

Mutual Respect in the Work Place

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-5 Larry: Divorce Care Holidays. Craft Night. Artists. Thrill.
- B. Slide6 Please stand if you have served in the armed services: We wish to express our deepest **thanks & appreciation** to all our **Veterans** for serving us & our country, **both** here & abroad. [And a happy B-day *on Fri* to the *US Marines*]
- C. Slide7 Israel Trip: March 2018. Contact Kristyn.
- D. Slide8 Homelessness Forum: 1st we are stopping our feeding ministry for a time. Accepting nor more food & clothes till we have more direction. TY for everyone who has been apart of that ministry for the last decade +.
 - 1. **Backstory:** 5 cities in *So.W.RivCnty* (Tem, Mur, Wild, LE, Menif) have been working together to find & implement solutions to help solve homelessness. 1st the local governments have come together, 2nd local law enforcements have, & now the invitation to the *faith leaders & volunteers*. If you'd like to be part of the solution come out *Tomorrow Night*, Old Town Tem Community Theater.

II. Slide9 **Intro:** *Mutual Respect in the Work Place*

- A. Slide10a *Four score and seven years ago* (87yrs ago i.e. 1776) *our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*
 - 1. Gettysburg address, then Pres Abraham Lincoln, on Nov.19,1863. A call for **equality** that was a direct affront to the practice of **slavery** of its day.
 - 2. But this morning, different from America's dark time in history past, of the Slide10b *transatlantic slave trade*. Different from the global atrocity today of Slide10c Human Trafficking, with an estimated *25-40 million people* who are enslaved today. Making it the fastest-growing activity of *trans-national criminal organizations* (estimated at **\$150 billion** in annual profit is generated from *forced labor* alone)
 - 3. Slide11 This morning, we look at that *1st century slaves* which was different.

a) Yes, slavery existed in Paul's day and he did not try to overthrow it. Apparently these were Christian slaves under Christian masters he is writing to.

b) **Slide12** 1Cor.7:20-24 Paul said, *Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you. 21 Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you - but if you get a chance to be free, take it. 22 And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a **slave of Christ**. 23 God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world. 24 Each of you, dear brothers and sisters, should remain as you were when God first called you.* [so, paradoxically, this *latter slavery i.e. slave of Christ*, is really *the highest human freedom*]

4. So, did Paul miss his opportunity to denounce/abolish slavery?

a) No, he was pretty clear in his letter to Timothy. He told him to stay in *Ephesus* in **Slide13** 1Tim.1:3^{niv}. **Then** called out *Slave Traders* specifically in vs.8-10 he said, *We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. 9 We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10 for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers - and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine.*

b) **But here**, Paul confronts the *practical issue* of how slaves can deal with **their** situation, **not** whether slavery should be *abolished* (an issue not relevant to his point in the context of *household codes*).

c) **It's like** if you were working in **China** today, you couldn't do anything to change that country politically, you would simply point Christians to *how to live for Christ in their situation that they face*.

B. In the first-century Graeco-Roman world, it was standard for every household member to be subject in daily affairs to the patriarch. This viewpoint was central to Graeco-Roman society. Paul works *within this framework* to suggest a model that makes **Christ** the *ultimate authority* - his viewpoint is based on **mutual love**. Faithlife Study Bible

1. **Slide14** It's about integrating every part of our life to be lived out for **Jesus**. **Whether as** a married person; **as** parents/as a child; **or** as a servant/master, employee/employer.

2. So, slavery existed in Paul's day and he *didn't* try to overthrow it.

III. Slide15 **BONDSERVANTS / EMPLOYEES (5-8)**

- A. In the Roman Empire, people were either **slaves** or they were **free**. These 2 statuses were central to the social and the legal fabric of the Roman world. Unlike in recent history, slavery in Rome was not based on **race** or **ethnicity**; anyone could become a slave and nearly any slave could become free. Consequently, the Roman world was composed of these 2 groups of people who lived and worked together and were distinguishable by their **social status**. Faithlife Study Bible
1. Christianity arose in a **real-life, tension-filled** setting.
 2. Paul's approach to the slavery problem of his day was to urge both slaves & masters to **acknowledge Christ as their Lord**.
 3. Keep in mind, *Where the gospel permeates lives, the institution of slavery will be undermined and abolished.*
- B. It has been estimated that they were some **60 million slaves** in the Roman Empire.
1. Possibly 1/3 of the largest cities were slaves (eg. Rome, Corinth, & Ephesus)
- C. **Ways in the 1st century to get into slavery:** 1) born into the slave system 2) A judgment against a debtor could force a free person into slavery 3) If in poverty you could sell yourself into slavery (ask a rich man, maybe a better situation you're in) 4) Prisoner of war 5) Father sell you into slavery 6) Penal slavery was used to punish crimes against the state, *evading a census or taxes, or military service* 7) Orphans, abandon babies (*exposure of newborns* was a practiced form of *post-birth* control. Left exposed to die, they were often picked up by slave traders & sold as a slaves).
1. Some were thus a **willing opportunity**, others entered into it **unwilling**.
- D. **Whether slave or free** (8) – reminds us today that Paul's instruction is just as applicable to the **modern-day employee** as to the 1st century slave.
1. **Slide16a** So we can use each of these points Paul lists in figuring out **how to serve Christ while at work**. *How do you live for Christ in your situation you face at work?*

E. How would Paul's list change the work place, & every employers view of Christians & Christianity, if every believing employee fulfilled this list?

1. Slide16b Being *obedient* to what you're told to do.

a) Slaves in the Roman Empire worked as *farmers, sanitation personnel, educators, nannies, and shoe keepers*.

2. Slide16c Working *with fear & trembling* meaning *respect/honor* (not fright).

3. Slide16d Twice he mentions *with the right heart attitude*.

a) In *Sincerity* or *simplicity, uprightness, singleness of heart*. Don't be a clock-watcher, *but* obey from the heart.

b) An employer can buy your time, your physical presence at a certain location, even a number of skilled muscular motions per hour *or* day.

But you can't buy a man's *initiative, loyalty, nor his devotion of heart*.

4. Slide16e Twice he mentions *as to Christ/to the Lord*, reminding us we really *work for Jesus*.

a) Serve your employer as you would serve Christ (even the most menial tasks).

b) By rendering *ungrudging service* to their true heavenly owner, slaves can work not for their value in the marketplace, *but* for their value to **the One** who poured out **His life for them**. *New Geneva Study Bible*

5. Slide16f Working hard even when your *not being watched*.

a) *Not with eyeservice* – labor when the master is present, *but* relaxation & laziness as soon as he's gone. [Jim Elliot said, *wherever you are, be all there*]

b) A retired man became interested in the construction of an addition to a shopping mall. Observing the activity regularly, he was especially impressed by the conscientious operator of a large piece of equipment. The day finally came when my friend had a chance to tell this man how much he'd enjoyed watching his scrupulous work. Looking astonished, the operator replied, *You're not the supervisor?*

c) Slide16g *“Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it.”* Zig Ziglar

6. Slide16h Working with *goodwill or wholeheartedly*.

a) And what will I get out of it? *Good work will get you good pay from the Master, regardless of whether you are slave or free* (msg).

F. In her book *Today's Good Word*, **Ethel Sutton** told the story of *a young British soldier* who was **blinded** in battle. He was a trained musician, so after he recovered from his injury he spent much of his time playing the piano for the wounded who had been sent to a London hospital. He sometimes wondered if anyone was paying attention to his music, for he often heard the tramping of feet through the corridors as visitors came and went. But he never let this distract him. He always put his best effort into his playing, hoping his music would encourage and comfort those who were depressed by their painful injuries. One day when he paused to rest, he heard somebody nearby heartily clapping his hands. Turning his sightless eyes in that direction, he asked with a smile, "Who are you?" "I am your King!" was the reply. The British monarch was visiting the wounded to cheer them and strengthen their morale. Without realizing it, the young man had been using his talent to *entertain royalty*.

G. Slide17 **MASTERS / EMPLOYERS (9)**

H. Don't forget, you are **2nd** in command (even a CEO typically reports to *the brd of directors*), & must one day give account to the Lord.

1. Treat your employees as you would treat Christ.

I. Slave owners were to *let up on* threatening them & to treat them **justly** and **fairly**.

1. They themselves were servants w/a Master, who's an example to them.

J. **He shows no partiality** regardless of one's rank.

K. Slide18 C.S. Lewis said, *Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters.*¹

L. Only a **Spirit-controlled believer** (5:18) is able to fulfill the obligations given in this section.

1. Many of these verses emphasize **selflessness**, which results in **harmony**, one evidence of the Spirit's work.

¹ C.S. Lewis in "Equality" from Present Concerns, quoted in Christianity Today, February 3, 1989, p. 31

M. They used to tell this story around the 20th Century-Fox offices in New York.

The company had advertised for a salesperson and got this reply from an applicant:

“I am at present selling furniture at the address below. You may judge my sales ability if you will stop in to see me at any time, pretending that you are interested in buying furniture. When you come in you can identify me by my red hair. And I will have no way of identifying you. Such salesmanship as I exhibit during your visit, therefore, will be no more than my usual workday approach, and not a special effort to impress a prospective employer.” Despite 100’s of other applicants, the *redheaded* furniture salesperson got the job.

N. **Slide19 End:** (7) **Doing service as to the Lord....*How did He do it?*** Phil2:1-11

O. Phil.2:1-4 msg **If** you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, **if** his love has made any difference in your life, **if** being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, **if** you have a heart, **if** you care - then do me a favor: *Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

P. 5–8 **Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.** He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death - and the worst kind of death at that - a crucifixion.

Q. 9–11 **Because of that obedience**, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

R. **Slide20 Bondservant** - *doulos*. A person who is legally owned by someone else and whose entire livelihood and purpose was determined by their master.