

V. 5 "Slaves, obey<sup>1</sup> the masters according to flesh, with fear and trembling, in simplicity of your heart as to Christ."

## Introduction

Review - The Will of God - Motivation = we are motivated by the will of God as contained in the Scripture and because we are His family.

The history of work:

Genesis 2:5, 15

V.5 This verse mentions that at that time, there was no man to cultivate the ground.

This is the mid-morning of day 6 of creation.

The animals have been made.

The earth and sea have been made.

The light and dark and all of the physical cosmos have been made.

It is now time to produce.

The idea of work is introduced in v.5 - until the man "cultivate" the ground, and water come, there would be no shrub or plant.

Then v. 15.

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<sup>1</sup> 2. "To obey." This obedience first relates to persons such as children, slaves or wives who stand in a divinely willed relation of subordination (Eph. 6:1, 5; Col. 3:20, 22; 1 Pt. 3:6). It can thus also describe the relation of demons (Mk. 1:27) or nature (Mk. 4:41 and par.) to the omnipotence of Jesus and the authoritative faith of the disciples (Lk. 17:6). In the same sense, however, the term expresses the V 1, p 224 position of man in relation to dominant moral or religious powers, whether in the good sense or the bad: R. 6:16 (δοῦλοί ἐστε ᾧ ὑπακούετε): ἐπιθυμία, v. 12; to the τύπος διδαχῆς, v. 17; πίστει, Ac. 6:7; εὐαγγελίῳ, R. 10:16; 2 Th. 1:8; λόγῳ; 2 Th. 3:14; αὐτῷ (τῷ Χριστῷ) in Hb. 5:9 (cf. 11:8: πίστει καλούμενος Ἀβραὰμ ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελεθῆν). Similarly at Phil. 2:12, in connection with the obedience of Jesus in v. 8 (infra), recollection of the ὑπακούειν of the community can describe its positive religious state: καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπακούσατε, just as believers in Ac. 5:32 can be called: οἱ πειθαρχοῦντες (θεῷ).

The frequent use of ὑπακούειν for **ΥΠΩ** in the LXX shows how strongly the idea of hearing is still present for the translator in the Gk. ὑπακούειν. Hence ὑπακούειν and ὑπακοή as terms for religious activity are always to be thought of within the sphere of a religion which receives the divine Word by hearing and then translates it into action (→, ἀκούω, 1): ὑπήκουσας τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς, Gn. 22:18; Lv. 26:14; τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους ὑπακούειν τῶν λόγων μου, Jer. 13:10; ὑπακούσεται (יִשְׁמָע) σοφίας τὸ οὖς σου, Prv. 2:2. Cf. also Test. Jud. 13:1: ὑπακούειν ἐντολᾶς θεοῦ; 18:6: θεῷ ὑπακούσαι οὐ δύναται.

Kittel, G. (1964-). ἀκούω, ἀκοή, εἰς-, ἐπ-, παρακούω, παρακοή, ὑπακούω, ὑπακοή, ὑπήκουος. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 1, pp. 223–224). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

God created a man from the dust of the earth and put him into the garden for a purpose.

The man had a primary purpose for his creation and insertion into the garden.

First, “cultivate” the ground.

This word means to “work, serve<sup>2</sup>.”

It is the idea of performing a productive service and is used in reference to the work of a slave, farmer, or artisan/craftsman.

The goal and idea is that the work required of a worker produces something.

Whether it is produce and vegetables, a building, or product of art, the idea is that the man is a “worker” producing something from his labor.

Here, Adam is called to “cultivate/work” the ground so that vegetables and trees of fruit can be produced for food for himself and his wife.

### **This is the beginning of work.**

It is a reflection of the image of God and is something that God Himself demonstrated His own ability to do (see vv. 8-9)<sup>3</sup>.

God’s pattern, given directly to the man, is work for six days, the days of creation, and then rest from that work/labor on the seventh day of the week.

Even after being expelled from the garden and from the fall, the man was sent out to “work” (Genesis 3:23).

Once man did fall, work became less productive, which meant that it would become harder to earn just a little bit of living, to produce just a little bit of food.

Genesis 3:17–19

17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you;

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<sup>2</sup> עָבַד

1. abs. **work** Ex 5:18;—2. w. acc. **till, cultivate** (soil, garden) Gn 2:5, 15; w. b<sup>e</sup>, work (w. an animal) Dt 15:19;—3. w. l<sup>e</sup>, **work** (for s.one), **serve** 2 S 16:19;—4. w. acc. **serve, work** (for a master) **as a slave** Ex 21:6; said of a son Ma 3:17, of animal Jb 39:9; political Gn 25:23 (of a tribe), 2 K 18:7 (of a king); abs. **be a slave** Ex 21:2;—5. spec. phr.: a) ‘ōb<sup>e</sup>dē hā’ār urban workers Ez 48:18f; b) ‘ābad b<sup>e</sup> work for (Rachel, i.e. to acquire her) Gn 29:20; c) ‘ābad b<sup>e</sup> Lv 25:46 &c. ‘ābad ‘ābōdā b<sup>e</sup> Ex 1:14 **keep** (s.one) **in service, work** (s.one); d) w. acc. **yield to, gratify** 1 K 12:7; e) **perform, do** Nu 4:26; f) **serve, do service** Nu 8:25; g) ‘ābad ‘ābōdā practice a (cultic) rite Ex 13:5, do (cultic) service Nu 3:7; ‘ābad ‘ēt sacrifice to (Y.) Ex 10:26;—6. **serve, worship** (a god, God) 2 K 21:3; Ex 3:12 (more properly, perform the proper rites for).

Holladay, W. L., & Köhler, L. (2000). *A concise Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament* (p. 261). Leiden: Brill.

<sup>3</sup> Really, the entire act of creation was a “work.” Therefore, God’s work pattern was for six days and then He rested from His labor on the seventh day.

In toil you will eat of it  
All the days of your life.  
18 “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;  
And you will eat the plants of the field;  
19 By the sweat of your face  
You will eat bread,  
Till you return to the ground,  
Because from it you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
And to dust you shall return.”

Therefore, work was created not to be hard, but was an area of the man’s responsibility that became grueling because of Adam’s sin...and then he would die.

But work itself is primarily a means of glorifying God by:

Doing it.  
Doing it well.

Skill is a very important component of work.  
Consider creation<sup>4</sup>.

Psalm 136:3–9

3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.  
4 To Him who alone does great wonders,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting;  
5 To Him who made the heavens with skill,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting;  
6 To Him who spread out the earth above the waters,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting;  
7 To Him who made *the* great lights,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting:  
8 The sun to rule by day,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting,  
9 The moon and stars to rule by night,  
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 104:20–24

20 You appoint darkness and it becomes night,

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<sup>4</sup> *Jeremiah 10:12; 51:15*

- In which all the beasts of the forest prowl about.
- 21 The young lions roar after their prey  
And seek their food from God.
- 22 *When* the sun rises they withdraw  
And lie down in their dens.
- 23 Man goes forth to his work  
And to his labor until evening.
- 24 O Lord, how many are Your works!  
In wisdom You have made them all;  
The earth is full of Your possessions.

Proverbs 3:19–20

- 19 The Lord by wisdom founded the earth,  
By understanding He established the heavens.
- 20 By His knowledge the deeps were broken up  
And the skies drip with dew.

Psalms 139:15

- 15 My frame was not hidden from You,  
When I was made in secret,  
*And* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

And, the issue before the Lord is not doing what you like.  
The issue before the Lord is simply performing labor well.

ILLUSTRATION:

The tabernacle which God gave to Moses to build was patterned after what exists in heaven  
(Exodus 25:40; 26:30).

The entire structure was to be built with skill, beauty and glory.

Exodus 28:2

- 2 “You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

Exodus 28:40

- 40 “For Aaron’s sons you shall make tunics; you shall also make sashes for them, and you shall make caps for them, for glory and for beauty<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> *The workmanship for these men was to display glory and beauty. The work was to be impeccable.*

Consider:

Exodus 26:1

- 1 “Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet *material*; you shall make them with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman.

The tabernacle was to be made with curtains of fine linen twisted with blue and purple and scarlet material with cherubim in them. Quite the feat!

This is the work of a skillful workman.

Exodus 28:1-8 = “skillfully”

And, according to Exodus 35:30-35, the skill necessary to perform this incredible work was given directly from God the Holy Spirit.

Exodus 36:1–2

- 1 “Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the Lord has put skill and understanding to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the Lord has commanded.”
- 2 Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the Lord had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it.

Further, the Bible records:

Skilled bronze-workers:

1 Kings 7:14

- 14 He was a widow’s son from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill for doing any work in bronze. So he came to King Solomon and performed all his work.

Skillful musicians:

1 Samuel 16:18

- 18 Then one of the young men said, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the Lord is with him.”

Skillful singers:

1 Chronicles 15:22

- 22 Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was *in charge of* the singing; he gave instruction in singing because he was skillful.

1 Chronicles 25:7

- 7 Their number who were trained in singing to the Lord, with their relatives, all who were skillful, *was* 288.

Skillful warriors:

2 Chronicles 26:13–15

- 13 Under their direction was an elite army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy.  
14 Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones.  
15 In Jerusalem he made engines *of war* invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he *was* strong.

Skillful leadership: Psalm 78:70–72

- 70 He also chose David His servant  
And took him from the sheepfolds;  
71 From the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him  
To shepherd Jacob His people,  
And Israel His inheritance.  
72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart,  
And guided them with his skillful hands.

Skillful handlers of the text of Scripture:

Ezra 7:6

- 6 This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the Lord his God *was* upon him.

But there were also those who took their skills and used them for evil:

Isaiah 40:18–20

- 18 To whom then will you liken God?  
Or what likeness will you compare with Him?  
19 *As for* the idol, a craftsman casts it,  
A goldsmith plates it with gold,  
And a silversmith *fashions* chains of silver.

20 He who is too impoverished for *such* an offering  
Selects a tree that does not rot;  
He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman  
To prepare an idol that will not totter<sup>6</sup>.

Ezekiel 21:31–32

31 ‘I will pour out My indignation on you; I will blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and I will give you into the hand of brutal men, skilled in destruction.  
32 ‘You will be fuel for the fire; your blood will be in the midst of the land. You will not be remembered, for I, the Lord, have spoken.’”

Daniel 8:23

23 “In the latter period of their rule,  
When the transgressors have run *their course*,  
A king will arise,  
Insolent and skilled in intrigue.

The general rule is this:

Proverbs 22:29

29 Do you see a man skilled in his work?  
He will stand before kings;  
He will not stand before obscure men.

The skill of a man’s work sets him apart, not the kind of work that he does.

This is what makes laziness such a great sin.

It rejects God’s pattern and example of creation to man in order to provide for others.

Proverbs 12:24

24 The hand of the diligent will rule,  
But the slack *hand* will be put to forced labor.

Proverbs 12:27

27 A lazy man does not roast his prey,  
But the precious possession of a man *is* diligence.

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<sup>6</sup> See Isaiah 44:9-20 for a description of the process and its futility in the hands of the darkened heart.

Proverbs 19:15

15 Laziness casts into a deep sleep,  
And an idle man will suffer hunger.

Lazy people tend to sleep a lot.

According to this verse, laziness causes a “false sleep.”

There is a preoccupation with sleep which the lazy man treats as a drug.

And, like a drug, he/she escapes the exertion of work and supposed fatigue by sleep.

Nevermind that responsibilities go uncared for.

The word for this is “idle” and being idle is seen Scripture as sinful.

Proverbs 31:27 = the godly noble woman is not idle. She learns to produce at every turn in her home.

Ecclesiastes 11:6

6 Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.

How should a Christian work and perform the will of God?

Proverbs 6:6-11

Generally, the kingdom of God is served best by diligent, wise, skillful men and women who see their work not as a curse and burden, but as a replica of what God does.

As Jesus said, John 5:17

17 But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

In the NT, laziness is seen as a sin.

In fact, the lazy brother who refused to work in this sense was the object of church discipline after being admonished (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

This is because work is the will of God.

To refuse to endure a job, work to produce, is to go against the will of God.

Ephesians 6:5-9

- 5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;
- 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.
- 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,
- 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.
- 9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Main command: "obey your masters"

Three conditions of obedience:

“With fear and trembling...”

“Not by way of eye service...”

“With good will...”

Mark 1:27–28

- 27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”
- 28 Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

1 Peter 3:6

- 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

Luke 17:6

- 6 And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea’; and it would obey you.

Romans 6:16

- 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

The idea of "obey" is that of being under the hearing of someone.

It indicates one who is speaking above another.

That is, there is a person of rank speaking to another of lower rank.

It is the speaking of commander speaking to a private.

It is the speaking of a parent to a child.

It is the speaking of an officer to a citizen.

This command is that of a superior to an inferior in a structure of rights = "*A slave is a man without rights, i.e. without the power of setting the law in motion for his own protection.*"<sup>7</sup>

The owner has all rights of the slave and thus is just in asking the slave to do whatever he would he desired.

However, before you consider this arrangement the same as our country's history of slavery, consider:

*"A large number of texts speak of slaves as persons. There does not seem to be a single text in the whole Corpus Iuris Civilis, or in the Codex Theodosianus, or in the surviving classical legal literature which denies personality to a slave. It is clear that the Roman lawyers called a slave a person, and this means that, for them, "persona" meant human being.*"<sup>8</sup>

Slaves sometimes held positions of teaching, accounting, even management of land and resources.

Slaves were only those who had no rights, but they were considered human beings in general.

There were instances of abuse, for sure.

But, by and large, slaves were for all intents and purposes household employees.

Unlike the slavery of our country a few hundred years ago, slavery then was not from the African communities and nations except in small numbers. They were predominantly Mediterranean natives of Rome or from other portions of the Roman Empire, throughout Europe.

There was a body of civil code that regulated slavery appropriately since about 35% of Rome was a slave population<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Buckland, W.W., *The Roman Law of Slavery: The Condition of the Slave in Private Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Union, New Jersey: Lawbook Exchange, 2000), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Hezer, "The Impact on the Household Slaves in Jewish Families in Roman Palestine", 2003, pp.379-380, ATLAS accessed September 10, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery\\_in\\_ancient\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_ancient_Rome) site accessed 9/9/2017

There were strict laws governing the treatment of runaway slaves.  
For a slave to runaway was to take the productivity of the master and halt it, given that that slave may be crucial to overseeing its operation.

Torturous death was often the result.

In order to see the extent of Christ in the society, you can look at Philemon and see that instead of Onesimus being executed for running away from Philemon, Philemon is admonished by Paul to forgive Onesimus and receive him back as a fellow Christian (Philemon 10-19).

Therefore, what is interesting to me is that Paul does *not* say, “Christian masters, free your slaves.”

Paul, along with the rest of the Bible, does not abolish slavery.  
That would create upheaval and serve to work against the true nature of Christianity.

Rather, Paul writes to slaves in the church, “Obey your masters.”

The command of the apostle gives no room for slaves to disregard their station in life as a Christian.

Paul wrote the same thing in 1 Corinthians 7:20-24 that a man who is a slave is remain in that position, unless being freed could better serve the kingdom of God.

So, we can take this instruction and obey it ourselves since most of us are “slaves” of a sort.

Although our work does not limit our legal rights, like slavery did, some of us are nonetheless performing work that benefits another man.

We work in order to do the will of another owner.

Therefore, this idea of slavery and masters might be understood as employee and employer today.

So, let’s cover this to understand what Paul is writing.

Again, the main command is: “obey your masters.”

This command is the main truth here and is to be obeyed.

It means to do the will of those over you.

In this context it is a reference to doing what you are told by those in authority over you.

“Masters” = “lords”

Those who own you.

There are legal rights that Ann employer has over those he employs.

He can change their wage, revoke positions dependent upon performance, and deny vacation requests.

Masters are those who own the company which is called to perform a job.

The tendency of slaves and employees is to resent being told what to do.

Therefore, in order to properly display the testimony of Jesus Christ, Christian slaves and workers are called to a higher standard: obedience from the heart.

**“...With fear and trembling...”**

This is the condition of your soul as you do what you are told.

This is only possible in Christ.

Paul explains how in the next phrases.

“...In the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ...”

This means in the simple act of obedience, innocently, without care about why you are to do it.

That is, slaves would get themselves into trouble if they would take an order and try to figure out why they are told to do something.

If the slave is trying to be the master, he is in sin.

A genuine, liberal, generous, obedient heart is in view here.

“...From the heart/of your heart...” = with all your will.

You have to want to do the work.

Wouldn't you want to serve Jesus Christ?

And that is the point.

Isaiah 66:1-2

God acknowledges the one who conducts himself in fear and trembles at the word of God.

**“....not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart...”**

Since we serve God in our jobs, we understand that when our boss instructs us a certain way, it is not for us the will of our boss, but the will of God.

So, we do not do our work superficially, apart from real desire and intent.  
We are to do our jobs “from the heart.”

“Heart” = “soul<sup>10</sup>”

It is out of the soul that we perform and excel at our labor.  
We learn each time to do a better job, perform a better service.

We really want to be there doing that work!  
To wish you were in a different place doing something else is disobedience to this command, but it is also less productive, practically-speaking.

**“ 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,  
8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.”**

In sum, Paul writes to do the will of God as if Jesus Christ were your boss in that company.  
Why? Because your reward is not the money you earn.  
Your reward is your eternal reward that will be awarded you when you are evaluated by Jesus Christ no matter who you are.

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<sup>10</sup> ἐκ ψυχῆς,

V. 9 “And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”

And, if a Christian is a business owner, he also is under command.

“...Do the same things to them...” = “do the will of God with good will...”

And, Christian boss, remember that you are under the command of Jesus Christ and He is not partial to anyone.

“Giving up threatening” = stop the threats that were potential in a slave master relationship.

In a Christian boss/worker relationship, there is no place for sinful treatment of the worker.

In a Christian boss/worker relationship, there is no place for laziness because it steals from the employer!

Conclusion

1 Timothy 6:1–2

- 1 All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against.
- 2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these *principles*.