

Fight the Good Fight
1 Timothy 5:17-25 (Week 17) 02/15/2026
Doulos Rules

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

¹ Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. ² Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. (1 Timothy 6:1-2)

Introduction and Review

- In **chapter 6** of **1 Timothy**, the apostle Paul continues to provide rules for the church.
- He began, in **chapter 5**, with **Family Rules**.
- How believers are to relate to one another as **Fathers, Mothers, Brothers and Sisters**.
- He continued rules for how the church should select and care for **true widows**.
- And **chapter 5** concluded with rules for **honoring, disciplining and selecting elders**.
- Then in the **first two verses** of **chapter six**, which _____ read for us today.
- Paul gives **Rules for Bondservants**...
- **Bondservants** is the Greek word **Doulos** which can refer to **3 basic types of people**.
- **Servants, Bondservants or Slaves**.
- All of which refer to those who are in **service to another**, they all have a ruler or master.
- But each type of **Doulos** is different.
- **Slaves** were considered **property, owned by their masters with no individual rights**.
- In **the Roman world** there were **many ways** one could become a **slave**.
- You could be **born into slavery**, you could be **captured in war**,
- Infants who were **abandoned at birth** were sometimes taken and raised as slaves.
- Or because of **poverty or debt** you could **sell yourself into slavery**.
- **Bondservants** were bound **under contract** to serve their master for a **specific period of time**.
- They often received **wages** and when their contract expired...
- They were freed and given **what they had earned**.
- A person became a **bondservant to pay off a debt or even to learn a trade**.
- And finally, **doulos** could mean **servants**.
- **Servants** were usually highly educated former slaves who'd been **freed**,
- but continued to work for their former masters,
- They received wages and sometimes becoming wealthy themselves.
- So those were the three types of **doulos** that Paul was addressing.
- And there were a lot of them in the Roman Empire and in the church.

- It's estimated that in the **Roman Empire** there were between **fifty and sixty million *doulos***.
- And that as many as **one third of the populations of large cities** such as **Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus** (where Timothy was leading the church) were **in servitude**.
- And **Rome was not unique**.
- With very few exceptions, throughout human history, slavery has been **part of most civilizations**.
- Although it was sometimes opposed...
- it wasn't **until 1834** when **Great Britain** abolished slavery that it began to decline (in the west).
- And this decline was led by **Abolitionists**, including **evangelical Christians and Quakers**,
- They rightly **argued that slavery** was immoral, **violated human rights**,
- and contradicted the spirit of Christianity.
- However, all Christians did not **oppose slavery**.
- In fact, the **Colonial New England Puritan Clergyman Cotton Mather**...
- used Bible passages which he believed supported the American practice of slaveholding...
- to write a set of "**Rules for the Society of Negroes**."
- Among other things, **Mather** argued that disobedient slaves were to be beaten **and barred from the church**.
- **The 19th Century Southern Presbyterian theologian, James Henley Thornwell**, wrote...

The Scriptures not only fail to condemn slavery, they as distinctly sanction it as any other social condition of man. (James Henley Thornwell)

- And **George Whitefield**, one of the founders of **Methodism**,
- **a great evangelist and leader in the first Great Awakening**...
- **Even though he** opposed **cruelty to slaves**, he considered slavery itself to be lawful.
- In fact, in order to help maintain **his Orphan House**,
- Whitefield acquired a plantation and **purchased some seventy-five slaves**.
- And these men were certainly not alone...
- There were others who sought to justify slavery through God's word.
- And while slavery was abolished by the British Parliament in 1834
- and in the **United States in 1865** by **the ratification of 13th Amendment**.
- The institution was widely accepted **by Christians in Europe and America** at least until the end of the **19th century**.
- Which says that **the church bears** part of the guilt for the sin of slavery.
- In the words of **19th Century American Abolitionist and minister, Henry Highland Garnet**,

[While slavery] stretched its dark wings of death over the land, the Church stood silently by—the priests prophesied falsely, and the people loved to have it so. (Henry Highland Garnet)

- There were theologians, pastors, clergymen who **wrongly used the Bible** to support the **institution of Slavery**.
- And their views were often based on **a misunderstanding** of the **Mosaic law**, which permits **certain forms of slavery**.

- And they defended slavery based on **the New Testament teachings**, like what we find in our passage for today) that slaves should serve, honor and obey their masters.
- But **they failed** to understand the **changes that came with the New Testament**.
- AND the **differences between the way** slavery was practiced **in both Israel and Rome**,
- and the way it was practiced in **their own times in Europe and America**.
- And we'll look at those **differences shortly**.
- But for these men who sought to defend slavery with the Bible...
- while they may have wanted to be faithful to Scripture,
- In fact, the doctrine of those I cited was generally very sound.
- And many were outspoken against the worst abuses of slavery, even working to **ensure that slaves received the gospel**.
- However, we must acknowledge that their errors in interpreting the Bible.
- Were at least partly responsible for countless human beings, **made in the image of God**, continuing to endure **untold misery and suffering**.
- This is one of many examples of **how misinterpretation of Scripture** can have tragic results.
- So, before we get to our passage for today,
- I think we need to begin with a **correct understanding** (interpretation) of what the **NT**,
- and specifically...

What Paul Really Said About Slavery

- Even today, it's sometimes thought that the apostle Paul, was **soft on the slave trade**.
- **For example**, he once met a **fugitive slave** named **O-nes-i-mus** and led him to Christ.
- Then he sent him back to **his master Philemon** with a letter in which he **never once told Philemon** to give **Onesimus his freedom**.
- Plus, there are several passages in Paul's letters (like our verses for today) that instruct slaves to behave themselves...
- Another example is found in Paul's letter to **the Colossians where He writes...**

²² Bondservants (doulos), obey in everything those who are your earthly masters... (Colossians 3:22)

- He wrote similar things to the **Ephesians and to Titus...**
- And so, you can see how some would say that Paul was soft on **or even approved of slavery**.
- And this is a problem because if it's **true**, and since **Paul is the principal author of the NT...**
- It becomes very difficult to defend our faith, **which is based on His writings**.
- Because we all understand **the evils of slavery**.
- It not only denies the reality that all people are created in the image of God.
- But it **has and continues to cause** great suffering for millions in our world.
- **So, the question is, why didn't Paul (or the Bible) forcefully denounce Slavery?**

- And usually, **Bible scholars** give answers that go something like this...
- The **Roman Empire** was not ready for **the abolition of slavery**.
- There were **millions of slaves in those days**,
- and slavery was **foundational** to their lives and economy.
- **Rome was serious about slavery**.
- And if Paul, who had no authority over Rome, would have called for the end of slavery.
- This could have led to a slave revolt, **and a bloodbath in the Roman empire**.
- Not only causing the **death of untold 1,000 of slaves**,
- But the arrest and **execution of Paul and other Christians**...
- **Effectively** ending the spread of the gospel in the Roman Empire **and the ends of the earth**.
- So, instead of trying to **abolish slavery**, the argument continues,
- Paul, in his letters, **sets forth principles** for its **gradual elimination**.
- For example, he writes...

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

- So, with these and other teachings, Paul was trying to **undermine the very essence of slavery**.
- And eventually, once these Christian principles started to have an influence on world culture, **people would figure out that slavery was contrary to the will of God**.
- Paul didn't have to tell **Philemon to free Onesimus**;
- he would be able to figure it out on his own by reading between the lines of the **New Testament**.
- Now this type of argument may have **some merit**.
- Because Christianity eventually (after much time) did become the single greatest force in history for the eradication of slavery.
- And even though there are still **places in the world today** where **people traffic in slaves**.
- Wherever Christianity has come to dominate a culture, **slavery has been legally eliminated**.
- In fact, **Archaeologist and NT Scholar William M. Ramsay** writes...

The more fully Christianity is realized in any society, the more thoroughly will slavery be destroyed. (William M. Ramsay)

- So over time, Christianity has had a great impact on eliminating slavery.
- But what is often overlooked in this argument is that Paul sought to gradually eliminate slavery.
- Is that while he does acknowledge the reality of slavery in Rome.
- And he does give instructions for Christians **who are slaves and masters**.
- **He also takes a strong stand against slavery as we know it**...
- **That is involuntary slavery, including the buying and selling of human beings**.

- Remember the word **doulos** refers not only to slaves, but also, to bondservants and servants.
- And, for their survival or to pay off debts, to learn a trade, or other reasons,
- Ancient people often voluntarily **chose this life, this path of servitude**.
- In fact, you could say that **being a servant or bondservant** was often necessary for their survival.
- So, Paul would not have condemned these types of **Doulos**.
- However, if you remember, at the beginning of this letter,
- He already condemned **actual slavery, (the buying and selling of human beings)**
- **In Chapter 1 verses 9-10** we read...

⁹ ...the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

- If you remember that word **enslavers** literally means **man stealer**.
- It refers to a **slave-dealer**, one who kidnaps men, women and children to sell to others.
- And as part of this list of grievous sins, Paul's condemnation could hardly be stronger.
- Anyone who traffics in slaves is a **lawless, disobedient, ungodly, unholy, profane sinner**.
- This was also true in the **Mosaic Law**, where **man-stealing was condemned**.
- The Old Testament permitted some forms of slavery,
- including the capture (as opposed to killing) of foreign slaves in a holy war,
- and voluntary servitude for Israelites who needed to pay off their debts,
- But only for up to six years, after which they were set free.
- However, the Mosaic law **also regulated slavery to prevent abuse**,
- and stealing or kidnapping people to make them slaves **was punishable by death**,
- **In Exodus 21** we read...

¹⁶ Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death. (Exodus 21:16)

- God gave the **death penalty** both to those who stole a man and those who **bought** a stolen man.
- And so, with **both Paul and even the Law** condemning man-stealing...
- This means that the whole Western institution of slavery, **directly violated the law of God**.
- It began with the capture (stealing) of African slaves,
- and included the death passage across the Atlantic to the Americas, where some 2 million people died in transit.
- We should also note that in the ancient world slavery was not generally based **on the color of someone's skin**.
- This is in contrast with the inherently **racist premises of slavery in the West**,
- which denied the **full humanity of people of color**.

- So you might ask how was this not seen by **many European and American** pastors and theologians...
- How did they **ignore this and other Biblical principles**.
- I've always wondered how they ignore **even the basic teachings** of Jesus, like...

31 ...You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)

- **And...**

...whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them... (Matthew 7:12)

- Possibly, they were like many Christians in our society today who are blinded by their culture.
- And instead of looking to all Scripture for a full understanding of the kind of slavery being practiced in the West...
- They sought only to justify their own practice and that of so many around them, with a few select passages.
- And this took place even though they were exposed to the contrary (correct) view.
- The unlawfulness of **the slave trade** was recognized **by many Christians**,
- Including **15th century British theologian, Richard Baxter**,
- **Baxter** called slave traders the **“common enemies of mankind”**
- and said that anyone who bought slaves (except for the purpose of freeing them) committed a **“heinous sin.”**
- **This was Paul’s view as well.**
- Slave trading is “lawless,” the apostle said, and anyone who participates in it is an “ungodly sinner”; **he is “unholy and profane.”**
- So, I hope we have a correct understanding of what the NT, and especially Paul said about slavery.
- **Because this will help us as we come to our passage for today.**
- **Which, as I said, is one of the passages that slaveholders twisted to their own advantage.**
- But Paul has not changed his mind and decided that slave-trading is permissible after all.
- In fact, he’s not speaking to slaveholders at all.
- He’s speaking to slaves themselves, as Richard Philips comments...

The Bible is always bound to be misinterpreted when people start listening to what God is saying to someone else instead of what he is saying to them. (Richard D. Philips)

- These instructions are not for masters, but for...

1 ...all who are under a yoke as bondservants (doulos)... (1 Timothy 6:1)

- Without approving of slavery in all its forms,
- Paul does give **pastoral counsel** to people who **are enslaved**.

- And this counsel applies to all **doulos**, whether they are **servants, bondservants or slaves**.
- Whether they volunteer for servitude or were forced into it.
- And as we'll see the principles found here also apply to many of us today who are employees.
- Paul's first rule for the **doulos** is they are to...

1. **Honor an Unbelieving Master**

- Verse 1...

¹ Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, (1 Timothy 6:1)

- The fact that this command is for **those** who have unbelieving masters will become clear shortly.
- Verse 1 begins by describing **them** as those who are...

under a yoke

- This probably has **actual slavery in mind**.
- **Because slavery** meant that one human being belonged to another as their possession.
- **Slaves** had no rights under Roman Law,
- which meant they were vulnerable to **both physical and sexual abuse**.
- They were like livestock (under the yoke), and some masters treated them that way.
- And to these **slaves, as well as servants and bondservants**, Paul says...

regard your own masters as worthy of all honor

- Now we're going to talk about what this statement involves for **Doulos in Rome**.
- But also, what it means for some of us today.
- Because even though slavery has been **largely abolished in the West**,
- what the Bible says to **slaves/bondservants/servants** is still relevant.
- Just as the master slave relationship was the primary economic relationship in the ancient world,
- So, the employer employee relationship is the primary economic relationship in the world today,
- Also, many modern workers are **under the yoke**.
- Not that they have no rights,
- Not that they are subject to physical or sexual abuse with no recourse.
- **But they certainly can be mentally abused**.
- Some jobs put the worker at the mercy of **bosses who are not so great**.
- Still other jobs are very stressful, demanding long hours, time away from family,
- **with no more compensation**.
- Many employees have to **slave away at their jobs**.
- Therefore, what Paul says to **slaves** in his day,
- generally, applies to nearly everyone who holds down a job.
- We too must regard our masters (bosses) as worthy of all honor.

- **And what does that look like?**
- Well, Paul has **used** the word *honor* (Greek Tea-May) several times **in chapter 5**.
- And as we saw, it defines the way Christians treat **both godly widows and good elders**.
- It involves both financial support (**which would not be the meaning here**)
- And respect (**which would be the meaning here**)
- Masters (Bosses) are to be **respected, even if they're not Christians**.
- The Bible doesn't grant any exceptions for bad masters or bad work situations.
- The apostle Peter was even more direct...

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. (1 Peter 2:18)

- If God gave these commands to servants, **slaves of the past**,
- They certainly apply all the more to **free men and women** in their jobs today.
- Honor (Respect) is something every **Christian worker owes to every boss**,
- even in the **very worst working environments**.
- We see this in Paul's **use of the word "regard"** ...

regard your master (employer, your boss) worthy of all honor.

- **Regard could also be translated consider (as the NIV) or count (KJV)....**
- **Consider your master worthy of all honor.**
- This allows for the possibility that someone's master may not actually be worthy of honor.
- He or she may be **incompetent, immoral, unreasonable or overbearing**.
- Nevertheless, the **doulos** must regard them as worthy of honor (respect)
- And notice he says, **regard them worthy of all honor**
- It doesn't say that workers need to show respect only when their bosses are in the office.
- It doesn't allow Christians to complain about their bosses on their breaks
- or even when they go back home.
- That's not to say that you can't quit your job in an honorable way,
- Unlike the **doulos**, you are free to do so.
- However, as long as you're employed, as long as you are getting paid,
- You must give your boss a full day of hard work.
- This is at the heart of Paul's command to... **regard their own masters as worthy of all honor.**
- **And why does he give this command?**

so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled

- This has to do with God's saving purpose for the world.
- And is the main reason this command seems to be for those who have unbelieving masters.

- If Christians are **disrespectful poor workers**,
- then the name of God (his reputation, who he is in all his divine attributes)
- And the teaching (the word of God, the doctrine, the gospel of salvation) will be brought into **disrepute**.
- God cares about his name, and this word.
- And these are linked to what unbelievers think about **his representatives** (Christians).
- We saw this several times in **1 Timothy**. In **chapter 3**, Paul says that church elders...

7 ...must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace... (1 Timothy 3:7)

- Elders are to live in such a way that causes **unbelievers to think well of them**.
- Otherwise, they **disgrace themselves**, the church, **the gospel and God himself**.
- **And in chapter 5 Christians** are told to **provide for widows...**

7 ...so that they may be without reproach. (1 Timothy 5:7)

- Reproach here refers to an accusation **from outside the church**.
- So, one reason we in the church care for our widows and others in need,
- is so the church's God will look good to the world,
- and the gospel of Jesus Christ can go forth with credibility.
- Put simply, for HIS Glory and for His Word, the Gospel,
- God wants his people to be careful how they are coming across.
- He wants them to have the respect and even admiration of their neighbors,
- including **their bosses and coworkers**.
- So, the way that a **Christian behaves on the job is a major part of his or her testimony**.
- **This was an important issue for Christian doulos in the early church**,
- Because the Romans typically started to get suspicious whenever their slaves decided to worship some new god.
- According to **Roman Statesman Cicero**, who lived **just prior to Christ**.
- Romans commonly believed that slaves who **dabbled in foreign religions** would turn against their masters and **overthrow the social order**.
- So, **if Christian slaves** showed disrespect to **their non-Christian masters**,
- then all of Romans' worst fears about Christianity would be confirmed,
- bringing dishonor to both God and the gospel.
- The archaeologist **William M. Ramsay** described the situation like this:

It would bring discredit on the church and cause ill-feeling against the church in the society of the Roman Empire if Christian slaves were found to be discontented or disobedient. The slave must cheerfully sacrifice his freedom, reconcile himself to his lot, and do the work that is ordered. The Name and the Teaching will thus be saved from discredit and vilification. (William M. Ramsay)

- Again, two things are at stake every time a **believer punches the time clock**.

the name of God and the teaching

- So, whenever Christians do their work...
- Every time a Christian makes a delivery or a sale, turns in a project, takes care of a patient,
- mops the floor, teaches a class, waits on a table, delivers the mail,
- or decides it is **time to leave work and go home**,
- he or she is making some kind of **statement about who Jesus is**.
- A Christian who gives **anything less than the very best effort** puts Jesus Christ in a bad light.
- **One man** who took the responsibility to stand up for **God's name** on the job was Joseph.
- **You know the story**; Joseph was **sold into slavery by his brothers**.
- He ended up serving in the house of **Potiphar, a captain of the Egyptian guard**.
- And he was such a good worker that he became **indispensable to his master**.

6 So [Potiphar] left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. (Genesis 39:6)

- However, eventually Potiphar's wife tried to put the moves on Joseph,
- But even though...

10 ...she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. (Genesis 39:10)

- And why did Joseph refused to sin with Potiphar's wife? He said to **his Master's wife...**

8 ...Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. 9 He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against (Potiphar NO against) God? (Genesis 39:8-9)

- Joseph understood that the way he handled himself on the job was a reflection on the name and character of almighty God.
- And the same is true about, **the teaching**
- Slaves need to honor their masters...

so that the teaching may not be reviled

- And why is that, because at the heart of the teaching is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- That God sent his Son to save sinners by dying on the cross.
- **And everyone who believes, accepts this teaching receives eternal life.**
- And what Paul is saying is that whether people will accept the teaching or not **partly depends** on the way **Christians handle themselves on the job**.
- So, every Christian who works in a **non-Christian environment** is a missionary of sorts.

- Paul said something similar when he wrote to Titus:

⁹ Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. (Titus 2:9-10)

- Doing well on the job, adorns the doctrine of God our savior.
- It makes the gospel look good.
- And I think this has wider application for our lives.
- If we are faithful, gentle, kind, honest people at work, in neighborhoods, on the golf course, when we spend time with our unbelieving families.
- Then we adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.
- We make Our God look good,
- and when we share the doctrine of God our Savior (the gospel of Jesus Christ) it is much more likely to be listened to and even accepted.
- As representatives of Christ, we need not be pushy.
- We don't need to leave tracts lying around the office.
- We don't need to focus on people's sins.
- Instead, in the most natural way, as we go about our work, our life,
- we can take the opportunity to open our mouths **and share the love of God with others.**
- Because every believer is called to be a witness, and not a closet Christian.
- Be sure that your employer and your fellow-employees,
- and all the people you have relationship with know that you are a Christian,
- so that your hard work (your good deeds) will be evaluated in the context of your faith.
- When you talk about your weekend, **mention what happened at church the day before.**
- When people are talking about **some current issue around the water cooler,**
- Without being **political or judgmental,** give an answer **from the biblical point of view.**
- At lunch or on breaks, take advantage of the opportunity to get to know your fellow workers.
- Your boss and coworkers may not be very interested in your Christianity.
- They may even ridicule your faith.
- But when the day of trouble comes, **to whom will they go for counsel or prayer?**
- When they are confronted with sickness or death,
- When the Holy Spirit awakens them to their spiritual need,
- **to whom will they go for the words of life?**
- They will turn to the person who has loved them with the love of Christ.
- Then you will be able to share the good news about Jesus Christ, so that they too can know his love.
- So, Paul has given rules for the **Doulos** who have an unbelieving master.
- **Honor your master that the Lord and the gospel might be honored.**

- Then he turns to those who have believing masters and says...

2. Serve a Believing Master

- What if your boss is a Christian already?
- What do you do when you walk through the company parking lot and discover, to your amazement—**that he has a fish symbol on the back of his car, too?**
- How is the work relationship different when both the manager and the employee are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- This problem was particularly difficult in the early church.
- Some of the first Christians were slaves,
- **so, if their master converted, then slave and master worshiped side by side.**
- And in the church, slaves had absolute equality before God,
- **there is neither slave nor free**, but in society they were considered inferior.
- What did this mean for their work?
- No doubt some slaves wanted to take advantage of their new-found Christianity.

¹ For freedom Christ has set us free... (Galatians 5:1)

- They reasoned, "**Because our masters are our brothers,**
- They can no longer be our masters, **and we can no longer be their slaves.**
- Therefore, they concluded that **the coming of Christianity** meant the end of their captivity.
- However, the New Testament never tells slaves to throw off their own yokes.
- They can pray to God for deliverance, of course.
- They can also purchase their freedom through legal means, **as Paul encourages them to do.**

²¹ ...But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. (1 Corinthians 7:21)

- But the New Testament does not tell slaves to escape their bondage.
- And this is understandable if you **were a voluntary Servant of Bondservant,**
- If you had **voluntarily signed** a contract **for a length of service.**
- **But what about those who were stolen into slavery,?**
- Most of us learned about **the Under-Ground Railroad** in school,
- It was a secret, network of routes and safe houses which Abolitionist (many of which were Christians) helped thousands of southern slaves escape to the North between the late 1700s and the Civil War.
- So why didn't Paul promote something like that?
- Why did he (who condemned manstealing) not tell the stolen to escape their bondage.

- **Well, we can't be totally sure of the answer.**
- Possibly he was seeking to protect them from the grave consequences of attempted escape.
- Possibly he felt that the best way for the gospel to spread would be through the many Christian slaves.
- And in fact, history shows that the spread of Christianity across the Roman empire was in large part due to the **witnessing of household slaves** to their masters.
- Or it could be that Paul considered slavery like any other kind of suffering.
- God does not tell his people to avoid suffering at all costs.
- Instead, he gives us the grace to endure it for the sake of Jesus Christ.
- And when it comes to the sufferings of slavery, the Bible says,

2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. (1 Timothy 6:2)

- Apparently, some slaves were starting to be **disrespectful to their masters**.
- They thought they could **take advantage** of them because they were brothers in Christ.
- People often treat **their own family members** worse than they treat guests.
- **“It's only my brother,” they say. “He'll get over it.”**
- Sometimes Christians face the same temptation in their work relationships with other believers—their brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Some Christian **workers take advantage of Christian bosses**.
- They assume they're entitled to **special favors** because they **are brothers and sisters** in Christ.
- They know **their boss** will be more forgiving (after all, he's a Christian!)
- So, they take liberties they would never dream of taking **in a secular workplace**.
- If they did try to take them, in fact, they would soon find themselves looking for another job.
- And so, Paul gives this instruction...

Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better...

- Not only can't you **be disrespectful** of your believing master because he is a brother.
- You must **serve all the better**. **Why?**

.... since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved

- The reason these **doulos** are called to **serve all the better** is that their masters **are beloved**.
- They are your brothers; **they are among the beloved of Jesus Christ**.
- Jesus loves them and therefore your service should come out of love for them as well.
- You want your Christian Master to benefit and so you provide good service.
- So those are the **rules for doulos**,
- and even though they are broken down between unbelieving and believing masters.
- I think it is fair to summarize... that if you are a **doulos** of any kind (including a modern worker)

- For the sake of God's name, the Gospel and your love for your brothers in Christ.
- You are to honor, and to the best of your ability **serve your master** (your boss)
- These rules would have been especially difficult for slaves in a hostile environment.
- We know that because, we who are free,
- know how difficult it is to follow the principles these rules reveal when we have a difficult job, a difficult boss.
- Yet there are two compelling reasons to follow these rules.
- The first is that **ultimately God is your Master**.
- This is a lesson Paul taught **the Ephesians in an earlier letter**:

⁵ Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. (Ephesians 6:5-8)

- If a slave belongs to Christ, then Christ is his ultimate Master.
- To serve an earthly master is actually **one way to serve God himself**.
- To put it in contemporary English, **every Christian is on God's payroll**.
- And we are to work as unto the LORD!
- Then second, not only is God your Master,
- but he has also become your servant, **even your slave**.
- The Bible says that God the Son

⁷ ...emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:7)

- The word for "servant" in Philippians is **doulos**.
- The Son of God became a slave when he became a man. He became our slave.
- He obeyed the law of God perfectly in our place.
- He suffered the penalty we deserved.
- He paid for our sins when he died on the cross.
- And so, while it is one thing to obey a master,
- It is another thing to obey a master who is so generous that he has willingly served as your slave.
- Since Jesus Christ has already done more for us than we will ever do for him,
- **We should at least do all that we can for him**.
- And whether we have a believing or unbelieving master (boss).
- For the sake of Jesus Christ, who we represent.
- We should honor, respect and serve them with our whole heart.
- As if we were serving our LORD!
- **Would you pray with me to that end...**