

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 37

Ephesians 6:9

Ephesians 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

THE manner in which the Lord views, esteems, and values individuals as worthy of blessings and rewards, bears absolutely no reflection on whether or not they are a master or a slave. This is because the Lord is not partial to anyone, other than those, who through obedience and subjection to the Son of God, initiates heavenly blessings to descend upon their lives.¹ To the Lord favoritism, partiality, and/or being a respecter of persons, holds no place in His holy character. Consequently, when good is done, it shall be recompensed,² even as when evil is committed, it shall be punished.³ Because heavenly and impartial justice, form the base of God's character, then carnal partisanship, and human favoritism, shall have no place, in any ruling of God. When this is believed, people

should never be misled to presume that God has a special love for them, beyond that which will exceed His exercising divine justice upon their lives. In reality, all upon this earth—whether bond or free, black or white, rich or poor, collectively have a Master in heaven—Who shall test, weigh, and judge each of their lives, and ultimately yield to all, the fruit, and/or consequences of their ways. Because the Lord reveals Himself as not a respecter of persons,⁴ then masters shall be judged as slaves, and slaves as masters, and both equally without any spiritual favoritism or religious preference. Also, just because someone maintains temporary earthly authority over others, does not mean, that God will not judge, and hold him just as accountable, as those who serve him. To also foolishly believe that you are different than other believers, and are exempt from divine law, is human conceit in its highest form.

(Benson's Commentary, Eph. 6:9) neither is there respect of persons with him—Whatso-

1 Ps. 1:1–3 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

Matt. 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Matt. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

2 Eph. 6:8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

3 Col. 3:25 *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no*

4 Rom. 2:11 *For there is no respect of persons with God.*

Acts 10:34 *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 1 Pet. 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:*

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ever difference there may be in their stations on earth: but he will administer to all the most strict and impartial justice, rewarding or punishing every one according to his real character. . .

In the context of slaves and masters, the apostle Paul is a great example of one who held high religious office,⁵ and honor⁶ in the Jewish faith, yet forfeited all,⁷ in order that he might become a slave to his Savior, and ultimately a *servant unto all men*. (I Cor. 9:19) *For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.* Paul, though free from any earthly obligation to any man, and free to live as he willed, still chose, because of the divine love which lived in him, to forfeit all personal freedom, so that he might win others to Christ.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 9:19) *For though I be free*—I am a freeman. I am under obligation to none. I am not bound to give them my labors, and at the same time to toil for my own support. I have claims like others, and could urge them; and no man could demand that I should give myself to a life of servitude, and comply with their prejudices and wishes, as if I were a “slave,” in order to their conversion; compare 1 Corinthians 9:1;⁸ see the notes at 1 Corinthians 6:12.⁹

From all men—(ἐκ πάντων *ek pantōn*). This may either refer to all “persons” or to all “things.” The word “men” is not in the orig-

inal. The connection, however, seems to fix the signification to “persons.” “I am a freeman. And although I have conducted like a slave, yet it has been done voluntarily.”

(*Benson Commentary*, I Cor. 9:19) *yet have I made myself a servant unto all*—Addicting myself to the most fatiguing duties, that I might advance their happiness; or complying with the persuasions and inclinations of others in things indifferent. The original expression, (*emauton edoulōsa*) εμαυτον εδουλωσα, is literally, *I have enslaved myself to all*; an expression peculiarly beautiful and proper as used here by the apostle. “Slaves wrought for their masters without hire, and were careful to comply with their humours. And the apostle, while preaching the gospel, reduced himself to the condition of a slave, both by serving all men without hire, nay, without requiring a maintenance from them, and by complying with their prejudices in all cases wherein he could do it without sin.”

A bondslave, as Paul voluntarily gave himself to be, possessed no obligation to receive either payment, or compensation for his service. Perhaps this is also why the apostle chose not to be indebted to any man, in ministerial duty and lived his physical life, laboring to care for his own earthly needs, and to assist the needs of those who served with him. Because the apostle desired to be indebted to no man, he proclaimed, heralded and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ,

5 Phil. 3:4–6 *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:* ⁵*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;* ⁶*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

6 Acts 7:58 *And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.*

7 Phil. 3:7–9 *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* ⁸*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,* ⁹*And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*

8 I Cor. 9:1 *Am I am not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?*

9 I Cor. 6:12 *All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

without charge.¹⁰ (I Cor. 9:18) *What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 9:18) *What is my reward then?*—What is the source of my reward? or what is there in my conduct that will show that I am entitled to reward? What is there that will demonstrate that my heart is in the work of the ministry; that I am free and voluntary, and that I am not urged by mere necessity? Though I have been called by miracle, and though necessity is laid upon me, so that I cannot but preach the gospel, yet how shall I so do it as to make it proper for God to reward me as a voluntary agent? Paul immediately states the circumstance that showed that he was entitled to the reward, and that was, that he denied himself, and was willing to forego his lawful enjoyments, and even his rights, that he might make the gospel without charge.

I may make the gospel of Christ without charge—Without expense to those who hear it. I will support myself by my own labor, and will thus show that I am not urged to preaching by mere “necessity,” but that I love it. Observe here:

(1) That Paul did not give up a support because he was not entitled to it.

(2) he does not say that it would be well or advisable for others to do it.

(3) it is right, and well for a man if he chooses and can do it, to make the gospel without charge, and to support himself.

(4) all that This case proves is, that it would be proper only where a “necessity” was laid on a man, as it was on Paul; when he could not otherwise show that his heart was in the work, and that he was voluntary and loved it.

To preach the gospel without financial compensation, free of charge, reveals that a man is neither motivated by mammon, wealth, or personal riches. To then preach the gospel freely, and demand nothing in return, which is every minister's right, also reveals that Paul's sole purpose for living, was to strengthen, feed, and nourish Christ's flock, and not to fleece it. This is a stark spiritual contrast, to so many today, who instead of loving their fellow man, and denying themselves to serve them, covetously seek to make merchandise of them. (II Pet. 2:3) *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, II Pet. 2:3) *And through covetousness.*—Better, In covetousness. This is the atmosphere in which they live. (See Notes on 2Peter 2:18 and 2Peter 1:1–2; 2Peter 1:4; 2Peter 1:13.¹¹) Wiclif and Rheims have “in.” Simon Magus offering St. Peter money, which no doubt he was accustomed to take himself for his

10 II Thess. 3:8 *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:*

II Cor. 11:9 *And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

Acts 20:33–34 *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.³⁴ Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.*

11 II Peter 2:18 *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.*

II Peter 1:1–2 *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: ²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

II Peter 1:4 *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

II Peter 1:13 *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;*

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teaching, may illustrate this (Acts 8:18; comp. 1 Timothy 6:5; Titus 1:10–11¹²). These false teachers, like the Greek Sophists, taught for money. A bombastic mysticism, promising to reveal secrets about the unseen world and the future, was a very lucrative profession in the last days of Paganism, and it passed over to Christianity as an element in various heresies. (Comp. the Shepherd of Hermas, Sim. IX. xix. 3.)

Make merchandise of you.—The verb means literally to travel, especially as a merchant on business; and hence “to be a merchant,” “to trade,” and, with an accusative, “to deal in,” “make merchandise of.” (Comp. our commercial phrase, “to travel in” such and such goods.)

If a man is not strengthening the church, is in some way or form, he is seeking to exploit it, and ultimately so, for his own personal advantage, benefit, and gain.

There are many other verses in Scripture, that reveal how the apostle Paul, a true example of a minister of Jesus Christ, lived his life as Christ, and did not place the burden of his physical needs, on the backs of others.

II Thessalonians 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

II Corinthians 11:9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept

myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

Acts 20:33–34 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

³⁴*Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.*

The apostle, like any truly good minister of the Son of God, was not afraid to work, and especially so, if his laziness would place a burden on others.

The reason and motive also, why true servants of Jesus Christ, will sacrifice their lives for the gospel's sake, is so that they, like the great apostle Paul, *might through their own personal sacrifice, win others to Christ.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 9:19) *That I might gain the more*—That I might gain more to Christ; that I might be the means of saving more souls. What a noble instance of self-denial and true greatness is here! How worthy of religion! How elevated the conduct! How magnanimous, and how benevolent! No man would do this who had not a greatness of intellect that would rise above narrow prejudices; and who had not a nobleness of heart that would seek at personal sacrifice the happiness of all people. It is said that not a few early Christians, in illustration of this principle of conduct, actually sold themselves into slavery in order that they might have access to and benefit slaves, an act to which nothing would prompt a man but the religion of the cross...

As noted, the reason the apostle Paul forfeited his individual freedom, and denied

¹² Acts 8:18 *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,*

I Tim. 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Tit. 1:10–11 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

himself for the sake of the gospel,¹³ was so that others could be won to it—that *I might gain the more*. This is a wonderful biblical example of a man who possessed sincere spiritual integrity, who sought to give his own life, willingly, and without hesitation, with the spiritual hope, that in doing so, other sinners, like his previous self, could be saved.

What should also never be forgotten, is that no true servant of Jesus Christ, is above his master,¹⁴ and as such, he should live, walk, and conduct his own life, as Jesus did. (I John 2:6) *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked*. Here we read a biblical standard, that relatively few, who profess themselves as Christian, desire to hear—that to identify oneself as a true follower of the Son of God, biblically requires, living and walking as He did.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:6) Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked—Ought to live and act as he did. If he is one with him, or professes to be united to him, he ought to imitate him in all things. Compare John 13:15.¹⁵

To walk as Jesus walked, demands that we carry the burdens of our fellow man. For no man can be a true follower of the Savior, and truly love Him, and remain unwilling to carry others' burdens. (John 21:15–19) *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest*

that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

It is impossible for any man to truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, and not care for His people, which indelibly is the sole proof, of genuine and sincere, love for God. A love also which demands following the Son of God wherever He might choose to lead us. For Peter, this journey would ultimately end in martyrdom and death. Unsurprisingly, concerning Jesus' twelve disciples, history records, that only the apostle John died a natural death. All the others, were murdered, as their Savior was. (Gal. 6:2) *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Gal. 6:2) burdens] This is not the same word in the Greek which is rendered 'burden' in Galatians 6:5.¹⁶ It denotes any weight which presses heavily on the body or the mind, as toil, suffering, responsibility, anxiety. In Galatians 6:5 the reference is to the burden assigned to man or beast, to a ship or other vehicle, to carry, corresponding to the English 'load'.

13 Matt. 16:24 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

14 Matt. 10:24 *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.*

15 John 13:15 *For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

16 Gal. 6:5 *For every man shall bear his own burden.*

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and so fulfil] The other reading, *'and so ye will fulfil'* has about equal authority.

the law of Christ] 'He calls love the law of Christ', Thdt., with reference to the new Commandment of John 13:34.¹⁷ The law of Christ is the law given by Christ and exemplified in His most holy life. The nature and the measure of its fulfilment are stated in the Divine Commentary: 'as I have loved you, that ye also love one another'. It involves sympathy always, active sympathy (i.e. help) when possible. Of our Lord it was foretold (Isaiah 53:4¹⁸), 'Surely He hath borne our griefs (Heb. sicknesses) and carried our sorrows'. This is quoted by St Matthew (ch. Matthew 8:17¹⁹), 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases'; while the Septuagint version gives, 'Himself bears our sins and for us He is in anguish'. With the injunction compare Romans 15:1,²⁰ 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak'.

There are a great many, far too many, who profess to follow Jesus, that completely reject subjecting themselves to Jesus' laws, which great law, demands, they carry others' burdens.

In the same context, the book of Philipians reveals how every true Christian should view his life, with respect to, the lives of others. (Phil. 2:4) *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

(Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, Phil. 2:4) *Look not every man on his own things*—That is, be not

selfish. Do not let your care and attention be wholly absorbed by your own concerns, or by the concerns of your own family. Evince a tender interest for the happiness of the whole, and let the welfare of others lie near your hearts. This, of course, does not mean that there is to be any improper interference in the business of others, or that we are to have the character of "busy-bodies in other people's matters" (compare the 2 Thessalonians 3:11, note; 1 Timothy 5:13, note; 1 Peter 4:15, note²¹); but that we are to regard with appropriate solicitude the welfare of others, and to strive to do them good.

But every man also on the things of others—It is the duty of every man to do this. No one is at liberty to live for himself or to disregard the wants of others. The object of this rule is to break up the narrow spirit of selfishness, and to produce a benevolent regard for the happiness of others.

If anyone is so ignorantly bold, to either think, or believe, that they do not have a biblical responsibility to their fellow man, to assist him, have sympathy for him, and help him carry his burdens, reveals that, no true salvation has occurred. (1 John 4:7) *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* It is biblically impossible for anyone to be *born of God* and *know God*, and not love those, who share the same divine nature.

Ultimately, to love and live as Christ, is to help and carry others, as Christ.

¹⁷ John 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

¹⁸ Isa. 53:4 *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

¹⁹ Matt. 8:17 *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*

²⁰ Rom. 15:1 *We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

²¹ II Thess. 3:11 *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*

I Tim. 5:13 *And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.*

I Pet. 4:15 *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.*

I Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Matthew 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

If any think that they are an exception to the divine rule of love, manifested by assisting in the needs of others, then Paul states this: (Gal. 6:3) *For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.* See, it is only those who have deceived themselves to believe, that they are *something*, that shall reject the need to bear others' burdens. Those also, who through conceit and personal deception, are completely unaware of the spiritual reality, that God views them as actually nothing.

(Meyer's NT Commentary, Gal. 6:3) *For if any one thinks himself to be something, imagines*

himself possessed of peculiar moral worth, so that he conceives himself exalted above such a mutual bearing of burdens, *while he is nothing*, although *he is* in reality of no moral importance, he is, so far from fulfilling the law of Christ, *involved in self-deception.*

The Greek word translated *nothing* is #3367 *mēden*. HELPS Word-studies defines the word, "*mēdeís* (from 3361 /*mē*, 'not a possibility' and 1520 /*heís*, 'one')—properly, 'no one, nothing'—literally, 'not even one.'" What HELPS Word-studies reveals in the definition of this word, is that when someone refuses Jesus' commandment to love, and as a result rejects the spiritual necessity to care for the needs of others, is that they remain in heaven's estimation, actually nothing.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Gal. 6:3) *something*—possessed of some spiritual pre-eminence, so as to be exempt from the frailty of other men.

when he is nothing—The Greek is subjective: "Being, if he would come to himself, and look on the real fact, nothing" [Alford]

(Meyer's NT Commentary, Gal. 6:3) *For if any one thinks himself to be something*, imagines himself possessed of peculiar moral worth, so that he conceives himself exalted above such a mutual bearing of burdens, *while he is nothing*, although he is in reality of no moral importance, he is, so far from fulfilling the law of Christ, *involved in self-deception.*

In closing, let us return to the apostle Paul's previous motive, as to why he forsook his own personal freedom, and assumed the position of a slave. It was ultimately so that, through denial of self, and sacrifice of self, (II Cor. 11:23–28)²²

22 II Cor. 11:23–28 *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.* ²⁴*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.* ²⁵*Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;* ²⁶*In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,*

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he *might gain the more*. That is, through his own personal sacrifice he might be of great spiritual use to others, in their quest for salvation.

Notice also the Greek word, from which is derived our English translation, *yet have I made myself a servant unto all*. The Greek is #1402 *edoulōsa*, “I became a servant.”

HELPS Word-studies defines the word “*doulōō*—enslave (passive, “become enslaved”), focusing on the status of being a

bond-slave. In contrast to the other verb-form of the same root (1398 /*douleúō*), 1402 (*doulōō*) stresses the results (effects) of enslavement. That is, what automatically goes with belonging to another.”

In closing, let us remember that every true bond slave of Jesus Christ, shall not only subjugate his life to his Master, but shall equally, and willingly, enroll himself in a lifetime of Christian service, to all other men. In doing this, he proves his true loyalty and love for the Savior.

*in perils among false brethren;*²⁷*In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.* ²⁸*Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*