

*The Spirit-filled Workplace*  
Ephesians 6:5-9  
Reading: Romans 8:12-17

Bethany Baptist Church  
November 12, 2017

*...pray...*

Do you *work* outside the home?

Has being a Christian made you a *better worker*?

Can your coworkers tell that you are *born again*?

**Turn w/ me, again, to Ephesians 5 & 6. Let's remind our selves of the context & then read this morning's passage: 5:18-21 → 6:5-9**

Paul commanded us to be *Spirit-filled* (controlled by the Holy Spirit).

Then he gave **three** *evidences* of the *Spirit-filled life*: *worshiping heart* (song), *thankfulness*, & *submission* in God-ordained *circumstances & relationships*.

That **third** evidence is *hard*! If you can be *consistently submissive* it's a pretty good indicator that you really are *walking in the Spirit*!

Just to demonstrate how *spiritual submission* works itself out, Paul then gives **three** *applications* (examples) of *Spirit-powered submission*: *marriage & parenting & workplace*.

Let's *unpack* Paul's **third** *application* of submission in the *Spirit-filled jobsite*.

The *Spirit-filled life* must be lived in the *workplace* and is evidenced by *submission* and *godliness* and an *eternal awareness*.

**The Holy Spirit wants to go to work with you!**

- 1. The Spirit wants to make you a better worker (vv.5-8).**
- 2. The Spirit wants to make you a better boss (v.9).**

Friend, you gotta walk by the Spirit *at work*, too. When you *do*, it'll make a *difference* that people will *notice*!

## Is your Christian faith making you a *better worker*?

1. When Paul penned this letter in **61 AD**, **60 million** men & women in the Roman Empire, about **50%** of the general population, were *slaves*, not *citizens*.
  - a. People were generally slaves as a result of *war* or *debt*.
  - b. You could even *sell yourself* into slavery for a *fixed amount of time* for a *fixed amount of money*.
  - c. Slaves might be *subject* to *grueling* labor or *trained* to *tutor* the children of *aristocrats*.
  - d. Slaves worked as *field hands*, *craftsman*, *domestics*, *civil servants*, *physicians*, *accountants*, *laborers*, & *teachers*.
  - e. Over time, as Rome rose in *power* & *affluence*, Roman citizens increasingly viewed all forms of work as *beneath* them, and become increasingly *dependent* on their *slave work force*.
  - f. The slaves that Paul addressed in our text were *Christians*: members of the *Ephesian church* who sat under the elders' *reading/explanation* of Paul's letter.
  
2. Paul's *command* for the Spirit-filled slave is simple: ***obey the boss***. *Be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh*.
  - a. The point is *obedience* (5). It's the same word he used w/*children* (1)!
    - i. 'ὕπακουω– lit. means "*to hear from under*" as in, *listen to those over you!*
    - ii. **Vv.5-8** are just one long sentence meant to explain Spirit-powered obedience at the job-site.

- b. Don't forget that the *big picture* (ch.5&6) is *being Spirit-filled* & therefore *being submissive*.
  - i. Which means ***obedience*** is a practical expression of *submission*....
  - ii. ...and ***submission*** is an evidence of being *Spirit-filled*.
  - iii. *The only limit* is the ***implied limit*** of honoring God's will (*morality, lawfulness*). You **can't** *obey a master* who demands that you *disobey Christ*.
  
- 3. And *obedience* is more than *action* or *compliance*, a Christian's obedience is *marinated* in the right *attitudes & motives*!
  - a. Perhaps you've heard the story of the *little boy* who was the *fidgiting terror* of his 1<sup>st</sup> grade class!
    - i. One warm afternoon he would *not* stay seated for story time. The teacher *threatened* w/every *weapon* in her arsenal, from *no* lunch to *no* recess,
    - ii. It *finally* seemed to work, but as the little rebel *slunk* in his chair, he *muttered* these words: "*I might be sitting on the outside, but I'm still standing on the inside...!*" Submission is *attitude*, too!
  
  - b. The Holy Spirit will lead you to do the *right thing* with the *right attitude*!
    - i. You will obey your boss with ***respect***. Paul writes (5): *w/fear and trembling*. That's pretty popular NT expression!
      - 1. Have you ever heard of someone: "*Shaking like a leaf!*" or "*As white as a sheet!*"
      - 2. The idea of *fear & trembling* suggests *respect you can see!*

ii. You will obey your boss with *sincerity*. Paul continues (5): *in the sincerity of your heart*.

1. Your *heart* is the seat of every *attitude & motive & decision*.

2. The expression also suggests *generosity*. As in: *pouring yourself wholeheartedly (w/o reservation) into your work*.

iii. You will obey your boss with *integrity*. In v.6: *not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers*.

1. It is tempting to *work* a little harder when the boss is on the floor & *relax* a little more when he's not.

2. ...to *work* a later when you want that promotion & *go home* a little earlier when you get passed over.

iv. You will obey your boss with *quality*. *With good will rendering service*.

1. One writer suggests that this *summarizes* all the good attitudes that should go with obedience.

2. You should work with *enthusiasm!* You should strive for *good results*.

3. **Eccl 9:10** (Solomon) – *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it w/ all of your might!*

4. *Attitudes* are purified by the right *motives*. There is a *work-purifying* Christian motive that is *all over* these **five** verses! *Do you see it...!?!*

a. **V.5b** – *as to the Lord*; **v.6** – *as slaves of Christ*; **v.6** – *doing the will of God*; **v.7** – *as to the Lord*; **v.8** – *from the Lord*; **v.9** – *their Master & yours & there is no partiality w/ **Him!***

i. Elsewhere (Col 3:23), Paul wrote: *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, **as for the Lord** rather than for men.*

ii. When you *work*, you work for *Jesus*. It is **His** *handwriting* on every trouble-ticket, **His** *voice* with every dispatch.

iii. Jesus stands smiling behind every *impatient supervisor* & every *unreasonable client*.

iv. This principle is as *inescapable* as it is *simple*: *you **obey** as to **Christ!***

b. And w/ *that*, the apostle also *motivates* us w/ the promise of *Christ's reward*: **read v.8.**

i. To be clear, Paul is **not** promising you that next weeks' *paycheck* will be *bigger!* He is pointing you to your *heavenly reward*.

ii. But Jesus is a *boss* who doesn't miss *anything* or *anyone*.

1. Your heavenly *paycheck* will never be an *hour short!*

2. And here is something simply *astounding* (8): *slaves* will receive the **same** reward for Spirit-powered good performance as *freemen!*

3. Believe me friend, there will be no better *paycheck* or *performance evaluation on earth* than, "**Well done, good & faithful servant!** ... *Enter into the joy of your Master.*"

5. I'd like to make an application of Paul's *work-place command*.
- a. Your job is a *mission field*. You are the *missionary*!
  - b. *How well you work prepares the soil: performance, relationships, conversations, responses to situation (good & bad).*
    - i. The *gossip & complaining* you **refuse** to engage in.
    - ii. The *innuendo* you studiously **avoid**
    - iii. The *time* you try not to **waste**.
    - iv. The *mistakes* you **own** & then **correct**.
    - v. The *shoddy work* you **refuse** to settle for.
  - c. And so you can plant *gospel seeds* because you have *spiritual credibility*.
    - i. I.e. How well you work *prepares* your boss & coworkers to *listen* to your testimony because it is obvious that *your* faith makes a *difference*!

**It is as *simple* as it is *powerful*: the Holy Spirit makes you a *better worker*!**

## Is your Christian faith making you a *better boss*? Read v.9

1. A *Roman citizen* had almost unchallenged power over his *servants*.
  - a. While *Roman law* recognized slaves as *human*, in practice many people viewed them as *livestock* or breathing *implements*.
  - b. **Not every** Roman master was *cruel*, but nevertheless *cruelty* was common. **1<sup>st</sup> century** masters: *threatened, abused, engaged in sexual harassment*, and might *threaten to sell & “export” a man* (i.e. separating them from their family) as a means of *emotional leverage*.
  
2. And in that social & economic context, Paul commands masters: *do the same things to them*. What does the apostle *mean*?
  - a. The instruction, of course, is **not** for masters to *obey* slaves!
  - b. But Paul is *looking back* at his word to *slaves* (5-8) and now calls on *masters* to adopt the same **attitudes**:
    - i. *Respect, sincerity, integrity, good will*.
    - ii. In general, v.7 – *doing the will of God*; v.8 – the pursuit of *doing good*.
  - c. And specifically, here in v.9 - to *give up threatening*.
    - i. Apparently *bullying* was a fav. *management technique* in *Rome*!
  - d. Once again, as w/Paul’s instructions to *husbands* & to *fathers*, this call to treat *servants* w/*respect* was *radical stuff*!

3. But the apostle has some *radical motivation*; consider these *three*:
- a. **1<sup>st</sup>**. *Everyone reports to someone!* In fact, we will *all* ultimately report to *Christ*, even our *earthly masters* – (1 Cor 3) *for we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*
  - b. **2<sup>nd</sup>**. *The Boss is in heaven.* This reminds *masters* that our **One Master** is high *above* us all. He *sees* us all. He *rules* us all.
    - i. **Prov 5:21** – *For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths.*
    - ii. **Psa 115:3** - *But our God is in the heavens; He does **whatever** He pleases.*
  - c. **3<sup>rd</sup>** *motivation.* *The Boss is perfectly **impartial**.* He is *completely **just**.*
    - i. And if *your God* is going to treat *you & your work-crew* fair in the *next* life...
    - ii. ...you need to treat them *fair* in **this one**.
4. Contemporary American theologian **RC Sproul** has done a lot of writing on the connection between our *faith* and the way we *live life* in the trenches.
- a. He suggests that the way you *treat* people (e.g. *workplace*) is basically a *theological* issue.
  - b. Let's reread v.8 & v.9: **?????** – **is this (4.b) clear?**
    - i. **Read v.8** – *each one...whether **salve** or **free***
    - ii. **Read v.9** – *both **their Master** & **yours**.*
  - c. There are **two** biblical truths that should always inform the way you *treat* others:
    - i. Everyone you meet: whether *slave & master*, is made in *God's image* (Gen 1).
    - ii. And both **Christian** *master & slave* are *bought* by the *blood* of Jesus.

**If you are *bought* by the blood of *Jesus*, then you have the *Holy Spirit*, and the *Holy Spirit* will make you a *better boss*!**

**We've been examining the *Spirit-filled life* for several weeks.**

And it all began w/ this command: *Be filled with the Spirit.*

**That might be one of the *most important commands* in your *Bible*!**

And it's just the *norm* for each one of us. **You can do this!** 😊

It's **attainable** because the Spirit lives in *every* Christian, *never* to leave.

It's **measurable** because the Bible lists *clear evidences* of the Spirit-filled life (e.g.): *worshipful heart, thankful attitude, & submissive relationships*. Along with the *fruit of the Spirit* (Gal 5) & the *assuring testimony* of the Spirit (Rom 8). Etc.

The *Spirit-filled* life is **practical** because we need Him *exactly* where Paul has just *promised* us He will be; just where we all *live*: our *marriages* & our *family* & our *work*.

***"Holy Spirit...You are welcome here!"***

***...pray...***