

**TEXT** Ephesians 6:5-9; 1 Timothy 6:1,2

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES** Deuteronomy 24:15; Colossians 4:1; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to explain that an employer has a responsibility to treat his employee in a fair and just manner; and that the employee has an obligation to do his duties faithfully and accord his employer respect and obedience. Whatever his position, he should perform his duties as unto the Lord.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. — Colossians 3:23

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. — Matthew 7:12

**ANSWER  
TITLE:**

# Which Comes First?

**SEARCH  
TITLE:**

# Duties of Employers and Employees

## REFERENCE INFORMATION

**Summary of Ephesians 6:5-9, Regarding Servants and Masters:** Half the population of Rome and a large proportion of the population of the Empire were slaves. Many of the Christians were slaves. They were told that faithful service to their masters was a prime requisite of their Christian faith. It is a remarkable teaching: that in the performance of our earthly tasks, however menial, we are always under the watchful eye of Christ for His approval or disapproval, as we may deserve.

In Old Testament times it was common to have servants. It is mentioned that Abraham had 318. God expected

the servants of that day to be subject to the hard masters as well as the gentle masters. When Hagar fled from Sarai because Sarai had dealt with her severely, an angel told Hagar to return to her mistress and be submissive (Genesis 16:9). This same thought is brought out in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:18). The Mosaic Law also instructed the masters how to treat their servants. They were required to be just and fair and not to be abusive. Jesus brought these issues into focus for everyone when He gave us what we call the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

## YOUR OPENER

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# Duties of Employers and Employees

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**KEY VERSE:** Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. — Matthew 7:12

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 fellowman. We cannot serve God acceptably without proper regard for our fellowman—our neighbor, our servant, our master. The world sees an example more quickly than it hears a precept. It is possible that nowhere is Christianity more observed than in the conduct of the Christian laborer on the job.

## RESPONSES

1. Ephesians 6:9 brings out that what the Christian boss expects of his employees, he should be willing to do for them. If he expects honesty and fair treatment, he should give honesty and fair treatment. The boss should not intimidate his employees by threatening discharge or more difficult working conditions. Colossians 4:1 brings out that the employer should give that which is just and equal. Ask your students to offer other thoughts. You may wish to discuss the fact that wages should be paid on time, as brought out in James 5:4.

2. Obedience. Discuss why an employee should be obedient to his employer. Your students should conclude that the employee is selling his time and labor to his employer, therefore he should do whatever the employer requests. In the event the employer demands something unlawful, or something that goes against the employee's conscience, the employee has the right to explain this to his employer. If the employer refuses to listen, the employee has the right to quit his job.

3. Ephesians 6:5 lets us see that our employers are to be served faithfully, as unto Christ. This would preclude any derogatory statements. If Christ were directly responsible for setting your wage, would you complain about it? If He were to evaluate your on-the-job performance, how would you go about your daily work?

1. What is the responsibility of the employer, as far as his employee is concerned? Use our text and Colossians 4:1 to substantiate your answer.

2. What is, perhaps, the most important word that governs the employee's relationship to his employer? (Ephesians 6:5) Why is this so important?

3. Many times an employee may have complaints about his boss—he doesn't spend enough time on the job, he doesn't pay enough wages, he expects too much, etc. The employee must remember that the boss pays the wage that has been agreed upon and it is his prerogative to do whatever he pleases—this is not the employee's business. Does the Bible give any license to the employee to talk in a derogatory manner about his employer? What does our text say regarding this?

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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4. What is meant by the phrase: “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers”?

5. Why is it so important to work faithfully in this world? How would the Scripture quoted in question 4 apply to monitoring carefully the amount of time spent on breaks, lunch hours, etc.?

6. Who is the most important—the employer or the employee? Explain.

7. Name at least one result of employees’ counting their employers worthy of all honor.

8. Explain how our key verse relates to both employer and employee.

4. Allow time for answers. Have the class consider the fact that some people work hard when the boss is present but slack off when the boss is out of sight. Those who work for another person would do well to take stock of their attitude toward their work and their boss. If it reflects carelessness or indifference when the boss is away, they are not meeting this scriptural standard. The Lord is watching all the time, even when the boss is not able to do so, and His records are accurate and unarguable.

5. Ephesians 6:8 brings out that, “whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.” Center the thoughts around the truth that when workers perform their duties with the thought in mind that they are actually working for the Lord, it places a far greater importance upon the work. This also makes work, especially the menial tasks, easier to accomplish, knowing an eternal reward is forthcoming. If your job has rest breaks, the time duration is usually stated—ten or fifteen minutes. To take more time than stated is actually stealing time from the employer. A Christian does not steal time or anything else.

6. Your students will no doubt conclude that neither the employer nor employee is most important. Discuss with your students the scriptural thought that there is no respect of persons with God. Each person is equally valuable to Him, as well as equally responsible. Whether we are the employer or the employee, our intentions and actions are noted by Him and will be judged accordingly. One may get by with some wrongful conduct on earth, but all wrongful actions will be judged at last.

7. 1 Timothy 6:1 brings out that one result will be that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. This answer is somewhat negative, but bring the discussion around to a positive note. When the Christian laborer considers his or her boss with honor, it may be the means of the salvation of that boss! Letting our Christian light shine by cheerfully doing our work can be used by the Lord to influence fellow laborers to come to Christ. “Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

8. Discussion with your class should bring out that God commands that we should treat one another as we wish to be treated. Obviously this indicates that the employer on the job should consider the feelings of his employee, and the employee should consider the feelings of the employer. Why will this type of consideration for each other make for a harmonious working situation? Why is this a situation to be desired?

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What do you think being a “servant of the Lord” means?

What are our obligations to God if we are a servant of the Lord?

What is a servant?

What does *eye service* mean?

Is it possible to take advantage of a Christian employer? How can one guard against this?

How can we make a difficult job easier?

Is it all right to slack off on our job if the boss is not around? if the other employees are doing the same?

There are many subtle ways to slack off on our job. Name a few.

In the ANSWER story, Travis grew tired of his paper route, but the job hadn’t changed. What had? What advice did his mother give to him? Would this help you in doing the things you are supposed to do around home? Explain.

## THINGS TO DO

Give each student a piece of paper on which you have written across the top: “If I were a boss, I would want my employee to . . .” Across the middle of the page, write: “If I were an employee, I would want my boss to . . .” Have the students complete the sentences. Then let them exchange papers and read aloud the suggestions.

If possible bring two new-looking paint cans (or other containers). Have one full and the other half-full. By looking at them, one cannot tell any difference, but when the lids are lifted, the difference can be seen. Explanation: One may be able to fool around on the job or cheat his employer and “keep a lid on it” so his employer won’t know, but God looks on the inside and when we are weighed in the balance we will be found wanting. Remember: Be sure your sins will find you out.

Ask for volunteers to act out the parts of the employee and employer in the following situations. After each situation, discuss how well it was handled or how the

characters might have handled it better.

1. Employer tells secretary, “If anyone calls, tell him I’m not here.”
2. Employee is late the third day in a row.
3. Person in dire need of work, applies for a job and is told he will be required to sell liquor and/or cigarettes.
4. One employee tries to get another to take an extra long lunch hour. (After all, the boss is out of town and won’t know the difference.)

Act out a skit showing contrasting work habits. Have one student be cleaning efficiently, another carelessly, until their “boss” comes in. Then the lazy one acts as if he had been working hard all the time—until the boss leaves. Let the good worker explain that God sees when we don’t work faithfully even when the boss thinks we do. The lazy one decides to get busy and be a good worker.

## Answers for ANSWER

### Doing Our Best

Anybody who is employed knows there is a “boss” he must please. A Christian should have no problem wanting to do this. This week’s key verse tells us how we can do our best for others even when we think it will be too hard. Without peeking at the key verse, look at the pictures below and add or subtract the letters as shown. (You may need some scratch paper.) Write the resulting words on the lines below.



- H    W + + - AP + EVER    Y + - BLL  
 AND WHATSOEVER YE

- NUT    D + - TP    - KE    + - GRL + Y  
 DO, DO IT HEARTILY,

- BKET    2 - W    - RMOS    - BALON + RD  
 AS TO THE LORD,

- H    - K    - S + - OTH    M + - H  
 AND NOT UNTO MEN.