

Ephesians
Chapter 6:5-9
“The Real Mission Field”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Allow me to beat this dead horse one more time ... "The Layout of Ephesians" ...

Chapters 1-3 ... what every Christian HAS in Christ.

Chapters 4-6, what every Christian should DO for Christ ... and that's summarized in **chapter 4, verse 1** where it says ... **walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called** ...

And the focus of that walk in **this book** is ... relationships:

1. Relationships within the House of God (**4:1 – 5:21**)
2. Relationships within the Home (**5:22-6:4**)
3. Relationships within the Workplace (**6:5-9**)
4. Relationships within the Spiritual world (**6:10-20**)

Now, as we consider the workplace relationships ... employee to employer and employer to employee, I want you to consider with me ... three questions:

1. Q. Should we have a job? (**Proverbs 6:6-11**)
2. Q. Why should we have a job? (**2nd Corinthians 11:9**)
3. Q. How should we conduct ourselves at that job? (**Ephesians 6:5-9**)

Verses 5-9: If you're a Christian ... whether you're an employee or an employer ... conduct yourself with Christlikeness ... because no matter what your earthly position is ... God is the real boss!

Now ... depending on what translation you read ... there may be some words here that would sound strange in your workplace ... words like “**slave**” or “**servant**” or “**master**”.

But, don't let them throw you off, because no matter what words you use ... it means the exchange of a service for money ... or ... money for a service.

In the case of an employee (or in Paul's day ... a servant) ... that might mean working for the next 8 hours, getting paid and putting that money in the bank ... while in the case of a slave ... that might mean working for the next 8 years to pay a debt to the one you're working for.

So, we may not use words like “**slave**” and “**servant**”, but in reality, we go to work for exactly the same reasons they did. We have financial obligations that we must meet (rent, groceries, electric bill etc...), and / or we have debts that we must repay.

In either case, it means submitting to the one you're serving for the purpose of the exchange.

So, with the understanding ... let's look at those three questions I mentioned earlier ...

1. Beginning with ...

Q. Should we have a job? (Proverbs 6:6-11) -- Absolutely! Whether employee or employer, we're to be about the business that God's called us to.

Christ was a carpenter by trade ... Paul was a tent maker ... Luke was a physician ... Matthew was a tax collector ... Peter, Andrew and John were all fisherman ... they worked for provision and for ministry.

But there are some exceptions:

- a.** The very young, for instance. They're in training or at least, should be.
- b.** Or the elderly ... **Psalm 71:18** says ... **even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come.** In other words, if the Lord's given you days beyond your working years, they are to be used exclusively for Him by reaching out to the generations that come behind.
- c. Q. How about the disabled?** – The Lord's made provision. For those who'd like to read up on it, I'd direct you to **Exodus 21-22** as well as **Deuteronomy 23-25**.
- d. Q. How about women with a family?** – Well **Proverbs 31** makes it clear that their primary job is in the home and not in the outside workforce, although it's not forbidden.

And there are others that I've not mentioned here ... but the rule to these exceptions is ... **WORK** ... employment for necessary income ... but not excess!

2. Okay ... so the right thing is that we each go out and earn a living.

Q. But why? -- Two reasons ... to earn an income ... AND to put you in the most prolific mission field on planet earth!

a. With regard to us earning an income ... the scripture is clear that we're responsible to provide for our own needs (**2nd Corinthians 11:9-11**), the needs of our family (**1st Timothy 5:8**) and, as the Lord leads, those with an urgent need (**Ephesians 4:28**) ... including our tithes (**Genesis 14 & Matthew 23:23**).

b. To have a mission field (Matthew 10:7). When the Lord first began forming this fellowship ... He literally populated it from my workplace (subordinates, coworkers, patients and supervisors). The Lord gave me a witness in my workplace and He literally built this fellowship through that.

Your workplace is your mission field. In fact, I would remind you again of specifically how the Lord commissioned His disciples when He ascended.

It said to them in ...

Acts 1:4 ... [Do] not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ... 8 ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Q. What was their first assignment? – Jerusalem! Their neighborhoods and workplaces. And that hasn't changed. Your workplace IS your mission field!

So ...

1. Q. Should we have a job? (**Proverbs 6:6-11**) – Yes!

2. Q. Why should we have a job? (**2nd Corinthians 11:9**) – To earn what's needed and to put us in the mission field!

3. Q. And how should we conduct ourselves at that job? (**Ephesians 6:5-9**) – Simple ... the same way you'd conduct yourself on the mission fields of any far away land.

Over the years, I've had people tell me that they're a better "missionary" when they're far away than they are at work.

Well ... with all the love I can muster ... that doesn't make you a "missionary" ... that makes you an actor! It makes you a fake!

We're to conduct ourselves at work ... the same way we would conduct yourself on the mission fields of some far away land!

Beyond that ... there are some specifics for the workplace ... and again we see that this hinges on what Paul said when he began talking to us about these relationships in ...

Ephesians 5:21 ... be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Christian employees are to submit to their employers and Christian employers are to submit to their employees.

It's just as we looked at previously ... a mutual pursuit of the other person's best interest. That's what's prescribed and yet ... there's always a recognition of individual roles in the fulfillment of that.

In many ways, the workplace is where the non-believing world gets its best look at Christians. That's where they get to observe what Christ has, or has not, done in your life. That's often where the pressure's on and the heat's turned up ... so it becomes your most scrutinized stage.

So, our workplace witness makes a MUCH more honest and reliable measurement of our Christianity than any far away mission field could ever be!

We have a mission field responsibility on our jobs. And not just toward our coworkers and customers, but also toward non-believing bosses and irritating supervisors.

Q. And what's the instruction? – Submit and obey in the Lord! Nothing about picketing or striking or rebellng or coercing, but rather ... submitting. We're to obey with consideration to what's in their best interest, not just our own.

Q. So how do we show ourselves to be different to the glory of Christ in the workplace? – First ... by our work ethic. But to be clear ... a good work ethic all by itself isn't enough ...

Luke 17:7 "Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'? 8 "But will he not say to him, ' Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'? 9 "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? 10 "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"

A good work ethic all by itself isn't going to win your workplace to Christ ... that's the minimum, but without it, it's an outright denial of His work in your life. So, it starts with

a good work ethic:

1. You show up for work every day ... no mistakes ... no excuses!
2. When you show up ... you're on time and ready to work!
3. You give your employer their money's worth (plus a little more to show that you're not like the others)!

But again ... those things are the bare minimums that, as a Christian, we must exceed!

2nd Samuel 23 offers us a great illustration of what makes the difference. *It's the story of David when he was in a cave at Adullam and the Philistines were garrisoned in David's hometown of Bethlehem.*

David was with some of his ragtag bunch of followers and in a moment of homesickness, he mused out loud how wonderful it would be to have a drink of water from the well of his hometown. The problem, of course, was that that well was far away and under the guard of the Philistine army.

But there were three men among David's bunch who overheard his whimsical daydream and after nightfall, they snuck out of their camp and into the Philistine camp and drew for David one cup of Bethlehem's water.

When they brought it back to David ... he was so blown away at their expression of love and loyalty that he took that cup of water and poured it out on the ground as an offering to the Lord saying that it was too precious a gift for him to consume. Only the Lord was worthy of such love and loyalty.

Those three mighty men show us something of what makes the difference in an employee and David shows us something of what makes the difference in an employer.

The average employee waits for orders and then does what's demanded. But the Christian who's seeking to exemplify Christ will listen for the heart of those they serve and seek to bless them enthusiastically.

Employers and even coworkers love genuine enthusiasm and with good reason. The word "enthusiasm" if you break it down is "en", meaning within, plus "thuse", meaning God and "asm", meaning full. "Enthusiasm" occurs when someone is "full of God" ... we see that in David as well as his Mighty Men.

I also like the story of the young man from Stanford University who stood before Louis Janin one Friday morning seeking part-time employment. "All I need right now," said Janin, "is a typist." "I'll take the job," said the young man, "but I can't come to work until next Tuesday morning."

On Tuesday he reported for duty. "Why couldn't you come back before today?" Janin wanted to know. "Because I had to rent a typewriter and learn to use it," was the unexpected answer. That quickly-prepared typist was Herbert Hoover, the 31st president of the United States.

God doesn't usually call men and women who are sitting around waiting ... He raises up men and women who are on their feet and actively seeking His will; Elisha, Peter ... even Paul's zeal couldn't be questioned.

If you wanna find out where the Lord wants you to be, it starts with doing what you're doing with all your heart.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might

...

But that's a high standard!

Q. How can we achieve and maintain it? Paul gives us that answer in the 7th verse of this morning's text ... **With good will, render service, as to the Lord, and not to men.**

The story's told of a Burmese boat operator who made a comfortable wage, but felt called to the mission field. And as he was being interviewed by the sending organization, he was asked "Are you willing to preach the Gospel at only one-fourth of your current salary?", "No ... I will not go for that small pay", said the boat operator, "but I will go for Christ."

Scripture teaches ... **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God (1st Corinthians 10:31).**

And **Colossians 3:23** says ...

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Paul looked upon all that he endured as mere acts of service to the Lord ... that's how he was able to power through such hardship and trial. In fact, he said he considered them to be insignificant (**Romans 8:18**).

To have endured hardship and imprisonment for Nero's sake, would have galled Paul to the very quick ... but when he was in Nero's dungeon for Christ's sake, it was a very different matter. The way to make our working lives a truly fulfilling experience is to give them over to Christ.

Maintaining an attitude of working for the Lord changes everything. When you make up

your mind that the reward you're working for is not merely earthly ... everything changes.

What you actually do matters little (janitor or CEO) ... how well you do it becomes the key issue because it's what the Lord's asking of you.

Christianity in the workplace is real Christianity. It's practical Christianity. It can't be faked and it can't be carried out in word only.

A converted cowboy put it very well when he said ...

"Lots of folks that would really like to do right ... think that serving the Lord only means shouting themselves hoarse praising His name. Now I'll tell you how I look at that. I'm working for Jim here. Now if I would do nothing but sit around the house telling what a good fellow Jim is and singing songs to him, I would not suit Jim. But when I buckle on my straps and hustle among the hills and see that Jim's herd is all right, not suffering for water and feed, or being driven off the range and branded by cow thieves, then I am serving Jim as he wants to be served."

And that should be our philosophy as well. We're called to serve, not just talk about it ... and the workplace is a great place to measure your serve.

There are some missionary duties that can't be transferred to anyone else. God puts us in little circles so that each of us touch certain people with more impact than anyone else could. ___

Conclusion: As we close this morning let me remind you that ... it all begins with a solid Christian work ethic.

You may not be the hardest working person in the place, but you have to be on the list of those who are praised. And always remember that that has nothing to do with how deserving your employer is.

Your workplace is the real mission field ... so work as unto the Lord to maintain your witness and represent Him well.