

CHRISTIAN EMPLOYMENT

The isagogic (the department of theology which is introductory to exegesis and the literary history of the Bible) of our passage has Paul teaching sound doctrine regarding Christian slaves (doulos) and their responsibility towards their masters (despotes) of the first century (AD).

Paul's doctrinal position on the subject of slavery was that a Christian may become a slave but shouldn't own one (Book of Philemon).

"No longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord." (16)

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal.3:28)

The 20th century (AD) interpretation of our passage would be Christian Employment.

We will study our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

- Submit – job authority (hupotasso/ chain of authority; Col.3:22-4:1)
- Specifications – job description (type of work, hours, pay, benefits, etc)
- Speech – job conduct
- Stealing – job ethics
- Spiritual – job mission work (1 Tim.6:1-2)

Paul explained why these five areas needed sound doctrine – “that they (masters) may adorn the doctrine of our God and Savior in every respect.” (2:10; 1:5, 9)

This lesson will study SIX aspects of CHRISTIAN EMPLOYMENT

1. Employment is placed under the doctrinal category of divine institution #4 (nation).

- DI #1 – freedom (Gen.1-2)
- DI #2 – marriage (Gen.2-3)
- DI #3 – family (Gen.4)
- DI #4 – nation (Gen.10): free enterprise (employment/ Gen.3)

As category of DI#4, employment has its own authority structure and its own laws of establishment (Gen.2: 5, 15-17).

2. A curse (itsabon / travail) was placed upon the area of employment with the fall of Adam (Gen.3: 17-19; Rom.8: 18-25; 2 Thess.3: 8) (Isa.55: 13; Ezek.28: 24) change in Mental Attitude.

- Transgression (Gen.3:17)
- Toil and thorns (3:17-18)
- Tired (3:19a)
- Tomb (3:19b)

3. As a category of DI#4, employment is divided into two areas of responsibility: employer and employee (Eph.6: 5-9; Col.3: 22-4:1).

The authority lies with employer of the business and submission lies with employee. This means employer sets the policy and the employee negotiates and complies or moves on to another job (Matt.20: 1-16).

It is the position of authority and NOT the personality of authority that is submitted to on the job (1 Pet.2: 18; Eph.6: 5; Titus 2:9). You will have all sorts of authority personalities in your life and they will be character builders in you (Rom.5:3-5).

4. Christian employee's submission should be to a clearly spelled out job description and chain of command related to it.

“Slaves (employees), be obedient to those who are your masters (employers) according to the flesh (job description), with fear and trembling, in sincerity of your heart, as to Christ.” (Eph.6:5)

“Slaves (employees), in all things (job description) obey (**hupakouo / p.a.impv**) those who are your masters (employers) on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work (**ergazomai / p.a.impv**) heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord whom you serve.” (Col.3:22-24)

The job description should be compatible with ethics of word of God and not legalism. The job description contract should spell-out hour and wages, responsibility and chain of command, and benefits and compensations.

5. The Christian employee is commanded to do his work HEARTILY (ek + ablative psuche) (Col.3: 23).

This means to give 100% to the agreed job description contract – a good day's work for an agreed upon day's wage. It means giving a 100% of one's time, talents, temperament, and top productivity. It is giving the best of you to it.

“**With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men.**” (Eph.6:7)

6. Christian employee is warned against EYESERVICE (ophalmodouleia)

100% not only when the boss is present but also when he is absent) work habits - “Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves (employees) of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” (Eph.6:6; Col.3:22)

Don't accept the false premise of slowing down or loafing when the boss isn't present and don't be critical of others who play this game. YOU DO IT BECAUSE IT IS THE WILL OF GOD and “**knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.**” (Eph.6:8)

As a Christian athlete, don't loaf in practice. As a Christian student, don't loaf in schoolwork. As a Christian young person in home, don't loaf in chores. It establishes poor work ethics and habits. Remember that God established the ethics of good work habits prior to the fall of Adam (Luke 12:42-44).

Joseph (OT) is a good example of the application of God's work ethics (Gen.39: 2-5, 21-23; 41:39-41).