



UPCOMING DATES ...

Women's Encounter – 3-5 November
Man Church -7 November
Holy Spirit Conference – 17-19 November
Water Baptisms – 26 November

Start In – Mondays 7.30pm & Sundays 4pm
Kids "Blast" (Kindy to Yr6) – Sundays Nights
Imagine Recovery – Every Thursday Night

2017 – CG Notes #29

STRONGER – Serving God's Dream

Title: Servants Heart

Key Verses:

Ephesians 6:5-9 (NLT)

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. ⁶ Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. ⁷ Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ⁸ Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

⁹ Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favourites.

Attitude matters

There was a busy mum, who one Saturday morning felt a bit overwhelmed with all the house work that needed to be done that day. She handed her teen-aged son the broom and said "Here you go – I need some help. I want you to go out and give the front porch a good sweep after all that wind yesterday." The boy mumbled something and dragged his feet as he made his way out to the porch. She returned to her work, but after a while, she couldn't hear much activity out the front so she went to have a look. There she saw her son had hardly started the task and his use of the broom was pathetic. She grabbed the broom from his hands and proceeded to demonstrate how to put some effort into his sweeping. Then handed the broom back to him and said "Now you do it just like that." The boy took the broom from her but then defiantly said "I don't know why I have to do this work. This is nothing but slave labor!"

Same task but two completely different points of view as to why and how the job needed to be done. The mother had need of help and she had a son who was capable of assisting. As her son, she loved and cared for him and provided all of his needs. It was not too much to expect that he would help her. The son, on the other hand, saw only a job that he didn't want to do, saw nothing in it for himself and gave no thought to the fact that as part of the household he should lend a hand.

Slaves and servants

Slaves and servants were common in New Testament times, particularly among the Romans but not unknown in Palestine. Across the Roman Empire, one in five people were slaves. In First Century Ephesus to whom Paul wrote, it was one in four.

Slaves were the lowest class of society. They had no rights, no legal status, could not choose to marry, have a family or own property. For all purposes, they were considered the property of their master.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ became the great equalizer of humanity. The fact remained that those who had come to faith in Christ were still slaves, naturally speaking, but in their hearts, they had become free men and women and they knew that before God they were equals. (Gal. 3:28, Col. 3:11)

For us today, we know nothing of situations such as this, however, the attitude by which we approach service in the house of God or anywhere else for that matter, makes all the difference in the world.

In our key verses, the Apostle Paul addresses the attitude of slaves – a class of people who had no choice as to whether they would serve or not. The only choice they were free to make was the choice of their attitude towards their work.

In the New Testament, there are two main terms used to describe those who served.

These words are:

Diakonos- A servant. One who executes the commands of another, particularly of a master. Used to describe the servant of a king. An attendant, a minister. In the New Testament used of a deacon who cared for the needs of the poor and other delegated tasks. Phoebe was a servant (deacon) of the church (Rom 16:1). Stephen's ministry, Acts 6 was as a deacon.

Doulos – A slave either voluntarily or involuntarily. Subservient. Metaphorically a person who gives up his will to serve another. Devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests. Paul considered himself the *doulos* of Christ. (Romans 1:1, 2 Cor. 4:5, Gal.1:10)

Discuss:

- What do you think could be some differences in attitude of being a *servant of Christ* and being a *slave of Christ*?
- What depth of emotional/ heart investment is required?
- Could a poor attitude be masked in either one of these?
- How might your attitude affect your behavior and activities?

The Slave of Christ

What can we learn from Paul's advice to slaves in Ephesians 6? Their circumstances were unlikely to change but Paul was teaching them how to rise above their circumstances and have the best of attitude in a difficult situation.

We can find wisdom and encouragement here. We can be equipped to do our work cheerfully whether it be at home, on the job or serving in the church or community. The principles still apply.

1. Serve as if you are serving Jesus Christ Himself. (v.5)

Paul's first advice is that they demonstrated obedience and respect to their master. Slave uprisings were not unheard of. With a high proportion of the population there

existed an uneasy tension and distrust. Fear and intimidation were used to keep the slaves in check. Paul advised they put all that to rest by the attitude they displayed.

Where ever we serve there are always different personalities involved. Some people are a joy to work for or work with. Others are more difficult. We can put all of that aside when we look past the person and personality and upward to Jesus Christ.

I serve Jesus. I am His slave; therefore, I can do anything I have to do and I can do it with a great attitude!

2. Serve with excellence when others are watching or not watching. (v.6)

Can you serve in secret or do you need to be seen by others?

Is your work well-done only when others see you?

Do you cut corners or do just enough to get by when no one is watching?

These are soul-searching questions that reveal where are hearts are at. If what we do it truly for Jesus then we will do a good job of it whether anyone is watching or not.

We do not need the praises of men to do a good job nor do we need the inspection of men to do a good job. We do a good job because we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Full stop.

3. Do what you do with all your heart and with enthusiasm (v.6,7)

This is where joy comes into our hearts. Our source of joy is not from without but from within. A slave would not receive any outward encouragement. Each had to find this from within. We can easily do the same.

Engage your emotions in what you do. See your work as an offering of your life to the Lord and a blessing to others.

4. Your thanks and reward are from the Lord. (v.8)

At the end of the day, this is where we become truly free. We don't need to be thanked. We do what we do because we love Jesus and we are totally devoted to Him.

Luke 17:7-10 (MSG)

7-10 "Suppose one of you has a servant who comes in from ploughing the field or tending the sheep. Would you take his coat, set the table, and say, 'Sit down and eat'? Wouldn't you be more likely to say, 'Prepare dinner; change your clothes and wait table for me until I've finished my coffee; then go to the kitchen and have your supper'? Does the servant get special thanks for doing what's expected of him? It's the same with you. When you've done everything expected of you, be matter-of-fact and say, 'The work is done. What we were told to do, we did.'"