

Studying the Letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians is about learning to let who we are in Christ, shape how we perform in life.

Ephesians Study 11



Warm Up

1. Greeting / Welcome

2. Prayer Requests (try to balance the amount of time between prayer and / or testimony by limiting the amount of prayer requests and/or time for testimony sharing.)

3. Testimony Sharing (*Optional* - prior to the group study time, ask one person to share for 3-5 minutes on how the recent truths being studied have impacted their life. Remember: *authenticity is the key* - What have you (or a group member you've asked to testify) shared lately that gives insight into your journey? Try to share things pertaining to the recent themes of the study.)



Overview of Today's Study

Text: Turn to Eph. 6:5 – 6:9

Lesson Title: *Performance on the Job*

Lesson Theme: A significant portion of many Christians' lives is spent "on the job." Both employees and employers alike have the responsibility to adopt a key mindset that will shape their on the job performance.

By the End of the Study today, we want to be able to answer:

🔑 Today's Key Question 🔑

How can Christian employees and employers maintain godly working relationships?

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Connecting the Studies

In chapters 4, 5 and the beginning of 6, we have been studying the transformation process of the growing Christian's behavior. We have looked at how believers can become freed from their individual flesh habits and more consistently model a godly lifestyle. We've studied how Christians are to relate to one another and how families can stay close within the household and family life.

In our next portion of Ephesians, we will study the area where many Christians spend the majority of their time when away from home: *on the job*.



Bible Passage Study

Read Eph. 6:5-9



Study Topic 1 – Godly Employee Performance

Paul Instructs Servants (Employees) in Key Areas of Their Performance on the Job. Eph. 6:5-8

A. What do these verses tell us? 6:5-8

1. Those under the authority of another for performing work or a task in this world are to behave a certain way.
2. There is a type of respectful obedience those with authority over us are to be shown.
3. There is a mindset that can help motivate this outward display of respect and obedience.

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B. What do these verses mean? 6:5-8

1. Paul's instruction to "servants" in this passage was directed to both free and bond servants. The Bible does not condone slavery but Paul addressed the issues of the culture of their day and ours by offering instruction to both bond and employed servants.

a. Employees are to obey with an attitude of fear and trembling – following commands with serious reverence as someone who is insecure with their ability to perfectly perform the task at hand but conscientiously does their absolute best to fulfill their duty. Performance not with a cavalier, "I don't care – so what" attitude, but **attentive** and **thoughtful**.



b. In singleness of your heart – one **motive** – no ulterior **motive** deep in the real us – and the focal point of this single motive is the next phrase:



c. As unto Christ – the mental drive to perform each task is to be motivated by thinking about doing that task for Jesus Christ. It is our choice to **imagine** that the work's only reason for being done is that Christ asked **me** to do it.



d. Not with eye service – not being diligent only when the boss's eyes are on you. *Illustration* One time pastor was returning from being out of town and as he came through the parking lot to enter the church one of the staff members hollered out, "Quick! Preacher's coming – act saved!"

e. As servants of Christ – remembering to diligently perform for Christ who is *always* with us.

f. Doing God's will from the heart – When we get to the place where our work is driven by a passion for pleasing God in all that we put our hand to, there is a lot less to be disgruntled with.

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g. With good will performing their service as for the Lord and not for men – good will here can also be translated as “kindness” from the original language. The idea is having job performance shaped by a caring attitude not slamming through tasks begrudgingly because it ultimately is the Lord we’re serving, not people.

h. Knowing that they will receive the same good from the Lord that they perform for others – If the truth of His sovereignty is not enough, we must know by now that God’s Word is true and that we will reap what we’ve sown.



Group Discussion

(Try to facilitate the group’s discussion and not do most of the talking during this time.)

- **With all of the different jobs represented here, how in the world do we imagine Christ asking us to do even some of the mundane things that our jobs require?** *We have to push passed the immediate thoughts that the task is mundane or unimportant or a waste of time in our estimation. We have to picture our Lord asking us personally to do it. It helps when we remember He is Lord of the little things in life as much as the big things. We trust Him with world affairs but not with cleaning toilets.*
- **How about fairness, how do I choose to see Christ asking me to do something that I feel I am unfairly being singled out to do?** *God is ultimately in charge – He’s either sovereign or He is not. If we believe the Bible’s teaching about His authority over His creation, then God is the One who ultimately has placed our various supervisors over us in life’s chain of command. If something is not going as I would like it to go, or is not meeting my expectation, I need to go straight to the top – I need to take my grievance to the Lord. God will then either change **my** heart or my **supervisor’s** heart to help through the difficulties.*

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- **What happens when a Christian does not choose to have this mindset toward his or her job?** *They become disgruntled.*
- **What happens when we become disgruntled at work?** *Bitterness sets in, maybe we begin politicking and attempting to manipulate situations to benefit our own position.*
- **Then what happens?** *God's hand of blessing is not being permitted to help this believer so this believer must "reap what they've sown." This could mean no advancement due to bad attitude, or demotion or even termination of employment.*
- **How can these verses shape the attitude of Christians in a volunteer position in a church family?** *The realization that God is ultimately in charge relieves me of the conflict between my expectations and the direction a particular ministry may or may not be going.*
- **Should concerns or differences of opinion never be mentioned?** *Yes they should be mentioned – BUT – they should be taken upward – to a supervisory person – not laterally to a non-decision maker as gossip or grumbling. ALSO – they should be voiced only after prayerful consideration so that God will give the time and words to be shared. complain*

C. How should these verses impact my life? 6:5-8

1. These verses provide a good way to evaluate my job performance.
2. What kind of attitude would my supervisors say I have?
3. I can be trained for doing specific tasks but what do my words and actions at work reveal about my awareness of Christ's presence on the job?
4. Am I seeing God's hand of blessing on my work?

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Study Topic 2 – Godly Employer Performance

Paul Instructs Masters (Employers) in Key Areas of Their Performance on the Job. Eph. 6:9

A. What does this verse tell us? 6:9

1. Masters and bosses are to show their servants and employees the same attitude that reflects the remembrance of Christ's presence.
2. Employers are not to use fear as a motivator.
3. Employers are to remember that the Great Employer in heaven, God Himself does not show favoritism.

B. What does this verse mean? 6:9

1. In a nutshell, employers are not without accountability no matter how high up on the "food chain" they are.
2. Employers are to resist showing partiality based on personal preference. As God is impartial so too they are to be impartial. God is the example of fairness as well as the Judge who will hold all those in authority accountable for their choices on the job.

C. How should this verse impact my life? 6:9

1. If I am an employer, on a scale of one to ten (ten being the highest), how would I rate my ability to treat my employees on an equitable basis?
2. As an employer, does my treatment of some employees cause others to feel disgruntled or feel less important than other employees?
3. How can I help preventing issues that cause disunity within my staff?

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🔑 **Today's Key Question** 🔑

If you forget everything else, remember this!

How can Christian employees and employers maintain godly working relationships?

Bosses and workers alike can maintain godly working relationships by remembering:



we are not working for **each other** but for Jesus Christ Himself.

Next Week – Get ready to suit up, it's WAR!

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