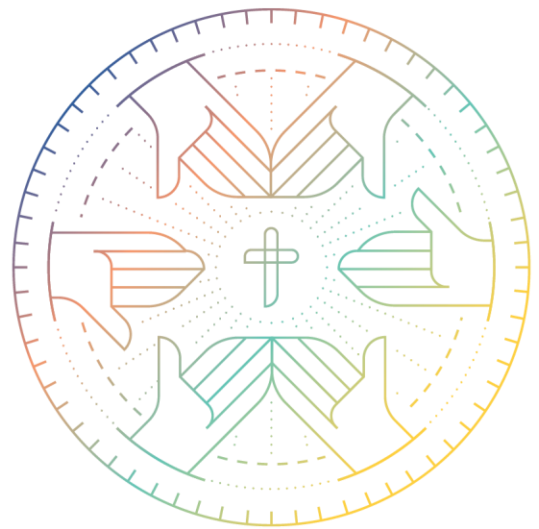


Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

In this week's study, we will be covering Ephesians 6:5-9. In it, we will dive into the workplace and the relationship between bondservants/slaves and their masters. We are including two articles that break down what it meant to be a bondservant in Paul's day as well as a biblical overview of the issue of slavery.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/bondservant.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-slavery.html>

Don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email.

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

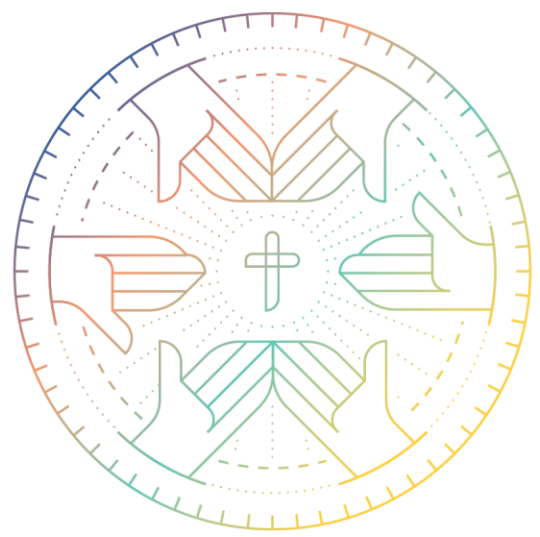
What is the first job you ever had, how old were you and what did you learn from that job?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

In this week's passage, Paul continues to discuss mutual submission first mentioned in Ephesians 5:21, and how that plays out in the workplace. Paul speaks to the context of the day in the working relationship between bondservants and masters. It is important to note that racial factors played no role in who was considered a bondservant. Many bondservants reasonably expected to gain their freedom during their lifetime with many becoming free by age 30. Bondservants worked in a variety of specialized and responsible positions including supervising and managing other people. Many bondservants received education and training in specialized skills and performed important roles in society including doctors and politicians. Finally, freed bondservants often became Roman citizens and developed a client relationship with their former masters.

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INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

1. Read Ephesians 6:5-8. What words stick out to you from this passage?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. In verse 5 Paul uses the phrase fear and trembling. The word fear here means to respect even when the other person doesn't deserve it. The word trembling references the idea of not getting comfortable in your role. When you get complacent you can get lazy and not work with the edge needed to perform your assigned role to the best of your ability. Paul uses the phrase, Sincere heart, to speak to the importance of doing your work with a pure heart and good attitude. In verse 6, he uses the words eye-service and people pleasers instructing the Ephesians to not work with the attitude of only making a good impression but instead, to focus their effort on serving Jesus. In verse 7, he uses the phrase "render service with goodwill to the Lord." Here, Paul is pointing back to the fact that everything we do including our work is serving God. We have the ability to see our work as sacred. In verse 8, he speaks to a promise that we will receive back from the Lord the good that we invest in our work. This is a general promise not that in every situation where we choose to do good that we will receive good in return.]

2. Read 1 Peter 2:13-18. Peter mirrors Paul's view of authority in Ephesians. What sticks out to you about how we should treat authority in our lives?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Peter here tells Christians to submit to every human authority, including the emperor for the Lord's sake. This is because the reputation of Christ is built by those who claim to be His followers, and Peter insists that believers should be known as people who submit to human authorities. Contextually, it is important to note the Roman emperor at the time of Peter's letter may well have been Nero. Nero was one of the cruelest emperors having Christians tortured and killed. Peter is not telling Christians to submit to authorities because those leaders are necessarily good or you agree with them, but rather that we represent Christ well by how we act. This is mirrored in Paul's call to the Ephesians as they interact with their masters. We model Christ to others by the way we interact and honor the authority in our lives.]

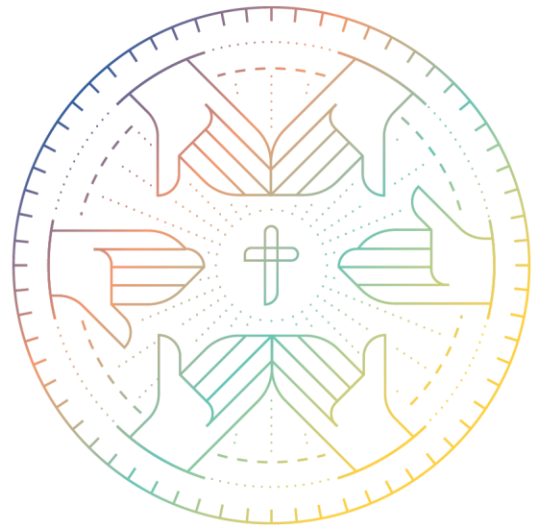
3. Read Ephesians 6:7-8 and Colossians 3:17,23-24. What sticks out from these two passages and how does this inform the way that you view the work that you do?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Paul is not just giving advice but he lived it out. Though imprisoned, he wrote encouraging letters to believers and shared the gospel while under house arrest. Paul did not let his bondage keep him from living with a godly attitude and instructed others to do the same. Demonstrating a good work attitude makes a tremendous difference in one's personal life and in our influence on others. From the most mistreated slave to the highest-paid leader, every person is called to work for God's honor.]

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APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

1. **Do you find yourself gravitating more towards prioritizing work above everything else or trying to survive work in order to do the things you actually want to do? What is one idea from Paul's message to the Ephesians that you can take with you this week to help you change the way you think about work?**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Sometimes we find ourselves leaning into making work the end all be all. At other times, we diminish its role seeing it merely as a chore to survive that will enable us to do what we want to do. Paul challenges the Ephesians to a third option. To view our work as sacred. Instead of viewing work as the end all be all or as a means to an end, we have an opportunity to do our best and reflect God's glory in the process.]

2. **Read Ephesians 6:9 and Romans 2:11. Paul instructs us to imitate God and that God shows no partiality. How can this shape your interactions with others this week?**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Showing no partiality will probably look different for each group member. The key is to treat the people we come in contact with as opportunities to honor and reflect God. This takes us shifting our mindsets and inviting God into our daily interactions.]

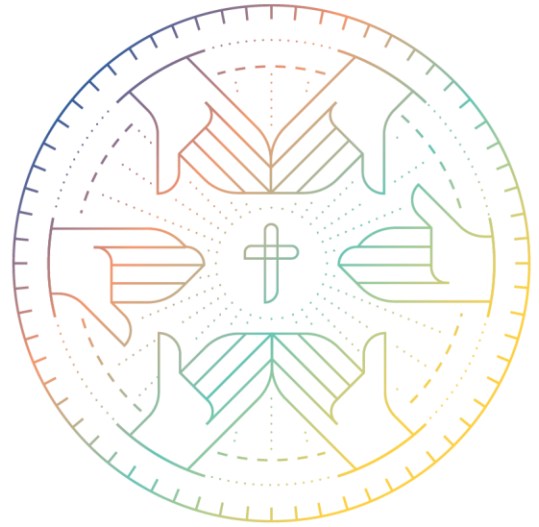
3. **Thinking back on the past few weeks, what common elements have you noticed from the different relationships that Paul mentions, and what action steps can you take this week? (Husbands/Wives, Parents/Children, Masters/Bondservants)**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. A key component is a mutual submission which is mirrored in how Christ sacrificially came and laid down His life for us. Whether we are over or under authority of others, we have an important role to play. We are called to do the same in the earthly relationships we have been given. As we imitate God, our heart is changed and changed hearts bring about changed behaviors. If we are not currently seeing fruit in one of these relational areas, we can bring that before God to change our hearts.]

Group Life.

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PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Dear heavenly Father,

Help us to view our work as an opportunity to glorify you. May we work with respect for others coming from sincere hearts as bondservants of you. May we be reminded this week to do our work to the best of our ability. When that is difficult, remind us that you will bless our obedience. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to reflect Jesus as we interact with each other. Help us to see each other with no partiality like you do. We pray for those who are in authority over us that they would honor you with their decision-making. In your heavenly name, we pray. Amen.