



GOD HAS A PLAN—AND WE'RE PART OF IT
“God’s Plan for the Workplace” Ephesians 6:5-9

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In the first century many believers were slaves or slave owners. How they conducted themselves in these capacities was vitally important. Our situation is different, but our work habits and relationships are no less significant. Half of our waking hours are spent there!

I. The Institution of Slavery in the First Century.

- A. Slaves and slavery were realities the early church had to face.
 - 1. War prisoners. 2. Kidnapped. 3. Born slaves. 4. Self sold.
- B. Slaves were “human beings” but not “legal persons. They could not:
 - 1. Marry. 2. Have kin. 3. Inherit. 4. Represent themselves.
- C. Slaves made up approximately 1/3 of the population of major cities.
- D. Slaves sometimes harshly treated but frequently “manumitted” by age 30.
- E. Slaves often highly educated and achieved positions of great importance.
- F. Slaves and masters could be members of same fellowship. (e.g. Philemon)

II. The Instructions to Slaves and Masters in the First Century Church.

- A. Slaves treated by Paul as responsible, ethical, spiritual people!
- B. Slaves to see themselves from a spiritual perspective. 6:5-8
 - 1. Obey Christ. 2. Slaves of Christ. 3. Will of God.
 - 4. Serving the Lord. 5. The Lord will reward.
- C. Slaves accordingly respond differently to their masters.
 - 1. Because they obey Christ, they are respectfully obedient. 6:5
 - 2. Because they are slaves of Christ, they work with integrity.
 - a. Sincerity of heart. b. Not only when the boss is watching.
 - 3. Because they are serving the Lord, they are enthusiastic. 6:7
 - a. Doing the will of God. b. Serving wholeheartedly.
 - 4. Because they are serving the Lord, not men, He will reward. 6:8
 - a. Good is rewarded. b. It makes no difference who does it.
- D. Masters adopt the same attitudes outlined above. 6:9
- E. Masters (earthly) are aware that they have a Master in heaven.
- F. Masters know they are dealing with the heavenly Master’s people.
- G. Masters know social standing is not a significant factor with the Master.

III. The Application for Workers and Bosses in the Twentieth Century.

- A. The workplace is to be seen as a place of worship.
- B. Work is to be viewed as eternally significant.
- C. People, whatever their social status, are to be regarded as God’s creation.

Points to Ponder: How can my workplace be transformed by spiritual considerations?