

Study Questions:
“The Curse and the Cubicle” Part 5
Ephesians 6:5-8

KEY POINTS

- Some slaves of Paul’s day were enslaved due to financial debt.
- We are responsible for our attitudes and actions while at work or school.
- Believers are to obey those who are in authority over them.
- God sees and God rewards.
- The Lord speaks to all leaders in the work place.

- 1) **READ** Ephesians 6:5-8.¹ What were some of the circumstances in which people would be enslaved in Paul’s day ² (one has been mentioned)? Is the slave and master relationship a comparable one to make with employer and employee? What are the limitations? What are the similarities?

- 2) What do you think when you hear that an employee must obey their boss? Is there ever a point when an employee should not do what their boss instructs or asks them to do?

- 3) During the message you heard that the meaning for “obeying” is similar to the meaning to “hearing.” What words were used to describe “obeying?” What then is the difference between hearing and obeying? Our current culture has recently experienced a rash of issues related to authority figures and their subordinates. How does this affect someone’s disposition to obey

¹ Cf. Exodus 21:2-8; Exodus 21:20-21; Exodus 21:26-27; Leviticus 25:39-55.

² It is easy for us to look at first-century slavery through the lens of American Colonial slavery, but slavery in Paul’s day was not justified by racism or even greed. People could become slaves due to war, though this was rare in the first century AD. They could also choose to become slaves if they fell on hard economic times. Slavery could provide a way to boost economic status or pay off a debt, which is likely the form of slavery that Paul addresses. The means for emancipating slaves was in existence and in common use at this time. Slaves “were [emancipated] by the thousands in the late Republic and early Empire.” This was so common that Rome placed laws to limit the number of slaves who could be emancipated by slave-owners through their wills.

Slavery could be categorized into *domestic slavery* and *public slavery*. Domestic slaves were employed to help their masters. Public slaves functioned much like civil servants today, commanding a fair amount of respect and independence in medical, political and educational spheres. (*Study Like a Pro: Explore Difficult Passages from Every Book of the Bible*)

those leaders? **READ** Ephesians 6:5 again. Does this cultural phenomenon affect our duty to follow Biblical mandates? In what way does Ephesians 6:5 tell us to obey these “earthly masters?”

- 4) We are also encouraged not to do our work with eye-service. **EXPLAIN** “eye-service” while using the context of the passage to help work through it (Ephesians 6:6). Are you or have you ever been an “eye-service” employee? Is this type of lifestyle difficult to maintain and what are some of the benefits and drawbacks of working in this manner?
- 5) **READ** Ephesians 6:8. Is it enough for you to await a reward from the Lord for your faithfulness at work? What conditions would have to be in place in order for you to continue working until 80 years old? Do you think you would derive much joy in your work at that age?
- 6) What are the expectations do the Lord have of those who lead on their jobs (Ephesians 6:9)? Are there double standards concerning work ethic and attitude at the place where you work or have worked (employer/employee dynamic)?
- 7) **LIST** two areas where the Lord is speaking to you for change about your relationship to your work after this study today.