

FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP

BIBLE TEXT : I Timothy 6:1, 2; Ephesians 6:5-9; Romans 13:1-8.

LESSON 358 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Timothy 6:1-2

¹ Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

² And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

Ephesians 6:5-9

⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

⁶ Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Romans 13:1-8

¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

³ For rulers are not a terror to

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Responsibility of Employees

1. They should honour their employers, I Timothy 6:1, 2;

Colossians 3:22

²² Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

Titus 2:9-10

⁹ *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again; ¹⁰ Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

1 Peter 2:18

¹⁸ Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

2. Their work should be done as unto the Lord, Ephesians 6:5-8;

Colossians 3:23

²³ And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

II Instructions to Employers

1. Their treatment of employees must be with respect, Ephesians 6:9.

2. They must pay them a just wage,

Colossians 4:1

¹ Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

James 5:4

⁴ Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

III A Christian's Attitude Toward the Law

1. "The powers that be are ordained of God," Romans 13:1, 2;

Proverbs 8:15

¹⁵ By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Daniel 4:32

³² And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

2. Those who do right need not fear the law, Romans 13:3, 4.

3. Christians must obey the law, Romans 13:5-7;

1 Peter 2:13-14

¹³ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

¹⁴ Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

Mark 12:17

¹⁷ And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

NOTES:

Christianity on Trial

The law of God is sometimes divided into two parts -- that which applies to our duty toward God, and that, which applies to our duty toward our fellow man. We cannot serve God without the proper regard for our fellow man -- our neighbour, our servant, our master.

The name of God, and His doctrine, are honoured by the

good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

⁵ Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

⁶ For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

⁷ Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

conduct of His true followers. The world sees an example more quickly than it hears a precept. "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (II Corinthians 3:2). The doctrine of God is magnified through the lives of those who live godly, and is blasphemed because of those who name His name but do not live according to His Word. Sometimes it is said of one, "There goes a real Christian." While of another one hears, "If that is Christianity, I don't want anything to do with it."

Perhaps nowhere is Christianity more observed than in the conduct of the Christian labourer on the job. Labour has gone to great lengths to improve working conditions and has often disregarded Christian principles to gain its end. The Christian workman must be careful not to follow the ungodly practices of the sinner in his relationship toward his employer.

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed" (I Timothy 6:1). This applies just as strongly to the employee of today as it did to the slave of Paul's day. How could one count his employer worthy of all honour and not strive to please him? "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again" (Titus 2:9). God demands that servants respect their masters. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (I Peter 2:18). This lets us know that we cannot say that because our supervisor is a sinner, or a wicked man, we do not have to strive to please him; but we are compelled to be subject to the froward. That means to those who will not yield to reason or arguments, to those who are wilfully wrong and obstinate.

So long as we are not required to do that which is evil, we are to give our employer implicit obedience. "Not answering again" means not to contradict, but to accept the orders or the authority of those over us.

Work Done for Christ

A Christian workman is to do his temporal work as "unto Christ; not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Ephesians 6:5-7). "Eyeservice" is a word, which is very descriptive of the way some people work. They are very careful to keep busy when the supervisor is looking, but the moment the supervisor is gone they begin to shirk their duty, and become lax, and waste their time. Then let the supervisor come back into the room, and immediately they start their work going again, full blast. Some men who would not think of stealing will waste the time for which their employer is paying them.

"Eyeservice" also describes those who work to be seen of men, who look for the praise of men and do not do their work as unto the Lord.

Enthusiasm Required

"Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23). Did you ever feel that you wanted to do something especially kind for a person for whom you have great admiration and respect? Would it not cause you to be careful as well as diligent? Let us then forget the man for whom we are working; let us put him out of the picture; let us, instead, see Christ sitting at the manager's desk. That One for whom we are working is the One who left a Throne in Heaven and gave His very life for us. As Christians, we are now working for Him. Whether we are driving nails into a board, waiting on customers in a store, working in an office, or digging a ditch in the street, we are working for the Lord. "Do it heartily," for Him.

Do you feel that you are underpaid, or that your work is not appreciated? Remember that "whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:8). Perhaps you are looking to the wrong paymaster; if you were working for John and you would not expect Bill to pay you. If you are working for the Lord, look to Him for the reward.

"And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service" (I Timothy 6:2). A Christian must not take advantage of the fact that he is working for another believer. The brother will not be so

harsh or demanding as a sinner might be; but, nevertheless, the labourer must be just as willing to give a good day's work to a fellow Christian as he would to a hard, exacting sinner who made strong demands of him.

God's Equality

And to masters the Bible says: "Your Master also is in heaven" (Ephesians 6:9). These words let the employer know that he and his employees are all servants in the eyes of God. There is no respect of persons with Him. He demands justice of a master, just as quickly as he does from a servant. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Colossians 4:1). The God who heard the cry of the Hebrew slave and delivered him from Egyptian bondage still listens to the cry of the oppressed. "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth" (James 5:4). God demands employers to pay equitable wages and treat their help right, "forbearing threatening"; that is, not holding a whip over them just because the labourers are in the employers' power.

Subjection to Law

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (I Corinthians 14:33). We have but to look about us and observe the regularity of movement in nature — the sun, moon, and stars, for example — to see the orderliness of which God is the Author. In order for people to live together in a peaceful society, it is necessary to have laws, or rules of conduct. God ordained it thus, and gave His Law unto Moses that Israel might know how to conduct themselves in the Promised Land. This Law is honoured yet today as the basis of much of our civil law.

"The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). The rules that men make for order and decency are the will of God. If we abide by them we have no reason to fear the law. If we refuse to abide by the law, we have not only to fear the rulers, but our conscience and God. It is not to the credit of a Christian to discard the law, whether it be traffic laws for our safety or regulations concerning the operation of our business. "Yet must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (Romans 13:5).

At times there creep into our statute books laws which are in conflict with God's law. These are not true laws; and Christians should do all that lies in their power to prevent such ordinances from going into effect. Daniel was confronted with a law that would prohibit him from praying, but he prayed anyway. Peter told the rulers, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Christians should take an active part in voting and raising their voice against laws that are unjust, and those that legalise vice such as drinking and gambling. By keeping our statutes clean, all decent people will have respect for our laws, and render "to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Romans 13:7).

QUESTIONS

1. Name some ways in which the doctrine of God is blasphemed.
2. What are some of the things an employee should remember concerning his conduct on the job?
3. If you regard your work as being done for God, how would you do it?
4. What are the instructions to those who have believing masters?
5. Name two things God requires of employers.
6. What is God's attitude toward civil rulers and laws?
7. Name two reasons why a Christian should obey civil laws.
8. Give an example of a godly man who disobeyed an unjust law, and state his grounds.