

## APPLICATION

- Knowing that your work and service are for Christ's glory, what is one thing you need to do differently starting this week? How can you treat people well?
- What do you think is God's purpose for you in your current role? How can you glorify Him through what He has called you to do?
- If you are currently working, how can you represent Christ at your workplace? What is one thing you will start doing this week?

## PRAYER

- Thank God for His provision and providence in your life. Pray that you would grow where He has placed you and that you would work to honor Him.
- Pray for the people you work with. Pray that your example would lead them to know God.
- Pray that you would represent Christ with integrity, humility, and boldness to preach the gospel.

# Life Together

## Employer and Employees

WEEK 3

## WARM-UP

- What is your ideal job? Why?
- What is one thing you could change about the work you do or about the environment you work in?
- Share one important lesson you have learned about work.

**WORD** <sup>5</sup>*Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ . . .*  
<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.*

**EPHESIANS 6:5, 9**

(Read also **EPHESIANS 6:6-8.**)

The apostle Paul called the church to reflect Christ in all their relationships, including that of a bondservant and master. Some people are shocked that Paul had to address slaves in his letter, thinking that he was endorsing slavery. In fact, the opposite is true. By addressing them in his letter, Paul acknowledged their being part of the Church and the Christian household. In a society that regarded slaves as no more than living tools, this was a radical idea that would later pave the way for their emancipation. And by addressing the master after admonishing the slaves, Paul was making it clear that both masters and slaves answer to the Lordship of Christ.

The principles in this passage can still apply to us in the context of employment or business. Employers and business owners can abuse and oppress those who work for them, and employees can work insincerely and only when their boss is around. The truth is,



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if we are followers of Christ, even when our situations are far from ideal, we can still represent Christ. By God’s grace, we can honor Him through our thoughts, speech, and life.

## 1 | We are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

*. . . submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

**EPHESIANS 5:21**

In a society where offense, greed, and power-tripping are normal, *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ* sounds unrealistic and out of this world. What is the limit of this submission? Where do we draw the line? Why would we even do this in the first place? Contrary to everything we think and feel instinctively, the Bible commands us to live in love, unity, and humility. This was exemplified by Christ Himself. What do you think mutual submission looks like at work or in the marketplace? How can this draw people to Christ?

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## 2 | We are to work as servants of Jesus.

*<sup>5</sup>Bondservants, 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 bondservants 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 bondservant or is free.* **EPHESIANS 6:5–8**

How differently do you think an employee would work when the boss is around or if there’s a significant bonus attached to the task at hand? Our natural tendency is to please those

we are serving. However, in this passage, Paul introduced a radical idea. What if we worked for Jesus? What if He were watching us? What if He were to reward us? If we are followers of Christ, He is both our master and rewarder. We are to work and serve as His servants. Why should we live to please God, not fellow humans?

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## 3 | We are to lead as servants of Jesus.

*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.* **EPHESIANS 6:9**

Employers hold power over those who work for them. They hold the paycheck and the ability to hire and fire. But even slave masters who followed Christ were admonished to lead as servants of Christ—not threatening their slaves or abusing their power. Employers can take a more humble approach when they recognize they are accountable to God, who is sovereign over the lives of both employers and employees, who sees everyone’s heart and hard work, and who is not partial or plays favorites. When Paul wrote that masters are to *do the same to them*, what did he mean (Ephesians 6:5–8)?

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