

THE SERVANT'S OBEDIENCE TO HIS MASTER

Ephesians 6: 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.

In scripture, there were voluntary servants who dedicated themselves to others such as Joshua to Moses and Elisha to Elijah. Under the law some servants sold themselves to their debtor or were servants to make restitution for theft. (Ex 21:7; Le 25:39-47; 2 Ki 4:1; De 15:12-18) A willing-bond-servant had served his time and was free to go but loved his master so he continued to serve him. (Ex 21:2, 6; 25:40) A slave was a servant forced to serve—Joseph is the first slave in scripture. (Gen 37:27-28) This kind of service is oppression and abhorred by God. (De 24:14 Ps 103:6 Isa 10:1-3 Am 4:1 Mal 3:5 Jas 5:4) Today, most of us are hired servants working for our employer for a wage. In this text, God gives the believer, who was a forced servant, instructions how he was to serve his master. It does not suggest we should practice slavery in our culture where slavery is illegal any more than Paul meant that women should show their subjection to the man by wearing a head covering in our culture where head coverings are not the way women show their subjection to their husbands. But in both cases, it is the principle which applies. No matter a believer's position, we are Christ's free men and are to serve in subjection as unto Christ.

We learn all truth by looking to Christ Jesus. In Philippians 2, we see Christ Jesus "*took upon him the form of a servant.*" (Philippians 2: 5-8) God the Son, equal with God the Father, willingly took the form of a servant because his elect fell into slavery in sin. (Romans 6: 17, 20) Only our Kinsmen Redeemer could provide righteousness for us and pay eternal death for our sins. (Hebrews 2: 14-15) Due to sin's corruption, we think being served is the great thing. But in Christ we behold that serving for those we love is the greatest thing. (Luke 22: 26-27; Matthew 20: 26-28; Luke 9 48)

How did Christ serve? He served the Father obediently. Therefore, he says, "*Servants, be obedient to them that are masters according to the*

flesh.” (Eph 6: 5) Christ served with fear and trembling as unto God his Master. Therefore, he says, “*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.*” (Eph 6: 5) Christ served not as pleasing men but as the servant of God, doing the will of God from the heart. Therefore he teaches servants to serve “*Not with eyeservice, 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.*” He served believing God would honor the pure motive of his heart. Therefore, he teaches servants to serve “*Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*” He teaches us that even in the lowest place of service we glorify God by being the best servant our master has and God honors those who honor him. (Read 1 Peter 2:18-24) May God make us great by making us willing to be least to serve one another rather than being served!