

Spirit-Filled Work Relationships

Ephesians 6:5-9

Study Questions

1. According to 5:22-6:10, there are four roles within God's new society Paul gives instructions for.
 - a. What are those 4 roles?
 - b. On what command in 5:18 does our obedience in these roles depend?
 - c. Our obedience to those commands is ultimately our obedience to which over-arching command? (see 5:15-17)
2. In 6:5-9, Paul addresses slaves and masters, but he does not speak out rightly against the institution of slavery.
 - a. What is Paul's primary concern in 6:5-9?
 - b. How is Paul's primary concern separate from abolishing an immoral institution?
 - c. How can knowledge of 1st century Roman slavery inform our understanding of this text?
3. The responsibility of slaves to masters is clear: Obey as you would obey Christ.
 - a. How would you explain obedience "with fear and trembling" and "a sincere heart"?
 - b. What is the difference between an individual who aims to please someone and a "people-pleaser"?
 - c. What does 6:8 promise to those who obey what God commands here?
4. In 6:9, masters are required to "do the same to them" and "stop your threatening."
 - a. What does Paul mean when he says, "do the same to them."?
 - b. What reason does Paul give for them to stop their threatening?
 - c. How does the equal treatment and consideration of slaves and masters (Gal 3:28) ultimately undermine slavery as an institution?
5. Application: Obviously, slavery is not something that exists any more in our society, but considering what more mild forms of slavery were in the first century, there is a sense in which employees, for a certain amount of time and in a certain way are "enslaved" to their employers.
 - a. Why is it important for Christians to view even the mundane things they do, not as a means to an end, but as an opportunity to glorify God?
 - b. What principles can employees glean from this text regarding how they are to approach their work?
 - c. What principles can employees and managers glean from this text that will enable them to faithfully exercise their responsibilities?
 - d. What over-arching principle does Paul appeal to in this text regarding both employee and employer relationships?