God's placed over you but it revolutionizes the whole relationship. You see the one in authority if he's a Christian has a new heart and therefore a new motive in his headship or his leadership.

He now looks at his headship if he's a husband or as a parent or as a church elder or as a civic leader in the community as a function for the glory of God and for the good of those under him. For example in the husband-wife relationship of course in this day wives were not much more than a piece of property. Well God did not remove the husband's authority and headship but he says very clearly husbands love your wives.

That was a radical thought. So he doesn't change it he revolutionizes it and I guess you'd say that is changing it but it doesn't change that there's a structure. As far as the parent-child relationship as I shared with you earlier in this culture you literally could abandon your child or give your child away in slavery or euthanize your child if you wanted to and didn't want her or him hanging around any longer.

But Paul revolutionizes it. He doesn't do away with parental authority but he says fathers do not provoke your children to anger. Lovingly and compassionately and tenderly raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

And now we come to masters and slaves or what we would parallel or have as a parallel in our culture management and labor and he says very clearly in chapter 6 verse 9 masters give up threatening and do to your slaves the way they're supposed to be doing to you. Honor, respect, goodwill. So this true illumination of the structures of authority in society radically contradicts what man would come up with to try to help people who are being abused or run roughshod over by the person in authority over them.

For example, the women's liberation movement with their man-centered humanistic viewpoint would tell us that women are abused today and women are taken advantage of today and by the way they are absolutely right that happens far far too often. But instead of going through God and the power of God to revolutionize the husband-wife relationship they want to throw the whole structure out and forget that God has a God-ordained line of authority for the home. And that leads even to more pain and more suffering for women.

It abandons them to more stresses and a more miserable life ultimately. So the answer is not man-centered humanistic liberalism. The answer is God's power through the gospel transforming human hearts.

And once God's power through the gospel transform the hearts it empowers those humans to live out social relationships as God intended and of course this leads to a witness of God's wisdom and God's greatness and goodness which glorifies God which will draw others to God which is really gospel living and which is really worshiping God in all these relationships. Now let me give you a word on slavery before we dive into the text and do an exposition of it. First of all, I think it's important to note some have condemned Paul saying that he condones slavery.

He doesn't condone slavery and the scripture does not condone slavery. Matter of fact, when you look at the husband-wife relationship, Paul gives it a high and holy divine origin saying that it is a parallel with the relationship with Christ and the church. When you look at the parent-child relationship in chapter 6, Paul says this is right.

It's a divinely ordained system. But when you deal with masters and slaves, he didn't say anything like that. He doesn't give any divine sanction.

He deals with it because that's where the people were in this age. So not only does he separate it from the other institutions separately, Paul understands something and that is that Christianity is not first about changing social orders. Have you noticed that in the scripture? Daniel was a part of a totalitarian dictatorial system, but God didn't call Daniel to start a social reform movement.

God called Daniel to change people through the truth, which brought revival in all of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and certainly changes in the social order follow true revival. So Paul understands first Christianity is not first and foremost about changing the social order. It's first and foremost about changing men.

Historians tell us that in this day, probably half the population was slaves. And in that functioning system, there's no way to come up with a radical new thing and get that fixed in just a few days or a few weeks or months. And some slaves treated their, or some masters rather, treated their slaves well, but others were brutal and abusive and they even killed sometimes those who are under them as slaves.

But one of the things we do note in history records this is that true Christianity has been the force in the world to rid the world of slavery in most places. I remember hearing the story of William Wilberforce. William Wilberforce was a godly politician who had a position in the British parliament during the middle part of the 19th century.

And out of his passion for God and his love for Christ, he went to the British parliament with one chief objective and that was to rid the British empire of slavery. And so he would bring the motion up or try to get a law passed and he was ridiculed and abused and persecuted and laughed off the parliament floor. But year after year after year after year, this brave Christian statesman kept at his task.

It took over 30 years and finally he persuaded enough people in the world to abolish slavery in Great Britain. Now secular textbooks may not point out to you, but the key behind that was William Wilberforce was a man of God. And from his Christian convictions he fought against the evils of slavery.

Now for believers in this day who had slaves, it is true Paul's teaching does fall short of abolition. But he does radically transform the relationship that it no longer functions as the culture would see the typical role between masters and slaves. And that's the process we're still going through today and that is that Christian influence is still having its effect on the institutions of our country and particularly the labor and management relationships.

And I believe it is Christian influence that is making it better and will make it better. Now let's get to the outline. First of all, I want you to notice Roman numeral one that Paul points out that employees must deeply respect the God-ordained authority of their employers.

He says, you must deeply respect the God-ordained authority of employers. In other words, it didn't just happen this way. God's ordained these structures in society.

Now in verse five, he says very clearly, slaves be obedient. Strong, clear, non-negotiable instruction there. Let me give you some points here of thought as we go through the text.

First of all, we ought to be obedient to our employers. Now, of course, unless they ask you to do something that violates scripture and violates morals, but generally you're to obey them because God has

ordained earthly authority. That's why he says here, according to the flesh.

In other words, we all have masters, but God has ordained you have some masters according to the flesh or in the earthly realm. That's the way God's intended it to function. Again, freedom in Christ does not free you from submission to earthly authority.

Authority and submission are God's ideas. They're God's absolute. For example, Jesus honored the authority of his heavenly father, though he was a co-equal to God the father.

His essential nature was the same as God the father. But in John 6 38, he says, for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. So Jesus understood this thing of authority and submission.

Now he's seated at the place of honor and authority in heaven, but while he was functioning on the earth among men of the flesh, he functioned under authority. Now we're liberated in Christ from the sinful flesh and we're liberated in Christ from the lustful temptation to rebel against authority. Now that's where our Christian liberty really is.

That you have the empowerment of God not to be caught up in the rebel movement to despise and dishonor God ordained human authority. And that's one of the ways we show our strength and we be a witness. The enslavement of the flesh and the lust to rebel and think only of ourselves is a woeful slavery in and of itself.

The person who can't joyously submit, the person who cannot joyously honor God ordained authority is a slave to his lust. And it's an enslavement that will destroy. Because the Bible says God destroys the proud.

The Bible says God's opposed to the proud. So liberty is the inner strength the gospel gives to be able to find peace and joy while honoring those God places over me in this world. So when your employer gives you an instruction, obey it.

Because it's ordained of God that you obey. Well secondly, not only obey them because God's ordained earthly authority, but secondly obey them with a reverence for God's wisdom. He says something interesting here in verse 5. Slaves be obedient to those who your masters according to the flesh.

Now here it is, with fear and trembling. What does that mean? Well when you look at that phrase fear and trembling, you find throughout the scriptures that it's used to describe an attitude of reverence and awe in the presence of God. I think that's exactly what he's getting to.

As you obey your employer, you do it out of deep reverence and awe for your Lord. Not for the employer, he's not your focus. God's your focus.

You're worshipping at the workplace by looking beyond them and looking to God. So this is not the slave's fear of a totalitarian leader. No, the believer's delivered from that kind of bondage, that kind of human intimidation, because we're now the slaves of Christ.

And as the slaves of Christ, he demands and he commands us that we render loyalty, honor, and obedience to earthly employers for his sake. Fear and trembling, great reverence and awe. And reverence here and trembling here does not mean bowing down and shuddering in fear of punishment.

It means a deep reverence and respect that God's way is right. That God's truth is wise and final and non-negotiable. So we obey our earthly employers, looking all the while beyond them and looking with reverence and awe at our Lord to whom we will give an account on the last day.

Well, he says, obey them because God's ordained earthly authority. Obey them with reverence for God's wisdom. He set it up this way and he's wise.

And thirdly, we obey our earthly authorities with heartfelt sincerity. He continues on in verse five with fear and trembling in the sincerity of your heart as to Christ. Now that word sincerity there is a word you've probably heard described before.

Literally it transliterates or translates rather out as without wax. In this day, it was common to sell pottery and sometimes when they were curing the pottery, they'd have a crack occur and a man without integrity would take some wax and fill in the cracks and then paint over the outside and sell it as if it was a good vessel. But it wasn't genuine through and through.

And that's what this means here. Be genuine. Don't have any cracks in your heart.

Don't have a bunch of wax on the outside trying to cover up your lack of heartfelt sincerity. You see, brothers and sisters, we are enslaved to Christ. Hopelessly and happily apprehended and captivated by Christ.

He's our all in all. And because of that, we have a new heart of love and affection for Christ. Now listen, from this heart of love and affection for Christ that's been put in us by the new birth, we can serve our earthly employees knowing that the performance of these earthly tasks are related to his rule in our lives.

We're doing these earthly tasks in obedience to these earthly employers with a sincere heart of love and affection for our heavenly Christ. That's worship in the workplace. What if everybody in your workplace really worked like this? It'd revolutionize the workplace, would it not? It certainly would.

And that's what God intends for it to do. Here we also see very clearly the separation of the secular and the sacred or the secular and the spiritual is totally abolished. We don't have components to our lives.

We don't have, well, the spiritual is over here and the social is over here and this part's over there. No, the spiritual affects the totality of your life or it's not spirituality. That's why Jesus told that woman at the well, she said, well, some say you worship over here on this mountain and others say you ought to worship over there on that mountain.

And Jesus said, forget geographic locations. The days coming and now is when you'll worship God in spirit and in truth. You worship him in the totality of your lives.

So all tasks done down here fall under his lordship and ought to be done with sincerity in order to please and honor him. Can I ask you a challenging question as I ask myself this challenging question? Do you go in the workplace actively purposing to worship your Lord by honoring these truths? That's worship in the workplace. Now he says there lastly in verse 5, the last part, as to Christ literally just means under his lordship and according to his will for his pleasure and for his glory.

Just imagine for a moment if Christ were standing before us and your heart was melting with joyous gratitude for his great love for us, his atoning death, his faithful intercession, that covenant personal love

he has for his elect children and your heart melting in that. Would you not do what you do out of sincerity for him? If he asked you to do something? Of course you would if you're a child of God. He said, now discipline yourself to look through your employer and see your Lord and from your heart of hearts labor for him, work for him sincerely from the heart.

Well, I don't know about you, this is pretty revolutionary. Pretty radical, isn't it? Well, notice the fourth thing, obey them without begrudging hypocrisy. Look at verses 6 and 7. Everything's building on this obedience phrase that we began with in verse 5 and then he comes to verse 6 and 7, not by way of eye service as men pleasers.

I don't know what your translation says, but that's a good translation. Not by way of just eye service, just as a man pleaser. In other words, no ulterior motive, no hidden agenda.

Some of the most disappointing things in my life have been to have a friend and find out months and years down the road that our friendship wasn't just friendship, they had an ulterior motive, they had an objective, they had expectations they wanted to get out of being my friend. And that didn't last. And so true work in the workplace that is true worship and truly Christian battles against that ever-present temptation to work though so that you somehow are going to gain out of it.

Now, I don't think there's anything wrong with you gaining out of it, certainly not. I don't even think there's anything wrong with you knowing that you're going to be blessed, maybe get a raise, maybe get in a better position if you work well. But at the, in your heart of hearts, there has to be that abiding understanding that I'm doing this as worship to my Lord who told me to obey my earthly masters, my earthly employers.

Eye service here means self-promotion to do what you do to attract attention to yourself. We're not to do that. We're to do it to help make our employer successful.

I was taught these type principles originally by Bill Gothard in his Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts. And I remember coming home from that and it just sank into my heart. And I realized I'm supposed to work for my employer like working under the Lord.

My goal is to make them successful and not think about myself first. And I came into Dr. Pittman and I sat down and I said, I want you to know something. This was years and years ago.

I said, as a staff member here, my job is to make you the most successful pastor in the Southern Baptist Convention. And I wasn't perfect, but I can tell you that was the purpose of my life. I was striving to worship through my attitude toward him.

And I can guarantee you by God's grace, I did a much better job of honoring him because I learned that truth. And I certainly would have if I had never learned that truth. Well, a man pleaser means that you do not focus in reverence and awe on God, but you look only at the human employer.

You look only at him and serve him ultimately to the end of self-advancement or self-praise. You know, it's even wrong to work diligently and sacrificially and lovingly just for the employer. You've got to look beyond that person and worship.

God, I'm doing it for them, but ultimately I'm doing it for you because you're the gods that ordained and set up this relationship. And I trust your wisdom. When you're a man pleaser, when you only have eye service for your employer, you're losing all God-centeredness in the workplace.

The heart motive in faithfully serving employers comes not from focusing on self or even focusing on the employer, but on a worshipful focus on Christ who ordained earthly masters. Now, he reiterates this again in verse seven. Look at it there.

With goodwill, just he keeps piling it on here. With goodwill, render service as to the Lord. You don't know my employer.

You don't know this guy's a monster. I do know your Lord, and he died for you. As to the Lord, it's the way you do it and not to men.

So he reminds them again, and boy, don't we need this reminder. By the way, if you're ever counseling somebody and they're struggling at work, here's your text right here. Here's your text.

You go to this text and you help your brother or sister. You hold them accountable. You pray with them.

You have compassion for them, but you urge them to live out these principles and see if the workplace environment doesn't get any better. One of our men share with me a while back that he first learned of this several years ago, and he went to his manager of his plant and he said, I want to tell you something. As a Christian, I've learned something, and that is that my job's to work for you like working under the Lord, and I'm going to strive to make you the best manager in this whole company.

He said, you know, ever since then, when I have my reviews, I get the highest marks of anybody out there. Of course, he deserves the highest. I know how he works.

I know how they depend on him, but you know, you won't ever have a problem keeping your job if you go in with that attitude. You'd never have to worry about job security if you have that attitude. Well, the fifth thing here, obey them knowing the Lord will reward you.

You'd obey them knowing the Lord will reward you. Look how he says it in verse eight, knowing, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this, he will receive back from the employer. Didn't say that, does he? This, he will receive back from the Lord.

And by the way, let me give you a little insight here. The Proverbs says that God can move the king's heart like rivers of water. And God at any point in time can reach down and move the heart of your employer and get you a 20% raise just like that.

And I think he glories in doing that for you if he can get you to honor his wisdom and leave it in his hands. Or he can move the king's heart or the manager's heart and turn it against you if he wants to. And sometimes God does that in his sovereign purposes because you need to be humbled.

You need to be broken. You need to seek the Lord more and he puts you in troubling circumstances. But I want to tell you something, God is absolutely in control in your workplace.

And he wants you to go in there worshiping. And he wants you to work for the Lord knowing that your employer may not reward you. He might.

God might move his heart in a mighty way to bless you here. But if he doesn't, you have a reward from the Lord. And what he's saying is that the last day when we face our Lord is motivation for the present day.

And he says something there with one word that I think we need to emphasize. And that's the first word of verse 8. And that is knowing. Knowing.

In other words, Paul's saying this is something we Christians know. This is something you've been taught before. There's some things we know.

And because we know these things, listen now, we're liberated from fears. We are liberated from self-preserving, self-protecting attitudes and freed to give ourselves the way the Lord wants us to in trusting him and his word and his truth in our lifestyles. And in this case, in the workplace.

Notice some of the things we know. First Corinthians 15:58 says, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. Do you know that? Small group leader, when you make that next phone call that you don't want to make, do you know your toil is not in vain in the Lord? Do you know when you go ahead and write that full tithe out to the Lord's church for the Lord's glory and it's sort of a struggle? Do you know that your toil is not in vain in the Lord? You ought to know that.

When you enroll that next person in small groups or invite that next family to visit the church and get them into the gospel, you must know that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. There's some things we can know. Paul said, you know, in this case, you're going to get a reward from the Lord one day if you do what's right as the employee.

Oh, some other things. Second Corinthians 4:14. Knowing that he raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

Knowing that there's a resurrection, there's a future life for us that lasts forever. Second Corinthians 5:6. Therefore, always or being always of good courage and knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. In other words, this isn't our place, our home somewhere else.

We know that. Say, pastor, if I go in the workplace and really strive to live this out and walk in this worship of honoring these biblical truths, they'll think I'm of another world. You are of another world, another kingdom, a higher world.

That's why I want you to do it for two reasons. That you'll be a witness and that you'll suffer. Do you know that? It's ordained that you and I suffer down here because we don't fit down here.

And don't go out there and try to suffer. Enough of it will find you. Just be faithful.

Enough of it will find you. But you'll also be a blessed witness for God. And before long, you'll find people in the workplace coming up to you and saying, I need to talk to you.

I'm having trouble in my marriage. And there's something different in your life. I see God in your life.

You have a security. You have a joy. You're not out here.

Dog eat dog fighting for everything you can get. You're just work with the peace and a joy and an enthusiasm that's contagious. Tell me what's different in your life.

Well, what if my employer does not reward me? What if my employer does not compensate me? What if my employer does not appreciate me? Well, remember, you're not ultimately working for him. You're

working for the Lord. And you're not ultimately looking to him or her to reward you.

You're looking to the Lord's reward. And that last day look motivates present day work. And that's where God wants us to be.

He gives us another encouragement there in verse eight, when he says, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, each one means God's omniscient eyes, miss nothing. All of those dozens of times when you went the extra mile, those dozens of times when you gave it the extra effort at work, nobody noticed and nobody gave you credit. Nobody patted you on the back.

Listen to me, worker. Listen to me, employee. God has a record of it.

He's going to reward you. Is that not good news? God keeps a record. He says, each one's going to get rewarded back for how you functioned in the workplace.

If you render the service to your earthly employer and do so out of God-centered worship, then he will richly reward you on that day. Second Corinthians 5.10 says, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. That day is coming.

Now he says also there in verse eight, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. Brothers and sisters, there is coming a day when your social status down here means absolutely nothing. There's two places where the ground is absolutely level.

The ground is absolutely level at the cross. Your social status, your family line, your family name, your power in the community, your wealth and influence, your popularity means nothing at the cross. You're an equal center with everyone else.

And by the way, whosoever will may come. Anyone can come if they'll come. Anyone can come if they'll come.

Secondly, the ground's level at the judgment seat of Christ. You might have been the mightiest master in the Roman Empire and everybody respected you and looked up to you and held you in awe and commanded thousands of slaves, but you'll be rewarded exactly like the lowest slave in the kingdom. The ground is level at the judgment, the judgment seat of Christ.

Well, Roman numeral two, and this will be a lot shorter, not only must employees, how did I word that? Employees must deeply respect the God-ordained authority of their employers. Secondly, employers must treat employees with God-ordained compassion and goodwill. Notice how he says it in verse nine, and masters do the same to them.

Now that was a shocking thought in this day. I mean, these masters had the power of life and death over their slaves. But he says, now you treat them with the same kind of respect, the same sort of dignity, the same kind of goodwill.

To show you how radical this was, there was a proverb that was commonly quoted in this day that said this, quote, all slaves are enemies, end of quote. You just might as well view your slave as your enemy and keep them under your thumb, keep them beat down. That's the only way to make them function right.

Many masters were tyrants and many masters were abusive, and they were known to threaten beatings and threaten sexual harassment or threaten banishing a slave to another part of the Roman Empire, making that slave be separate from his family and loved ones for the rest of his life. And so Paul picks up on that phrase there in verse nine, and give up threatening. In other words, as a Christian master, you're going to be revolutionized in the way you oversee your slaves.

Or as a Christian employer, you should have a revolutionary concept of how you view your employees. Give up threatenings. That means all forms of manipulation and demeaning are terrifying threats.

That doesn't mean that you don't give a firm word every now and then that certain rewards or punishment might be the case if a certain person doesn't do as they're supposed to. That's certainly in line, but this is beyond that. This is that manipulation, demeaning, terrifying intimidation that a master could have over slaves.

So here the slaves have already been instructed in how to show respect from the sincerity of their heart and goodwill to their masters. Now the masters in a radical revolutionary concept for the day are commanded to do the same back toward the slaves. Now, two points here about this.

First of all, employers are fellow slaves of Christ. And that's what he points out here. He says, masters do the same for them.

Give up threatening, knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven. You have a master too. You have somebody you're going to answer to.

They answer to you perhaps in the earth, but you have someone you're going to answer to. Colossians 4.1 as Paul addresses this to the church at Colossae says it this way, masters grant to your slaves, justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a master in heaven. So first of all, your fellow slaves, your slave on earth is your fellow slave to Christ.

And that puts you on equal ground. Secondly, he says, employers must treat employees with God ordained compassion and goodwill because the Lord will judge without partiality. Notice what he says there in the text, both their master and yours is in heaven and there's no partiality with him.

In other words, appearance will not affect his judgment. No special deals will be made with him on that day because your power, your influence, your respectability, or your popularity. So employers must so conduct themselves with employees as one who will give an account as a fellow servant of this heavenly Lord.

Can you think about that for a moment? You, you've got a business and you're the employer and you've got employees and you're a Christian and they're Christian, at least you all claim to be. One day at the judgment seat of Christ, you'll give an answer to God for how you treated your fellow equal servant of Jesus Christ. Now that had changed the way you view your employees.

That's a powerful insight. Let me summarize it this way. Employers oversee employees knowing that they are responsible to their Lord and master for how they treat them.

All of you that employ people will give an account for how you treat your employees. Secondly, employers are also responsible to the Lord and master of their employees. Did you get the change in the wording there? In other words, you won't just stand before your Lord and master and give an account.

There's an aspect that when you stand before the Lord, you'll give an account to the Lord and master of those people who is under you. In other words, God says, I particularly am going to look out for those under authority. I, in a very special way, am going to care for and keep record of how you dealt with my servants because ultimately I'm everyone's master.

So employers oversee their employees knowing ultimate accountability is to God and employers must remember their master is Lord of heaven, which once again emphasizes there's no partiality. Now bring this whole thing full circle. Here Paul ends the instruction on how to illuminate, set a right, the social orders.

He talks about this revolutionary new concept of employees deeply respecting and honoring employers, not begrudgingly, not with hypocrisy, but with sincerity, with obedience from the heart, he says. And then he says, masters, you got to give up all this threatening and all the superiority attitude and treat them with compassion and goodwill, knowing that you're going to give an account to your master, but also to their master who happens to be the same master, but there'll be two aspects to it. And here's where I come to, how do you do this? Well, that's why the whole thing begins back in Ephesians chapter 5, look with me, Ephesians 5, 18, and do not get drunk with wine, that's always a good idea, for that's dissipation, that's waste, but be filled with spirit.

That's literally what it says, be filled with spirit, or as I say it, be full of God. And what he means there, it's a command to cultivate this, he means cultivate a love for God in your heart. And the only way you can ever go in the workplace and ever genuinely and really expect to live this out, is if you as a Christian are working toward loving God.

If there's not a growing love of God, and therefore a growing respect and reverence for God's truth, you'll not be enabled to carry out this kind of ministry, this worship in the workplace. You just can't do it, it's not of the flesh. The flesh revolts against it, the flesh pushes against it, the flesh rejects it.

But if God is in you, and you're cultivating a love for God, and you get up and get in the morning, and you have your quiet time, and in that quiet time you've refreshed in your love passion for God, then you can go in the workplace focusing on Him, and worshiping Him, and living out these truths. Now what happens when you do that in a very specific way? What does it say in Ephesians 5 21? He says, and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. Be subject to one another.

What's he mean? You are now capable because of the change in your life, that's Ephesians 1, 2, and 3, the radical transformation of sovereign grace. Sovereign grace, the grace of God through Jesus Christ, radically changes us. We're born again.

After you're born again, Ephesians 5 18, you work toward cultivating a passionate love for God in your life. As you work toward cultivating a passionate love for God, and don't lose me on this, then you are empowered to live in submission to God's will and to one another. And in the work relationship, that submission means as an employee, you respect, you honor, you obey sincerely from the heart because you're doing it for God.

As the employer, you treat that person under you with compassion and goodwill, knowing you'll give an answer to your master and to their master. And when you're doing that, you're worshiping God. And when you worship God like that, you'll be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, and He'll get all the glory.

And that's why we're here, to bring Him all the glory we possibly can. The preceding message comes from the expository preaching ministry of senior pastor teacher, Dr. Jeff Knoblett. For more information or other materials that are available, contact Anchored in Truth Ministries at [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org) or call us toll free at 1-800-565-PRAY.

It's a love that produces an intimacy, and that's what He's done for us. Now, turn back to Ephesians again, Ephesians chapter 5, and we'll just do a running little overview here to note how He does all of it. In verse 25, He loved the church.

In verse 25, He gave Himself for the church. In verse 26, He sanctified the church. He cleansed the church.

He washed the church. So that in verse 27, He can present to Himself a church holy and blameless. He does it.

Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

If you're going to listen to my preaching, you've got to get very used to something. Salvation is all grace. All of God, none of me.

He gets all the and all the glory. So by His love, the bride believers us, we become beautifully and perfectly adorned for our groom, Jesus Christ. So we become like Him.

So we can be presented to Him. So for eternity, we can glorify Him. You see, His love has established the most intimate relation with us.

We are in a true sense now bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Because of His love, we become His special, now listen to this, we become His special object of delight. Did you know in the eyes, now listen to me, and in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, you believer, are His special object of delight.

God's not sitting in heaven with His arms crossed saying, well, I'm going to watch that rascal for a while. No, He's sitting in heaven and tears are running down His face and His heart beat throbs when He hears you, when He sees you, when you pray to Him. You are because of His doing the glorious, perfected, blameless, holy object of His special delight.

Wow. Ask me why I serve Him. Ask me why I'll be faithful to Him.

We love Him because He first loved us. And He didn't just love me. He didn't say, I'll tell you what, I'm going to love you, I'll tell you what, do.

I love you and I'm going to let you get your little place over in the corner of glory. And you can just kind of be up here. You ought to be in hell, but I'm going to put you on the corner of glory.

And you just kind of behave yourself up there in glory. And I'll let you stay up. No, no, no, no, no, no.

He's going to so love you when you get to heaven, you'll never get over it. You are the special object of delight in His eyes. Isaiah 62 5 says, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.

I did not take the time in my meditations to write out thoughts on this, but do you remember when you were married? I'm going to tell you, I delighted in my bride. I still do. After all, she's delightful.

He exceedingly more delights over you. You see, He wants you to be intimate with Him. It's an intimacy producing love.

You see, His love for us is such that He makes us become the gift to Himself for His own joy. When God takes you into glory, when you're going to be there with Him, and to an extent even now, I'm sure, you're going to make Him so happy. Did you know that? He is going to be overjoyed with you.

This is the intimate relation His love produces. This is the high destiny of the church. This is the end for which Christ died to purify, to adorn and make us glorious so that we might be prepared to sit with Him on His throne.

Intimacy. Now, where's Paul going with this? He says, oh, by the way, husbands, I got you in mind here. Husbands, husbands, I got a word for you here.

Husband, your love is to the end of drawing to yourself your wife in a union and intimacy like no other on earth. Listen to this. The husband so loves his wife that her fears, her insecurities, her reservations are banished.

And ladies, only love can do that, right? God has allowed ladies to have a lot of these things in their hearts. But God has ordained that the husband can so love his wife that the things that would keep her pushed away, her reservations, her timidity, her fears, her insecurities are banished away in that great love the husband has for the wife. And therefore, in the intimacy, she cleaves to him bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

Now, let's look at this another way. We get to verses 26 and 27. Jesus is sanctifying, cleansing and washing the bride.

To the end that verse 27, he can present this bride to himself in all of her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she should be holy and blameless. So we see two chief ends here, two chief designs in Christ's death for his bride. Number one, that he would gain for himself a bride for his own delight.

We've talked about that. That speaks of intimacy. And number two, to prepare the bride for that high destiny.

Now, from the God-centered perspective, it's already done. You're glorified. From the manward perspective, we are being perfected.

We are, that's what our forefathers called the perseverance of the saints. We are being sanctified and God's persevering us through his grace and the work of his Holy Spirit. So that as we walk through this life, listen to me, disappointments, trials, death, failure, disease, heartache, abandonment, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

He uses all this stuff to be perfecting us. To lean more on him, to trust more in him, to look more to him, to depend more on him. That's why I told our deacons the other day, they said, how can we pray for you, pastor? I said, pray this, pray that when difficult seasons come, I will glean out of it what God wants me to

get.

Don't just pray to be gone. If you just pray me out of trouble, you won't have a good pastor. Pray that I grow as I'm supposed to grow and mature as I'm supposed to mature.

And so it is with you and your area of life and responsibility. So God, through his son's death, is preparing a bride for his son to be the object of his delight. And he's preparing the bride for that high destiny.

The death of Christ for us and the dealings of Christ with us is his love drawing us into intimacy with himself. And by the way, that is the essence of salvation. Let me say something to you this morning.

We've had salvation in the evangelical life and in Baptist life, particularly on its head. We've had it upside down. We've had it on its head.

The emphasis in scripture is not what you're saved from. The emphasis in scripture is who you are saved for. It is gloriously true you are saved from hell.

But that's more the byproduct. The glorious truth of scripture is you're saved from the lordship of sin, the lordship of self, the lordship of the world. So you can be saved unto the true lordship of God through his son, Jesus Christ.

Intimacy. That's why I wrote my little witnessing booklet, because it takes you away from man-centered, what am I missing, to God-centered, what am I gaining? God and his glory. His love for us is unique.

His love for us is special. And that's why it's compared to a bride. We've already talked about that some.

His love is such that he has for no other order of creatures in all the universe, no matter how highly exalted they may be. You know, if an angel, one of God's glorious angels, appeared right now on this platform, the dazzling majesty and glory of that angel would put every one of us on our face. They are an unbelievable, beautiful, glorious, awe-inspiring creature, and they are extremely intelligent.

So outwardly, you'd think God would thank a lot of them. But the scriptures teach, no, he loves you infinitely more than he loves angels. He has a love for you much greater, more unique and more special than any creatures he's ever created.

And because of his love, we are his in a way that no other being participates in. Did you know that? We are God's in such a unique way that no other being in the universe gets in on it but us. The closest you can come to in the human economy is the unique love of a groom for a bride.

And the scriptures teach there's coming a climactic and glorious day of glorification and the church will be the admiration of all the universe. Did you hear that? We will be the admiration of all the universe. Well, what's in the universe? I don't know.

There may be 400 trillion billion angels. I don't know. Can you just see all the host of all the universe gathering around and gazing on us and saying, wow, did you see the bride of Christ? Did you see that? That is the most stupendous and wonderful and glorious bride, us.

All the host will glorify us. We will be free from all defects. We will have absolute perfection.

That'll be the culmination of sanctification. If you're not enjoying God much now, you're going to freak out in heaven. Heaven is all God and it's going to be better.

I want to say this. It's going to be better than the best fishing trip you could have ever been on in this world. It's going to be better than the best stinking college football game you could ever watch.

And that stadium, that's an idol's temple. It's going to be better than the best job and all the stuff money could ever possibly buy you in this world. It's going to be better than all the sexual experiences you could put together in this world.

The pleasures of God are infinitely wonderful. We just can't taste them as well as we need to because of the limitations of our fallen flesh. But we're to begin tasting some of them now.

Well, Paul, where are you going with all this doctrine and theology? Well, husbands, let me end this section with husbands. Husbands, he's saying, in like manner, a husband's love that has been perfected by Christ, listen, will transform his wife so that she becomes intimately his. In a special, unique, one-of-a-kind, glorious way.

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