

# How To Be Right in Our Relationships (Part 5)

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're talking about the health and effectiveness of the church.

! Church needs to be healthy, doesn't it? That doesn't mean that we would ever reach a place where we don't have issues or some pain, just like our bodies always have some issue going on, and so it's kind of the course of life.

But overall, a church needs to be healthy, healthy spiritually, and healthy in other ways. And a church needs to be effective in what God leads it to do.

And so these two things, health and effectiveness, as I have said now a number of times, and we're just gleaning this from Paul's letter, that these two things are directly related to two things.

That is harmony in the Christian home, and so we've covered that ground. The other one is honor or integrity among Christians in the workplace.

[ 1 : 19 ] Whether you are on the employee side of that relationship in the workplace, or the employer, you know, employee, boss, we need to have integrity and honor in the workplace.

So that's why Paul deals with that subject here, because it's related to the church. So he's writing this letter to the church, and it's about the church. This is a church epistle, and he is addressing, you know, some of the major relationships and giving instructions and even commands for these various relationships within the body of Christ, within the church.

And so it touches on the home, of course, we would assume that and expect that, but also touches on the work relationship. Now, obviously, Paul's not talking about the work relationship as much as he is about the slave-master relationship.

But we understand the application of that to our day. All right, so we've looked at the believer in the household of God. That's the church. We've looked at the believer in his household or her household.

And now we're looking at the believer in the workplace, the duty of an employee and the duty of the employer. And remember that specifically, the truth Paul intended to convey in this passage is the responsibility of Christian slaves to serve their masters as if they were serving the Lord.

[ 2 : 58 ] All right, that's his primary concern. In fact, it is his concern, not just his primary one. That is what he's talking about. And on the other side of that, that relationship, the other is the responsibility of Christian slave owners or masters to rule or master their slaves as if the Lord were their master.

And he is. He is. And so this is Paul's concern. And so Paul's not speaking really to the issue of Christian employee and employer relationships, yet it's valid to apply that, as I've said.

Valid to apply that to that issue or that context, primarily because the principle that governs the Christian master-slave relationship also applies to the Christian employer-employee relationship. So that principle applies there because at the heart of that principle is this Christ-centered focus, Christ-centered approach to really all aspects of life.

And so we have seen that in all the interpersonal relationships that Paul's addressed in this letter. I gave you the outline last week. I'm sure you took it home that very night and studied the passage for yourself.

[ 4 : 20 ] Raise your hand if you did that. No, don't. But we're going to go through it here tonight. And so in case you didn't bring your copy back, I've got notes there for you.

Fill in the blanks. Though you've already memorized the outline, I'm sure. Right, Jarrett? You're looking at me because I knew that you had a positive answer to that. But I'm just kidding.

Or just making fun. All right, so let's fill it in. All right, so Paul begins then with the slave side of the relationship, doesn't he? And so Roman numeral number one is submission.

Submission of the slave employee to the master employee. Master slash employer. All right, I'm just kind of putting the two together, all right? I know what Paul intended when he wrote.

And I know a valid application. And so we're going to put those two together. And so sometimes I'll go, I'll be talking about the slave master kind of relationship.

[ 5 : 22 ] And sometimes I'll go back to the employer, employee employer relationship and kind of back and forth. So they're kind of woven together. But I don't think anybody will be confused by that.

All right, now we could divide then what Paul says to slaves slash employees into two parts. Into two parts. So the first one is this.

Service in relation to a slave or work in relation to employees motivated by a relationship. So service slash work is motivated by a relationship.

A relationship, verses five through seven. Now, let me say a word about this word, bond servant or bond service. That's how Paul begins here in verse five.

And he says bond servants. All right, so first of all, we know that Paul is addressing those in the church.

[ 6 : 23 ] who are slaves. They're slaves. And the Greek word is translated doulos. Doulos. I don't think I put that in your notes, did I? Not that you need the Greek word, but it gives me an opportunity to tell you another way that I made an association in order to remember that word doulos.

I might have shared this with you before. And, you know, I hope this doesn't hurt anybody's sensibility. But doulos sounds a little bit like the word doulos.

Doulos, doulos, doulos, and that old Negro spiritual. You remember it? Doulo, oh, doulo, oh, doulo, oh, doulo. Did you really?

It was an old Negro spiritual. All right, so I'm sorry, but in our culture, we associate slavery with African Americans. Because that's what took place in our country years ago.

Thank the Lord no more. But there's association, doulos, doulo. So if I say doulos, then what are you going to think? Slave. All right, slave.

[ 7 : 34 ] So see, word association. See, I'm trying to teach you some Greek. Now, I gave you a word association for bread. Anybody remember? Artos.

Maybe I didn't share this with you. Artos. Anybody ever been to Lambert's? What do they do at Lambert's? Rolls.

Rolls, roll. They toss the rolls. Artos. Artos. Are you writing that down? See, you're learning Greek. Okay, you're learning Greek. Seems like I shared one of my associations with you not too long ago, but I remember now what it was.

All right, so bondservants. And it's the word doulos. Doulos. And it means slave. All right, I've heard all kinds of kind of mental exercises from preachers who try to say that bondservant, the word bondservant means something a little bit different.

More like a household slave who, you know, who maybe he has or she has reached a point where she's or he has been released and now is free, but chooses to continue to be a slave.

[ 8 : 46 ] Have you ever heard that story? Well, it's not true. I mean, there is such a thing. But just because we have the word bondslave or bondservant, like comes from the King James, just because we have that doesn't mean it's talking about that kind of a slave.

It's just simply the word doulos, any and all kinds of slave, no qualification of what kind of slave the person is. So we have to then default to the basic meaning of the word doulos, and it's slave.

All right, so Paul's talking to slaves. And these slaves were members of the church. Many of them become believers. In fact, a large percentage of the church in that first century were slaves, primarily because a large percentage of people in the Roman Empire were slaves.

And so he's talking to people in the church who were slaves. And some of them really in bondage to some very severe slavery.

And Paul's addressing that. So that kind of helps you maybe think about the audience a little bit.

And then when Paul begins to give his instructions, then you're going to begin to understand that what he was saying to them is pretty radical.

[ 10 : 12 ] And not only radical, but very difficult. All right, so they're slaves. And as a slave, one is in subjection and bondage to one's master.

All right, there's no other way around it. Whether it's a, you know, kind of a good kind of relationship, kind of situation where you've got a very benevolent master, and therefore a really peaceful relationship between master and slave, or the more typical, a very overbearing and very cruel

master.

And so it includes all of those. But you're in subjection and bondage to the master. And slaves in Paul's day were, and I'm talking about in the Roman Empire, were usually considered by society as subhuman.

They didn't qualify as humans. In fact, I was reading William Barclay's commentary on, actually it's Galatians and Ephesians. He puts the two together.

And he kind of quoted a couple of things, or noted some things from history. He said that the Romans divided their agricultural instruments.

[ 11 : 30 ] That's what they called them. You know, for us that would be tractors and, you know, other kinds. But this is something a little bit different here. They divided them into three classifications.

Number one, articulate. They called them articulate. Who would that be? That would be the human slaves. And then two, inarticulate, animals.

And three, mute. Mute instruments. That would be your tools. All right? And so you can see how it put human beings in very closely to animals and tools.

They were all just simply instruments that they could use. Whatever they desired. And they had no real standing whatsoever as human beings.

One Roman statesman. Did I put these in there? Okay. Well, then you can read it for yourself. But I thought it might be good to have some of these quotes. This Roman statesman said that old slaves should be thrown on a dump.

[ 12 : 34 ] And when a slave is ill, do not feed him anything. It's not worth your money. Take six slaves and throw them away because they are nothing but inefficient tools.

That's basically the mentality. Understand, when Paul is addressing the issue of addressing slaves in the church, it doesn't go to say, it doesn't automatically mean that the masters are also members of that church.

Remember I said the principles that Paul is teaching here apply when the slave is a believer and the master is not a believer. Or the slave is not a believer and the master is a believer.

It applies regardless of the inequity in the relationship as far as the spiritual inequity. All right. So he's addressing slave but also master.

The Roman emperor Augustus Caesar once had one of his slaves crucified because he accidentally killed his pet quail. Isn't that terrible? I mean, he deserved to die.

[ 13 : 39 ] You know, you kill a... Who has quail for a pet anyway? I thought you'd shoot those and eat them, don't you? Well, anyway. I guess Caesar Augustus, he had pet quails.

All right. So let's make sure then we understand to whom Paul is talking. Most of these slaves, I would imagine, did not have a Christian master. And we kind of surmise that because Paul spends a lot more time talking to the slaves than he does masters.

And it was evangelism and the growth of the gospel seemed to be much more free and more effective among the poor, the slaves in that day, than it was among the rich and the masters.

So there would be very few masters, slave owners in the church. And probably also because when a master was saved, he would usually free his slaves.

All right. So. All right. So now Paul then gives six points of instruction.

[ 14 : 53 ] If you did memorize your outline from last week, then you might note that I only had five last week, but I added one. I found new information. No, it was right at the scripture, but I really kind of see, you know, a sixth one there.

So anyway, there's six, six points of instruction. And they apply to the slave master relationship, but also by application apply to the employee employer relationship.

All right. Here they are. Number one, serve slash work. Obediently. All right. So he's telling slaves to serve their masters obediently or in the application of the employee or employer.

Then employees, those who are employed, serve those over you, your boss, your employer, serve them obediently. So verse five says bond servants or slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters.

So it's just very clear, very straightforward. The word obedient, it's hupakouo. I don't have any association for that one. Okay. I just had to memorize it.

[ 16 : 07 ] Hupakouo is the, is in the form of a command. You know how the word is spelled. It tells us in the Greek, whether it is an imperative and this is an imperative.

It's in that form. So this is a command. In fact, this is the only command or imperative verb used by Paul in his entire address to the, to, to slaves.

It's the only one. So everything else that he says is, you know, connected in some way to this overall command to obey.

And the form of the verb also conveys the idea of continuous action. And you've heard me talk about that a number of times and the significance of that to convey meaning in scripture.

That a verb is continuous action, present tense. So Paul is commanding, commanding a continuous, uninterrupted obedience to their masters or their employees.

[17:15] And so it's not just when you feel like it. I mean, if you work for somebody, I know we have some retired folks in here. But when you work for somebody, you're to obey your boss, your supervisor, whatever term is used, even if you don't feel like it.

All right. So it's continuous. We know that in our heads, you know, but it doesn't always come out that way in, in actions. And it's not just when we like our jobs.

You know, a lot of people are, you know, have jobs they don't like. Right? Have you ever had a job you didn't like? You know, I can think early on in my career or my, I guess, life of working, I had a few jobs I hated early on.

I think one of my first jobs was a summertime job, bucking hay bales, stacking them up on trailers and hauling them to a barn and stacking them in there.

I hated that job. I don't mind telling you, I hated it. But I did it. And I think I got two cents a bale or something like that. It was ridiculously low price.

[18:30] Of course, that gave you the incentive to buck as many of those things you could, you know. And it was nasty and hot and made you get itchy all over here. Anybody ever done that? Several of you saw it.

Georgia, was that you that read it? And Teresa? I've been in the hay bales. Okay. In the barn. Well, you know, they've done away with that now.

I mean, now you've got these gargantuan bales. You can't buck those things, can you? I'll tell you. For two cents. Yeah. All those young teenagers out of work. Because they're not bucking hay bales. How do you do that? Several times. Yeah. Anyway, you'll have jobs you don't like. But Paul says serve obediently. Even when you don't like your job.

Not just. And do so not just when the job conditions are good. Because sometimes job conditions are not so good. You know. And I. You know. Whether it's environment.

[19:31] Or whether it's the people you work with. Or. You know. It's not good because of maybe a supervisor. You know. All kinds of different scenarios. And so.

This kind of gives you the idea. Paul says this is continuous. This uninterrupted. Serving. Your boss. Or employer.

Obediently. And you do it. Not just when you get paid what you deserve. Anybody had a job. That didn't pay well. And. And certainly.

At least. According to your evaluation. Didn't pay what. What you deserve. Right. All of us. And yet. See.

Paul didn't qualify. This. No qualification here. Based upon. Work condition. Or. Environment. Or whether you like the job. Whether you feel like it.

[20:26] You know. All those things. And. You know. And not just when you have a good boss. Um. I've had some. Pretty stinking bosses. Over the years. I really have.

And. You have too. So you can understand. First Peter. Chapter 2. Verses 18 through 20. Servants be. Submissive to your masters. With all fear. Not only to the good and gentle.

But also to the harsh. For this is commendable. If because of conscience. Toward God. Wanted to do it. Grief. Suffering wrongfully. All right. So while Paul didn't qualify.

This command to obey. Your masters. Peter does. He said. Let me give you one qualification here. You obey them. Even if they're. Terrible people.

Terrible bosses. They're harsh. You know. They're not good. All right. So serve or slash work. Obediently. Second. Serve slash work.

[21:24] Reverently. Reverently. Or maybe. I should have picked the word. Respectfully. So if you want to put. Respectfully in there.

That would be better. Reverently sounds a little. I don't know. All right. Verse 5. Bond servants. Be obedient to those. Who are your masters. According to flesh. That just means.

They're human. Flesh and blood. Masters. Okay. To make a distinction. Between the. Capital M. Master. The Lord. All right. So obey. Your earthly masters. We could put it that way. With fear. And trembling. With fear. And trembling. You see that. That combination of words. Quite often. In the New Testament. I think. I think all of them. Actually. Come from Paul. So. Kind of. One of his favorite. Couplets. Pairs of words.

[ 22 : 18 ] To put together. Now. Of course. The idea. Here. Is one of reverence. Reverence. And respect. For the master's.

Position of authority. It. You know. It doesn't. It doesn't say. It doesn't have. It doesn't. Connect necessarily. With the master's. Personal character.

You don't have to respect. A master. Has a terrible character. I don't respect his character. But I respect his. Position. And his authority. And God.

Has placed that authority. Over me. So I have a respect. And a reverence. For that. John R. W. Stott. I do believe. I put this quote in there. Paul. Implies.

Not a. Cringing. Servility. Before a human master. But rather. A reverent. Acknowledgement. Of the Lord. Jesus. Whose authority. The master. Represents.

[ 23 : 12 ] And that. That's putting it well. And. And this. Introduces. The idea. That. That. That really. Keeps. Coming up.

All throughout. Paul's. Instructions. About. Interpersonal. Relationships. It's all about. Jesus. It's all. It's a. Christocentric. Approach.

To life. And. So. Stott. Is kind of. Putting that together. Right. Here. And. It's because. Paul. Is. Continually. Putting that. Together. In our.

Obedience. So. We know. That. Paul. Is talking. About. Respecting. The master. Because. Of. The master. We know. He's talking. About that. Because. Of a parallel.

Passage. Colossians 3.22 where he says, Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. And so he's saying almost exactly the same thing as here, but he also says, in sincerity of heart, fearing God. Fearing God.

[ 24 : 15 ] Alright, so we know then Paul is getting at this idea that our obedience to our master is based upon a respect we have for his position because God placed him in that position.

And so God is the one who is orchestrating this. And so really our respect and reverence is directed toward God as if our master is God.

In that sense we obey him in that sense. So therefore the respect does not depend upon the character of the earthly master. We have to remember that.

If it depended upon his character then we would have an excuse not to obey. So it doesn't have anything to do with the character or the personality or the nature or anything the approach the managerial approach or anything about the master in that sense because the respect goes to him because of who is over him and over us too and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alright so number three serve slash work genuinely. Verse five bond servants be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh in sincerity of heart.

[ 25 : 38 ] If you're used to the King James then you might remember that the word there is singleness. They use the word singleness and it conveys the idea of an undivided heart.

And that's really the root meaning of the word that's translated sincere or sincerity. It is an undivided heart. No flaw.

I mean it's a focused heart. In fact the word sincerity actually the Greek word sounds very much like sincere sincerity and it really takes us back to a term that applied to the pottery.

So when you would buy pottery in those days you would put a candle down inside of it so that the light would shine through and so you could see whether there were any cracks in the pottery because some dishonest pottery sales people would put wax in the cracks and then smooth that out and repaint that so that you couldn't tell there was a crack in it.

And so the candle would reveal that and so that was the kind of the root of the meaning of this word sincere sincerity without cracks.

[ 27 : 06 ] And so you can see how the old King James would use the word singleness. It would be a pure heart. A single undivided heart.

So slaves slash employees should serve slash work with loyalty and integrity. Have you ever tried to think about this earlier today when this was just recently.

Sherry and I were somewhere in Walmart but something like that business and overheard a couple of employees that were just out on the floor and they were complaining about their boss. Complaining about the store and work conditions and they were just really grumbling outward. I've even gone through a restaurant or gone through the checkout lane at a grocery store and have the clerk say something disparaging about the store about the boss and about the company. [ 28 : 16 ] Have you ever had that happen? And so Paul is addressing that issue with slaves but the application can apply also to the workplace where we serve genuinely and it carries with it the idea of loyalty and integrity and then number four need to move on here serve or work spiritually spiritually verse 5 my bond service be obedient to those who are your master according flesh as to Christ as to Christ so this idea that all along has been implied throughout Paul's instructions to slaves here it's plainly stated so here's the bottom line every aspect of the believer's life be it in the church home marriage parenting and now employment is a spiritual work that's the idea it's a spiritual work in fact for

Christians there is no sense of the secular no sense of the secular everything for us falls under the spiritual for a believer there is no secular you know we have a tendency to make those separations those distinctions there's secular there's spiritual there are things I do in a secular sense there things I do in a spiritual sense I've even had in I remember in one particular church years ago and a couple of fellas in that church I remember one of them was a deacon as a matter of fact I don't want to go too far with my description and they were businessmen in the community and they had bad reputation in the business world kind of ruthless maybe not really ethical at some point you know all in the name of business and they really operated with two kind of two guiding guiding principles there's business and there's the church and it's separate so what I do in the church is different than the way

I am out there in the business world because that's business and for a believer there is no such distinction everything we do is sacred everything we do is spiritual there is no secular for the believer so Paul's addressing remember he's talking to the church and he's addressing the health and the well-being and the effectiveness of the church so he's addressing these issues of relationships and so he's saying that the relationship out there in the workplace is just as much a part of the church as the relationship you have interpersonal relationships you have with the body of Christ they're the same so we're to work spiritually Colossians 3 17 and whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him now that's singleness of heart number five quickly serve or work honestly honestly verse six not with eye service as men pleasers but as bond servants of

Christ so there's that word slave again alright now in that there are really two kind of secondary concepts that describe what Paul is talking about here one of them is work with integrity work with integrity that is doing good work even when the boss is not looking I mean this is just so simple so straightforward and not anyone in here would disagree with some of these things any of these things that's integrity doing good work even when no one is looking not just the boss but when no one is looking when no one even knows I mean doing good work just because you want to do good work whether anybody ever finds out about!

it or not you know it's the little things and I thought of Jonathan right away and you know in this group most of you are kind of core of the church you know more than maybe some of the fringe members of our church Jonathan did a lot of things that nobody ever knows about little things and he kind of operated on this principle and we all operate on this principle we do it for the Lord whether anybody is looking at whether anybody even knows in fact he preferred that nobody knew actually and that's the kind of work ethic that Paul is talking about here the second part of that would be work without hypocrisy work without hypocrisy and that means just doing good work only you know only when there is potential for reward that is not doing not just doing good work [ 33 : 35 ] I didn't word that correctly not just doing good work when there is potential for reward but even doing good work whether there even if there's no potential for any reward or any advancement or any praise that's that's doing work without hypocrisy and number six I guess I'm just going at the end of that I thought I'd get all the way through this serve work worshipfully and this also is kind of connected with what I was talking about a while ago for the believer everything is sacred everything we do is sacred everything really is in one sense or another part of our worship of the Lord so verses six and seven doing the will of God from the heart with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men at the heart of any good definition of worship is the concept of service service to the

Lord in fact we could talk about the word worship as it appears in scripture and the Greek word the origin of that word and at the heart of that is the idea of service and actually it's worth ship I mean we it's how we respond to the worth of God and so we respond to his great worth in everything that we do so that includes our service I put that in this in here I've quoted this many times but Ruth Graham's little plaque above a kitchen sink worship services held here three times daily and you know it's cute and yet this is the idea that everything we do is a part of our worship so our good work on the job that's the will of God to do a good work on the job that's his will and it is our service rendered ultimately to him see that changes everything if we would truly if believers who are employed if they would truly apply all of these instructions that Paul gives and really their commands it changes everything everything

Christians should be their best employees anyone would ever want to hire now having been an employer with Walmart I can tell you sadly many times that's not the case not the case at all and it's poor testimony to poor testimony of Christ alright so here's the whole idea and we'll stop here a slave's service to his or her master is motivated by a relationship with God it's all motivated by relationship with God Paul ties everything he says to that to that relationship with God verse 7 with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men let me just give you B real quickly because it's not very long and then we'll deal with the master side or employer side of the relationship next time service slash work motivated by reward it's also motivated by reward not just relationship but reward which is part of the promise of

God verse 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does he will receive the same from the Lord whether he's a slave or free by the way the word free there it's interesting that is a clear connection with the context of employment so he is connecting the two applying the principle to both areas so you're a slave or you're free so if you're a slave you're working for your master if you're free that means you're not working for a master but you're working for an employer and or working for yourself if you are self employed and so good work may go unnoticed by a master according to the flesh but and we ought to think in that way as employees if you are one a good work will never escape the eyes of God never escape even if man never knows even if you're falsely accused and maybe someone suspects that you're not a good employer maybe they've given you a bad evaluation you know in your heart that you served and you've served the

Lord well then it will be noticed by and actually this is a quote from God might have been MacArthur but he said no good thing done in his name and for his glory can escape his notice or fail to receive his reward that's a good thing to live by Thank you.