**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 58**

**Ephesians 6:5-9**

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. What is my attitude toward my boss, supervisor, customers or clients? What is my greatest struggle in working for someone?
2. Do I serve wholeheartedly and with sincerity of heart as I would Jesus? Why?
3. How do I feel about my job/career? Who am I trying to please? What motivates me more in my work, my earthly reward or heavenly reward?
4. How do I treat my employees or those who I manage or supervise? What is my attitude toward them?
5. What is my greatest struggle in employing or managing others? Why?

***Insight:***

All of us work in some way. Even if we are a homemaker or stay at home mom or dad, we are working just as much as any employee does. Even if we are self-employed or run a business we still answer to our customers and clients. For the homemaker, or stay at home mom or dad the clients are the members of the household. We all have someone we are working for. In this sense we all have a “boss”. The scripture teaches us to obey our boss with respect, fear, and sincerity of our heart. Is this our attitude toward our boss? This is a hard teaching especially since for many of us our boss is not a Christian. But the scripture makes no qualifications or conditions. Our attitude toward our boss should not depend on how good or bad they are as a boss. We are to have the right heart towards them no matter what kind of person they are. Is this our conviction today?

We are also supposed to serve our boss wholeheartedly as if serving Jesus. The quality of our work should not depend on the character of our boss. Ordinarily a worker will perform better when working for an excellent boss. The same worker will ordinarily work poorly for a bad boss. But Christians are not ordinary workers. We do not base our performance on who our human boss is because we always focus on our ultimate Boss which is God. Everything we do as Christians we do for God. We don’t even do it for the paycheck or any earthly reward. As Christians we don’t work just to earn a living. We work to glorify God. Is this our attitude or do we work only to the extent we get paid?

The way that we work is part of how we offer up our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. The quality of our service is a reflection of how we view God. We cannot separate our jobs from our ministry. Our work ethic is part of our testimony. Does the way that we work inspire people to become Christians? Does our work give honor to God?

Just like our other acts of righteousness, we serve wholeheartedly even if our boss does not see it. We give our best all the time because God sees what we are doing all the time and he is the one we are trying to please. During this pandemic it is very tempting to just be lazy at home. For those of us with a work from home arrangement, it is easier to hide from our boss than if we were at the office. It is easier to make excuses not to work than to find ways to work. That is why it is important to remember that our work matters to God and he always sees what we are doing.

Some of us may be employers, managers, supervisors or team leaders. Some of us are the clients or customers who pay for goods and services. Homemakers and stay home moms and dads also manage other members of the household who are accountable to them. So all of us are a boss in some way. The scripture says we should treat those we employ, lead, supervise or manage “in the same way.” We should treat them as if they were Jesus. This can be hard when they are irresponsible with their tasks. The ordinary response to poor service is to threaten and to exercise positional authority over them. But Christians are not supposed to be ordinary bosses. We need to ask ourselves: How would Jesus respond to this kind of behavior?

We also need to remember that just because we have authority over others, in the eyes of God we are all equal. We all need grace and forgiveness. We are all fellow servants of God so we should not act like an unmerciful servant (Mt 18:32-33). We are answerable to God for how we treat those we have authority over.

Even during the lockdown, God is our boss and we are fellow servants with those we manage.