

## Ephesians 6

<sup>5</sup> *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, <sup>6</sup> not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. <sup>9</sup> Masters, **do the same to them**, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.*

**Context:** One-third of people in the Roman Empire were slaves; race was NOT a factor.

This text deals with employee/employer relationships on one hand, but it speaks to much more than that, the theology behind this text deals with **who we are and why we work: what motivates us and whom we seek to please.**

### WHY do we work?

Dorothy Sayers wrote an essay entitled “Why Work” (Available on the resource page) addressing what work is and how we should view it.

See writes:

*“Work should be thought of as a creative activity undertaken for the love of the work itself; and that man, made in God’s image, should make things, as God makes them, for the sake of doing well a thing that is well worth doing.”*

*“Work is the full expression of the worker’s faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental and bodily satisfaction, and the medium in which he offers himself to God.”*

1. How does this definition of work compare to how you currently view your work? How would your co-workers respond to this definition?

### Who we are.

Genesis 1 says...***God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it;”***

*Sayers writes: “In nothing has the Church so lost Her hold on reality as in Her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world’s intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion.*

*The Church’s approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly (morality) in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables.”*

2. Genesis 1 says that as image bearers we were created to work; work is a natural function and a biblical mandate from God. Work is not something we do that is separate from who we are.

Do you think that sometimes you have a “work personality” and a “church personality?” If so, why?

## What motivates us?

The Apostle Paul warned against the wrong motivation! He says that we work, **not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, doing the will of God from the heart.**

Often, we'll fall into this trap when we take a job for the wrong reasons, meaning we end up doing the job for the wrong reasons because the job never suited us in the first place.

God calls you to do work that you are **equipped and gifted to do**. This doesn't mean that you are called to only one job but rather a range of jobs. Look at your passions, gifts, past experiences, then look at your current role. Do you see a match?

**Recommended Resource:** A good resource to help you find more focus in this area is [www.chazown.com](http://www.chazown.com). This website can help you ask the right questions and to create a plan to find a role that better suits you.

We can also fall into the people pleasing business when we see our jobs as only a way to make money or to earn status. Our job becomes a means to an end and not something we do because of our gifts and calling.

3. Do you find yourself working to please others? Or, are you working hard only when you are being watched? If so, why do you think that is? Are you working in a job that doesn't suit you? How can you address it if that is the case? What step can you take next week?

## Do your job well.

In the essay, "Why Work?", Sayers comments about the need to do a job well:

*No crooked table legs or ill-fitting drawers ever, I dare swear, came out of the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Nor, if they did, could anyone believe that they were made by the same hand that made Heaven and earth. No piety in the worker will compensate for work that is not true to itself; for any work that is untrue to its own technique is a living lie.*

4. Do you do your job in such a way that brings honor to the name of God? Do people around you at work get inspiration from how you do your job to the best of your ability and with great joy?

## **Remember, in Christ You are Free.**

Often, we work for the wrong reasons because we think we have to prove our worth. When we do our jobs well, we feel great about ourselves. When we get promoted, we are on the top of the world. However, if things don't go as well, we get depressed and feel worthless. We feel ill-equipped to do our jobs and it can bring us down.

[Galatians 5:1](#) says "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

5. Do you live like you are free from the world's approval? Or, is that still why you work? If so, how can you let Jesus set you free of this?