



“HOW TO BE THE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR”

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Theme: *Believers who will excel see work as a sacred duty.*

Introduction: How is your job going? Responses to this inevitably vary – from great to horrible and for different reasons. Foremost among these is ... “your boss!” In 2020, **56.3%** of U.S. Workers were satisfied with their jobs – a high in recent decades. Nearly half of people are dissatisfied with their jobs. Part of this is the standardization of remote work and flexibility. In 2021, **70%** of employees complained that the problem at work was their boss. A popular saying goes: *“People don’t leave jobs; they leave bosses.”* Among the most common complaints are poor communication, unclear expectations, perceived favoritism, lack of recognition, and an inability to trust and respect a boss.

At the same time, employers are complaining about employees, saying they are unreliable, resist change, lack initiative, are insubordinate, lack quality of work, refuse to upskill, misuse company resources, and possess belligerent attitudes.

A Christian’s engagement at work should demonstrate a heart transformed by grace so that our Master –the One we serve – is Jesus Christ. We look past the human “boss” and see One standing far beyond them Who merits our utmost devotion, sacrifice, and efforts. Instead of work being a “necessary evil,” ***“Believers who will excel see work as a sacred duty.”*** This applies not only to paid jobs but any work we do – from the chores by a child, wife in the home, a worker in Grace Kids, to anything one assumes responsibility to accomplish.

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I. THE ATTITUDE OF A GOOD EMPLOYEE – 6:1A

- A. The Attitude toward Your Service – *“All who are under the yoke as slaves ...”***

1. Another matter the false teachers were promoting is the unethical and obstinate attitude toward work, so Paul had to address it: *“All who are under the yoke as slaves ...”*
2. A great deal of clarification is required to properly understand this text in the way those in the 1st Century would have received it.
3. One crucial matter is the corruption in the 21st American mind brought about by the unethical, immoral, and ungodly institution of slavery in our Nation’s history.
4. Slavery in biblical days was nothing like the racially driven institution against which we all take such umbrage.
5. Slavery was essential to the employment structure of the 1st Century economy through which people provided for themselves and their families.
6. Day laborers were seasonally employed, with domestic slaves serving as managers and overseers.
7. They were *“yoked”* to their *“masters,”* officially obligated to work for them for a specific time frame - similar to the contracts signed with employers or sports teams today.
8. *“yoke”* [ζυγός] – refers to joining together with someone to accomplish a task or a goal – it is an obligation.
9. The term *“slave”* [δοῦλος] – refers to people who are in any number of levels of obligation to a “master.”
 - a) *Prisoners of war.*
 - b) *Purchased, inherited, or gifted while already slaves.*
 - c) *Volunteered to repay a debt.*
 - d) *Indentured by choice.*
10. Society forbade the “kidnapping” of a free person to make them a slave, as was true of the American slavery institution and trade – cp. *Exodus 21:16.*
11. Paul’s point here is that when you are under the official responsibilities of a job, you are to see yourself as obligated to fulfill your duties faithfully – cp. *Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25.*

B. The Attitude toward Your Supervisor – *“... are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor ...”*

1. The second focus of your attitude is toward your *“master”* [δεσπότης] – referring to the one for whom you are working or to whom you are accountable – lit—the one who exercises control over another.
2. Although such persons can often be under-skilled in their managing

abilities, the believer must check his attitude and have *“regard”* [ἡγέομαι] – a term meaning to engage in an intellectual process – to think through something and not merely react.

3. *“worthy”* [ἄξιος] – conveys the role of *“master”* is deserving esteem regardless of the merit of the person in the position.
4. Essentially, God calls on us to think through the fact that we are to *“honor”* those for whom we work regardless of their merit.
5. To *“honor”* [τιμή], as it has regarding widows and elders, means to place a value on something or someone that is a premium, to manifest esteem for someone.
6. Because your employer might be a personal dolt or even an imbecile, that they are in the role of supervisor means they are in authority and owes their position to the Lord.
7. The notion of *“honoring”* your master means doing everything you can to make them successful – without obsessing with who is credited; the Lord sees!

II. THE ASPIRATION OF A GOOD EMPLOYEE – 6:1B

A. The Aspiration to Commend God – *“... so that the name of God ... will not be spoken against ...”*

1. A second characteristic of a good employee is an aspiration to bring glory to God.
2. The assumption is that believers will be doing their work so that God is glorified – cp. *1 Corinthians 10:31*.
3. As we conduct ourselves admirably, with honorable, ethical, moral endeavors to cause those above us to know success, our efforts will cause others to “see our good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” – cp. *Matthew 5:16*.
4. However, suppose we are known as believers and offer unethical, immoral, lazy, and slothful efforts at work to dishonor our bosses instead of being a good reflection of God and His glory. In that case, we will cause *“the name of God ... [to be] spoken against.”*
5. *“spoken against”* [βλασφημέω] is the word “blasphemed” or reviled, defamed, or profaned – the opposite of glorifying Him.
6. Paul emphasizes to Timothy that believers must see their jobs as a means by which God is glorified – as a sacred duty, not merely a temporal or carnal pursuit.

7. We must do all we can to give our best at work – not seeking to be minimalist in our efforts but doing everything possible to avoid anyone associating us with God in an unfavorable way.
8. Instead, our aspiration is to commend God to others by the way we do our jobs.

B. The Aspiration to Confirm Gospel – “... so that our doctrine will not be spoken against.”

1. Additionally, Paul states that our work reflects “*our doctrine*” – a reference to the influence of the Gospel.
2. The Word of God instructs followers of Jesus Christ to be exemplary in all we do – conducting ourselves in a godly fashion.
3. Our efforts must be deliberate, intentional, and aspirational to avoid our employers saying: “*So this is the kind of person following that God produces – who needs it.*”
4. Instead, we aspire to hear – “*What makes you so different? You are conscientious and productive beyond your pay grade? What motivates you, and can you share with me about the hope that is in you?*” – cp. *Titus 2:9-10.*

III. THE ALLEGIANCE OF A GOOD EMPLOYEE – 6:2

A. The Allegiance Despite Fraternity – “*Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren ...*”

1. Once again, false teachers were pushing the application of truth into erroneous conclusions.
2. The Gospel eliminates all distinctions between people spiritually – that is, God is not a respecter of persons – the blood of Christ is equally effective regardless of gender, race, or social status of slave or free.
3. However, asserting that all distinctions are gone is wrong – a man remains a man and must not act as anything other than a man. Similarly, an employee remains accountable to his employer even if the employer is a believer.
4. Paul states: “*Those who have believers as their master must not be disrespectful ...*” [καταφρονέω] – a term meaning to consider something not important enough to be concerned, to be unafraid of someone.
5. It is the idea: “I don’t have to be concerned about them – they’ll be forgiving.”
6. We must never take advantage of or expect special treatment from an

employer because they are kind, tolerant, patient, and forgiving.

B. The Allegiance Demonstrating Favor – “... *but must serve them all the more because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved.*”

1. In fact, instead of taking advantage of an employer who is a believer, one ought to “*serve them all the more*” – *Galatians 6:10*.
2. Paul’s comments teach us that instead of taking advantage of a brother in Christ, we must seek to be a blessing to them by doing our work as to the Lord – cp. *Colossians 3:22-23*.
3. When we do all we can to glorify God through our work, a believing boss “*partake[s] of the benefit*” of our diligence.
4. Our motivation is because they “*are believers*” in God “*... and beloved*” by God.
5. Paul informs Timothy that he must persist in his resistance of false teaching – whether doctrinal or applicational – “*Teach and preach these principles.*” – to constantly (present tense imperatives) be exhorting the believers to be “employees of the year” in their work ethic.

So What?

1. In what ways can I do a better job of honoring the authority of my boss?
2. How would I have to change if my work ethic and performance were the only way I could share my faith in Jesus?
3. Name a way that your faith directly influences your approach to your job.
4. Am I guilty of doing my job merely to please my boss or collect a check instead of seeking the glory of Christ through my work?

Believers who will excel see work as a sacred duty.