

Sunday, September 5, 2021—Colossians 3:22 Servants, Masters, & The High Calling Of Our Daily Work

### Colossians 3:22

- **Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:**
- **Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh**—this statement contains yet another imperative command. The verb “obey” is once again in the imperative mood.
  - Col. 3:1—“seek those things were are above”
  - Col. 3:2—“set your affection on things above”
  - Col. 3:5—“mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth”
  - Col. 3:8—“put off all these”
    - Anger
    - Wrath
    - Malice
    - Blasphemy
    - Filthy communication out of your mouth
  - Col. 3:9—“lie not one to another”
  - Col. 3:12—“put on therefore as the elect of God”
    - Bowels of Mercies (v. 12)
    - Kindness (v. 12)
    - Humbleness of Mind (v. 12)
    - Meekness (v. 12)
    - Longsuffering (v. 12)
    - Forbearing one another (v. 13)
    - Forgiving one another (v. 13)

- Charity (v. 14)
    - Col. 3:15—“let the peace of God rule in your hearts”
    - Col. 3:15—“be ye thankful”
    - Col. 3:16—“let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”
    - Col. 3:18—“Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands”
    - Col. 3:19—“Husbands, love your wives”
    - Col. 3:20—“Children obey your parents in all things”
    - Col. 3:21—“Fathers provoke not your children to anger”
    - Col. 3:22—“Servants, obey in all things your masters”
      - There is a reason in verse 24 that I keep emphasizing this list. The judgement seat of Christ is in view.
- **Servants**—the word translated “servants” means slave, bondman, or man of servile condition. It is variously rendered as “servant” 120xs, “bond” 6xs, and “bondman” 1 x. It has both literal and metaphorical meanings.
  - Literal—a slave or one who is a servile condition.
  - Metaphorical—one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men.
    - Colossians 4:12—is an example of the metaphorical sense, Epaphras is a “servant of Christ.”
    - Romans 1:1—Paul was a “servant” of Jesus Christ.
    - I Corinthians 12:13—the English word “[bond](#)” in this verse means, “In a state of servitude, or slavery; captive,” according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*.
    - Galatians 3:28
    - Ephesians 6:8

- Colossians 3:11
- Revelation 6:15
- During New Testament times a master and slave relationship was a part of the economic structure. There were undoubtedly many reasons why a person might find themselves in a position of servitude, such as subjugation resulting from war, indebtedness, or voluntary submission in exchange for security.
- The existence of the master-slave relationship came about as part of the curse of sin. Therefore, the Bible while not condoning the practice recognizes it as a reality of the human experience. Therefore, the Holy Spirit in the New Testament seeks to regulate this relationship for believers.
- I Corinthians 7:20-24—Paul did not call for believers to instigate the overthrow of the socio-economic order. Rather, he instructs slaves that they are the “Lord’s freeman” even in a condition of servitude. In other words, because they are in Christ, they can serve the Lord in their servitude. However, if the opportunity for freedom presents itself, they should seek it.
- Philemon 24
- I Timothy 6:1-2
- Colossians 3:22—even as children were admonished to obey in all things their parents in verse 20, likewise servants are so instructed in verse 22. The only difference between verse 20 and verse 22 is to whom each party is instructed to be obedient.
- **Eyeservice**—means service rendered to please the eye, i.e. serving faithfully while the master is watching.
- **Manpleasers**— likewise defines the servant who works hard while his master is watching. He does not have a genuine interest in what he is doing but is only interested in making a good impression when the master or overseer is present.
- **Singleness of heart**—deals with the basic idea of single attention directed toward one object or focusing on a given purpose. Instead of trying to put up a good front and please men. Paul exhorts servants to be in singleness of heart fearing God. Paul is telling them that instead of putting up a false front before the eyes of men their heart should be singly focused on the Lord.
- Notice once again this issue of fearing God in verse 22, serving one’s master in this capacity in this way was God’s will for the Body of Christ.
- Ephesians 5:5-9—the will of God is not for some people to be slaves and others to be masters, rather it is his will that we serve God in whatsoever state we find ourselves in as believers.

- Ephesians 5:21—is the verse that introduces the lengthy passage on the submissions that are in order for the Body of Christ. The relationship of Christian slaves to their masters was to be governed by their relation to the Lord.

### **The Believer at Work**

- Thankfully the present economy of the United States no longer includes servant-master as one of its relationships; however, it does include the employee-employer relationship.
- All of the same lessons still apply to our work relationships.
- Paul instructs believers to work and do right by their families and secular relationships and responsibilities.
  - II Thessalonians 3:10-12
  - I Timothy 5:8
  - Ephesians 4:28
- Genesis 2:15—from the very beginning God created man to be his workman in the earth and gave his jobs and responsibilities to carry on for him in the earth.
  - Man’s first occupation was that of a “husbandman” or “fruit dresser” of an orchard. Adam was to be God’s gardener of beauty.
  - Second, Adam is instructed to keep the garden. He had to be God’s watchman on duty. Keeping something involves retaining it in your possession; guarding it secure, even protecting it from being seized by another.
  - Genesis 1:28
- Genesis 3:17—work only became drudgery after the fall. Unfortunately for us we live on this side of the fall.
- God’s will for the Body of Christ is that our work would serve as a testimony of his grace. Now that we have been justified and redeemed from sin, we have the capacity to restore work to the purpose for which God created it as a means of serving him.
- Colossians 3:23—whatever we do ought to be done unto the Lord and not unto men.