

## Walking the Way

### Disciples In The World

#### Focus point today: The World Sphere - Where we live, work and play.

- It is both *whom* who have relationships with outside of the home and the church, as well as *where* and *how* you live those relationships out *in the world*.
- What is one step you can take towards being a disciple in the world?

**Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT)** Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup> Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

**Ephesians 6:5-9 (NLT)** <sup>5</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

<sup>8</sup> Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. <sup>9</sup> 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 favorites.

#### In our work environments

- Historical Context: "slaves and masters" is best translated to today's "employees and employers".
- Paul is not excusing slavery; he merely acknowledges its reality in the world he lived in.
- To be clear, slavery, meaning when an individual(s) is exploited by others, for personal or commercial gain, and loses their freedom, is *sinful and should have no place in the Christian faith. God doesn't condone nor does He endorse slavery of any sort.* Slavery is a result of sin in the world.
- The slavery system looks different during this time than it did in our more recent history.

#### As employees

- We must actively fight for humility in the work world. Our work *is not* our identity.
- Paul tells us here we should work with integrity and humility no matter what – even if we're not appreciated. Why? Because what we do is for the Lord. We'll be rewarded by the Lord even when others don't reward us.
- Note how Paul uses specific words here to connect with humility: respect, fear, sincerity of heart, obey and serve. We're called as workers to be humble and obedient.
- There is a time to report mistreatment, abuse, or harassment, or to quit a job if you're being asked to sin.
- Discipleship to Jesus makes us better workers, and learning submission at work helps us better submit to Christ.

#### As employers

- "In the same way"; in the context of this passage, it's serving their workers wholeheartedly. This is a total reversal of how worldly cultures think about "being in charge" at work. The call to humility is even greater for those at the top.
- Insights of a humble leader; 1) You're in a position of responsibility rather than privilege; 2) Use your job as a mission field; 3) Are you growing in humility?
- Those in authority are to treat others with dignity, respect, sincerity, and integrity (**Matthew 7:12**).

#### In submitting to the government

- Acts 4 & Romans 13 Template

In **Acts 4**, Peter and John's actions show disciples how to stand up for God before the authorities.

- Humble disciples of Jesus say no *only when people are asking us to do something that is clearly contrary to God's expressed commands in Scripture*.
- For Peter and John, God had commanded them to preach the gospel, so preach they did.
- As Christ-followers, we don't go around looking for a fight because we're called to be peacemakers and people who seek peace (**Matthew 5:9, 1 Peter 3:11**). We are filled with the Holy Spirit, and a fruit of his Spirit is peace (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

In **Romans 13**, Paul emphasizes humility before governmental leaders, that we should submit to earthly leaders because they have been placed there by God.

- In context, Paul spoke to Christians living in Rome under pagan leaders. For Paul, to rebel against them was to rebel against God.
  - *Remember, if anyone asks us to sin against God or do something clearly contrary to the teachings of God in Scripture, we must not submit.* However, we can't merely act as though these passages about submission don't exist.
  - We must wrestle with these passages and make *God's Word the center of our worldview*. Limitations exist, but we must let *Scripture identify what those limitations are*.
1. Decide the kingdom of your primary loyalty: your own kingdom, your earthly nation or the Kingdom of God.
  2. Immerse yourself in God's Word about humble submission to the government.
  3. When rebellion arises in your heart, recognize it, and take captive every thought, making it obedient to Christ. Rather than giving in to emotion, allow God's Spirit to work through your mind to seek God's view and His direction.
  4. Determine if you're being asked to do something *clearly contradictory to the Word*.
  5. Humbly live out your convictions in the world when you're compelled by God's Word, but only if the two clearly and explicitly contradict one another. Otherwise, submit to leaders.
  6. Live peaceably with the people in your life with whom you disagree about any disputable matter. (**Romans 14**)
    - a. In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things love.

## In our communities

**Neighbors:** Every Christian a missionary; every non-Christian a mission-field.

- How I treat those around me, in my neighborhood and in my community, reflect my heart for God (**Colossians 4:5-6, 1 Peter 2:12**).
- We each bear the responsibility of reflecting God to the world and sharing the Gospel. (**2 Corinthians 5:20, 1 Peter 3:15**).

**Hobbies and Sports:** Share your life with others and have fun! These can be wonderful tools for teaching discipline, service and how to get along with others in the world, but don't let them consume your life or become your identity.

- In recreation and sports, we represent Christ so let us represent well.

## Walk of Action- What is one step you can take this week?

1. Pray for our government, act with wisdom in submitting and live peaceful and God-honoring lives.
2. Work with integrity and humility at whatever you do.
3. Be ready to share your faith.
  - a. As you walk with God, He has you where you are to be a witness for His Kingdom.