

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE OF SERVANTS

Ephesians 6.6-8: Our Fight for “Success” in the Workplace

Theme: Do your job in a way that adorns the Gospel and brings glory to the name you wear as a *Christian*.

(Josh 1.8) Remember, as we talk about “success” at our jobs, that the Bible defines “success” very clearly.

- Success is *knowing* God's will (through God's Word) and *doing* God's will (obeying God's Word).
- (Eph 6.5) And that is exactly what we see in this passage about “God's instructions for employees.”
 - ✓ God's *one* command to servants: Obey your masters—employees, do what you are paid to do!
 - ✓ The rest of the passage (v5b-8) explains *how* He expects us to obey.

(Eph 6.5) Review of previous message: How God expects us to work at our jobs...

1. With fear and trembling: Because as Christian employees/servants, we are ultimately serving Christ.
 - A Christian is a follower of Christ, a slave to righteousness. That doesn't change when we clock into work. Therefore, on the job, we still follow Christ and serve righteousness (we do what is right).
 - (v8) And God will judge us for *what* we have done and *how* we've done it—our works since we have been saved. And a good portion of our time and works have to do with our jobs.
2. In singleness of heart: With undivided attention and wholeheartedly.
 - When we are at work (or school), we are to focus on doing our jobs and doing them well (work hard).
3. As unto Christ: There is no such thing as a “secular” job; we are bought with a price and we serve Christ always.
 - We wear the name of Christ *always*... we serve Christ *always*...
 - And so God will judge us at the Judgment Seat of Christ for *every* work, whether it be good or bad.
 - “Success” in the workplace (and reward at the Judgment, rather than loss of reward) depends on doing the will of God... and servants/employees are to obey their masters as if their Master was Christ Himself.
 - In doing that, we adorn the Gospel we preach instead of bringing shame and reproach to the Name we wear (being *Christians*).

(Eph 6.6-8) Today we are going to continue with this same theme: How God expects us to work...

1. (v6-7) God expects us to work with *prudence*.
2. (v8) God expects us to work with *perspective*.

I. (Eph 6.6-7) Success in the Workplace Requires Prudence

- Prudence: [def] refers to being wise in practical affairs—it refers to discerning and distinguishing between good and bad, and choosing to do the good.

A. Prudence: The Eye vs. the Heart

1. Eye-service: Hypocritical service for the eyes of man.
 - a) If we desire to do our jobs according to the will of God, we cannot serve our employers with what the Bible called “eye-service.”
 - b) *Eye-service* refers to serving only when the “eye” is on you.
 - c) We all know what this is: You work hard and diligently when the boss is around... but, “when the cat's away the mice will play” (as soon as the boss isn't watching, you slack off and don't work as hard).

- d) That's hypocrisy: You're pretending to be something you're not (a good, diligent employee).
- e) To serve with “eye-service” is to be a *man-pleaser* because you're certainly not serving to please God (who watches you *all* the time).

2. Heart Service: Serving Christ from the heart at your job.

- a) A good servant (employee) is one who does his job “from the heart,” not with “eye-service.”
- b) And this good servant (employee) does his job “from the heart” even when the boss isn't around watching him... why?
 - (1) Because he know that is God's will: (v5) Be obedient to your masters (whether they are there watching you or not).
 - (2) Because he understands that he is really serving Christ because he carries the Name of Christ being a Christian.
 - (a) Look at how many times this mentioned in this short passage to servants: vv5, 6, 7.
 - (b) (Titus 2.9-10) This is the only way we can adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (by serving at our jobs “from the heart” as “unto Christ,” not as men-pleasers).
 - (c) (1Tim 6.1) Any other kind of service rendered to our employer (especially “eye-service”) will likely have the opposite effect: We will bring shame and discredit to the Name we bear and the doctrine we preach.

3. Prudence dictates, then, that we as Christians serve with the *heart* and not for the *eye* (of our masters).

- a) From the heart: We are to work diligently throughout the whole day, in singleness of heart and heartily.
 - (1) We are expected to focus on our work and do our jobs the best that we can—to the best of our ability (no slacking off or doing personal stuff on company time).
 - (2) That is God's will—that is His expectation—because we are (ultimately) the servants of Christ and we bear His Name and His doctrine before the world.
- b) Not with eye-service: What do *you* think of these kinds of employees? Is that the example and testimony you want to give of someone who follows Christ?
 - (1) (Luke 2.41-42, 51-52) We aren't given very many details about the life of Christ from when He was 12 years old until He was about 30.
 - (a) But, one thing is mentioned: He had favor with both God and man.
 - (b) He worked as a carpenter until He was 30 years old, and the work He did (and how He did it) earned Him favor with everyone who knew Him.
 - (c) The only way to do that is to work “from the heart” as unto God Himself, not with “eye-service” (only when the boss is looking).
 - (2) We, as Christians (followers of Christ) should strive to be like Christ in all areas of life, and that includes our jobs. We should strive to work in such a way as to have favor both with men and with God.
- c) Therefore, we should labor with prudence: Eye-service is bad; service from the heart is good.
 - (1) Prudence discerns the good from the bad, and chooses the good (that's being wise in the practical affairs of life).
 - (2) We need to work as if Christ Himself were our boss, watching all the time (because He is).

B. (v7) Prudence: Good Will vs. Bad Will

1. A godly, Christ-like employee will do his service (his job) “with good will.”
 - a) Good will: [def] A willing, friendly, cheerful disposition.
 - b) This does *not* mean we have to *enjoy* our work (remember, this passage deals with slaves). It does mean, though, that we should have a willing, “volunteer” attitude.
 - (1) You should willingly do the work expected of you, not grudgingly.
 - (2) You should also be willing to “go the extra mile” at your job, and not just drop everything when “my shift is over” or “my stuff is done.”
 - (a) (Mat 5.41) The principle is this: You should willingly fulfill your obligation (go the mile required of you), and then you should be willing to do more (go the extra mile).
 - By law Roman soldiers or couriers could make people (“compel” them to) carry their baggage or gear one mile.
 - (b) (Mat 5.16) Why? So we can bring glory to the Name we wear (as Christians) and adorn the Gospel we preach.
 - (c) We don't have to *like* or *enjoy* being “compelled to go a mile,” nor do we have to *like* or *enjoy* choosing to go another mile (and work the overtime or do someone else's job).
 - (d) But, we should do it (we should serve with good will rather than grudgingly with “bad will”) so that God might be glorified and the Gospel adorned.
2. Side Note: Career Counseling...
 - a) Obviously, in Ephesians 6, we are reading instructions given to servants and slaves, many (if not all) of whom had no choice in their “career path.”
 - b) However, today we do have many choices (especially in the USA). So, with that in mind along with Paul's exhortation to serve with “good will,” I think we can glean some very practical advice for “choosing the right career” (whether you're starting out or starting over).
 - c) Sound, prudent advice: Find a job doing what you enjoy or what you are passionate about.
 - (1) If you can make a living doing something you like or enjoy or are passionate about, by all means do it! (I had the privilege of doing that for 15 years on the mission field: laboring in the Word and doctrine.)
 - (2) (Prov 17.1) Even if you don't make a lot of money, at least getting up and going to work each day won't cause you strife and rob you of your peace in life.
 - (a) Having a job that (for the most part) you like and enjoy is far better than having a job that only gives you strife and grief... *regardless of the paycheck*.
 - (b) Many people make “career choices” based on the money they can make, or the “job security” they think they'll have. And they are miserable, and tend to do the job poorly.
 - d) However, remember your biblical obligation: (2Thes 3.6-12) Get a job.
 - (1) If you can't make a living doing what you enjoy, God still expects you to get a job and support your family (because if you don't, the Bible says you've denied the faith and are worse than an infidel/unbeliever: 1Tim 5.8).
 - (2) (Eph 6.5-8) And regardless of whether you like your job or not, you need to do your work in a godly, Christ-like manner... with *good will* (doing a good job and ready always to “go the extra mile”) so that you adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.
 - (3) How can we do this consistently...? I think “perspective” helps us to be prudent...

II. (Eph 6.8) Success in the Workplace Requires the Right Perspective

A. (v6a) Biblical Perspective: “...*whatsoever good thing any man doeth...*”

1. A biblical perspective of your job requires that you *know* you'll be judged for everything you have done (every work in your body) after you converted to Christ.
2. The “*doeth*” in v8 refers to the “*doing* service” in v7 and the “*doing* the will of God” in v6: It refers to doing your job as a servant (v5).
3. Remember: God does not make a distinction between the “secular” and the “religious.”
 - a) (Eph 6.5-8) God will judge employees (servants) for their service on the job—their service to their “masters according to the flesh.”
 - (v9) And He'll judge those “masters” (employers, supervisors, managers) also.
 - b) (2Cor 5.10) God will judge each and every Christian for each and every thing done in his body, whether it be good or bad (whether we think it's “religious” or “secular”).
 - c) (Col 3.22-25) We will receive reward for good service (“from the heart”; “as to the Lord”) or we will lose reward for bad service (“eye-service”; as men-pleasers).
 - d) So, the reminder is this: God will judge us for *how* we have done our jobs for our earthly employers... just as He will judge us for evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved.
 - Because *how* we do our jobs will either adorn the doctrine we preach or bring reproach to the Name we wear.

B. (v6b) Biblical Perspective: “...*whether he be bond or free...*”

1. We need to know this also: All these principles about our conduct and attitude on the job are for both “bond and free.”
 - a) Whether you are forced to do a job you don't like, as was the slave in “bondage”...
 - b) Or whether you can freely choose to do a job that (for the most part) you enjoy...
2. God expects all of us to fight the daily battles of this spiritual warfare in the workplace so that we can be “successful” in our jobs: Working as godly, Christ-like servants for our earthly masters.

Conclusion: (Eph 6.5-8) The Spiritual Warfare of Servants

Our fight for “success” in the workplace is a *spiritual* battle...

- (Josh 1.8) Our success at our jobs depends on *knowing* God's will (through God's Word) and then *doing* God's will (obeying God's Word).
- God's will in the workplace is clearly laid out in passages like the one we just studied: Ephesians 6.5-8.
 - ✓ The “what” of God's will: Obedience (servants/employees are do what they are told). Do your job!
 - ✓ The “how” of God's will: Do your job in a way that will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Our jobs are *not* our life's mission; our life's mission is to make disciples by preaching Christ.

- So, *what* we do to make a living is *not* really the issue here (you will not get more reward in heaven for being a “full-time evangelist” or a “full-time pastor” than for being a full-time truck driver).
- It's *how* we do what we do that will make the difference:
 - ✓ It can make an eternal difference *now* because we can adorn the Gospel we preach to those that are working with us at our jobs.
 - ✓ It will certainly make a *big* difference at the Judgment Seat of Christ because a *large* portion of our time is spent at our jobs (and God will judge us for every work done in the body since conversion).
 - ✓ So, labor in a way to adorn the Gospel and bring glory to the name you wear being a *Christian*!