



Eph 6:5–9

Read, the passage below...

Ask the Lord to open your eyes, that you may behold wonderful things from His Word (Ps 119:18), and that you would receive His Word with humility—putting it into practice in your daily life (Jas 1:21–22).

Passage:¹

- 5 ^aSlaves, be **obedient** to those who are your ¹masters according to the flesh, with ^bfear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;
- 6 ^anot ¹by way of eyeservice, as ^bmen-pleasers, but as ^cslaves of Christ, ^ddoing the will of God from the ²heart.
- 7 With good will ¹render service, ^aas to the Lord, and not to men,
- 8 ^aknowing that ^bwhatever good thing each one does, this he will **receive** back from the Lord, ^cwhether slave or free.
- 9 And masters, **do** the same things to them, and ^agive up threatening, **knowing** that ^bboth their Master and yours **is** in heaven, and there **is** ^cno partiality with Him.

Context:

According to 5:21, to be Spirit-filled among other things, means being involved in relationships of mutual submission in the fear of the Lord.

Beginning in 5:22, all the way to 6:9, Paul is going to focus on 3 different spheres of relationship to show us the practical implications for lives of mutual submission.

Having discussed the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives in 5:22–33, as well as that of parents and children in 6:1–4, Paul finally focusses his attention on how being Spirit-filled effects the relationships between masters and slaves in 6:5–9.

1. Do you think that slavery is always wrong? Why, or why not?

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2. Does the Bible ever condemn the practice of slavery? If it does, briefly list some of the applicable passages. If it does not, then why do you think it would be that the practice of slavery is not condemned in the Bible?

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¹ Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.



Exploring the Text:

As you answer the following questions, please take the time to read all the *cross references* at the end of the questions. These are provided to enrich your study experience.

3. Why does Paul make the qualification "according to the flesh," in v5? What is the implication?

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4. List the three ways that obedience is described positively in v5. What is the significance of each description?

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5. Explain the significance of the negative/positive contrast that Paul sets up in v6.

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6. What additional positive description is given in v7? What does this mean?

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7. What motivation does Paul give for the whole-hearted service of slaves? (cf. v8) How/when does this happen? Try to support your answer with Scripture.

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8. Complete the following sentence: When slaves obey in the manner that is set forth in Eph 6:5-7, then it is an act of _____.

9. Does the attitude and behaviour of the master have any effect on how the slave is to act? (cf. 1Pet 2:18-20)

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10. What is "the same thing," in v9?

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11. What motivation is given for master to behave in a commendable manner?

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12. Why does Paul say that there is no partiality with God? What does this imply for masters?

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For Further Reflection:

13. We don't live in a society with slaves and masters. Can we apply these principles in our contemporary workplace environment? Why/why not?

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14. How do you need to change as a result of your study of this passage?

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15. How can these principles apply to those who are not engaged in the workplace?

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Suggestion for Prayer:

Thank the Lord for His grace that we no longer live in a society where enslavement is an excepted practice. in light of all the recent governmental restrictions that have been placed upon us, thank the Lord for the many freedoms that we do still experience in our everyday lives.

Recognise that there are still many dark corners in our world where various forms of slavery is still in practice (children are being sold into slavery in many parts of the world). Pray that the Lord would expose such practices and that He would deliver the oppressed and exploited victims of such practices.

Above all, praise the Lord for His own willingness to become a slave on our behalf so that we might be made free from our enslavement to sin and Satan.

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Additional Notes:

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