

## GOD

### God is Not a Respector of Persons (Ephesians 6:9)

How would it feel if your boss, your political leadership, or somebody that you greatly respect showed favoritism or partiality, treating others around you well and giving them benefits while treating you poorly or not giving you the same good things? We know that this is the way things often are with natural man, but that's not the way it is with our God. We will see that our heavenly Father, as well as His Son, Jesus Christ, never shows partiality, and each one of us can expect and enjoy the same blessings and benefits as we stand upon God's Word and claim His promises. It doesn't matter whether we're the most learned, long-standing believer or minister or whether we're brand-new in the Word, God is no respector of persons: He loves and blesses us all the same.

We'll consider the record in Ephesians, Chapter 6, where this is made clear in the immediate context of the relationship between servants and their masters, and will see how this great truth applies to all.

We've been considering truths about submitting ourselves one to another in the household as we walk in love, walk as children of light, and walk circumspectly. We've already seen how this submission applies in two of the major relationships between members of the household: between husband and wife and between children and parents.

The third major relationship that was prevalent within the household in the culture at the time Ephesians was written was between servants and their masters. The relationship between Christian servants and their Christian masters is covered in verses 5 through 9.

#### Ephesians

- 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;
- 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,
- 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men;
- 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.
- 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.

Verse 5 exhorts servants to be obedient to their masters, respecting them and serving them with singleness of heart. The word translated "singleness" is the Greek word *haplotēs*, the same word translated "simplicity" in Romans 12:8 ("he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity"). Servants are to respectfully serve their masters with simplicity, without ulterior motives, just as if they were serving Christ himself.

This point is established in verses 6 and 7, in which servants are twice exhorted to serve as if they were serving Christ, not just going through the motions to get the approval and

recognition of men. The word “heart” in verse 6 in the Greek is the word *psuche*, which more accurately means “soul”, referring to the whole being. Servants are exhorted to “give their all” in service to their believing masters, just as if they were serving Christ.

It’s interesting that the words “good will” in verse 7 are not the same as seen in Luke 2:14 where it mentions “good will toward men”. “Good will” in Ephesians 6:7 is from the one Greek word *eunoia*, which appears in only one other place, in I Corinthians 7:3 where it is translated “benevolence” (“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and also the wife unto the husband”). This term implies rendering something that is due, and in some texts is translated “debt”. The servant in Ephesians lovingly serves because they are indebted to their believing master who treats them well.

Verse 8 provides an incentive for a servant to serve their master well. The servant knows (perceives, recognizes – the Greek word is *oida*) that anybody, not just a servant, who does good things will, in the future, be rewarded with good when the Lord, Jesus Christ, returns.

Then verse 9 addresses the masters, exhorting them to “do the same thing” to the servants – to treat them well, doing good, because the same principle of future rewards applies to them also. The masters are also to “forbear threatening”: they are not to use threats of penalty or harm which might inspire service out of fear, but they are to treat their servants well so they will lovingly serve without compulsion.

Verse 9 then reminds the masters that they have a master themselves, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they made Lord when they got born again (Romans 10:9). In the text, this part of verse 9 actually reads “knowing that both your and their master is in heaven”. Because this section is addressed to both believing servants and believing masters, the servants have the same ultimate master (Jesus Christ) as the masters. And this master of both servants and their masters does not treat one of them better than the others, as explicitly stated at the end of this verse: “...neither (absolutely not) is there respect of persons with him.” The words “respect of persons” are translated from the single Greek word *prosōpolēpsia*, which literally means “accepting of faces” but can better be understood as “partiality”.

The Lord Jesus Christ does not show any favoritism or partiality at all. Every person (servant, master, or anyone else) is loved just the same, and has access to the same blessings and benefits. Not only is Jesus Christ not a respecter of persons, but neither is his (and our) Father, God (Acts 10:34). We’ll see the significance of this shortly.

If you look at the book of Colossians, which represents correction to those who failed to follow the doctrine of Ephesians, you see a parallel section dealing with the servant/master relationship beginning in Chapter 3, verse 22:

### Colossians

3:22 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

- 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.
- 3:25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.
- 4:1 Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

The servant/master relationship is further expressed in I Timothy, Chapter 6:

### I Timothy

- 6:1 Let as many servants who are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.
- 6:2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful (believing) and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

We reviewed this section of scripture in Ephesians, Chapter 6 dealing with the relationship between servants and their masters, and saw the great truth that Jesus Christ, the ultimate Master, is not a respecter of persons: he is totally impartial. This record, however, doesn't just apply to people whose roles are actual servants and masters, but applies to us all.

The word translated "servant" in these verses is the Greek word *doulos*, which can be rendered "bond slave". A *doulos* is one who makes a loving, sold-out commitment to serve their master. The Greek word translated "master" is *kurios*, which is usually translated "lord". It's the same word that is used for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

According to Romans 10:9, to get saved we confessed Jesus as Lord and believed in our hearts that God raised him from the dead. So now Jesus Christ is Lord (Master) to all of us who are born again. This word *kurios* is also rendered "owner", the truth of which can be seen when we remember that we were "bought with a price" (I Corinthians 6:20). When we as born-again believers decide to make the sold-out commitment to serve our Master and his Father, God, we are *doulos* servants.

Knowing all this, let's now focus on the great truth that God (as well as His Son, Jesus Christ, our Master) is no respecter of persons.

Throughout the Bible we can see that God is not a respecter of persons. Instead, He is a respecter of conditions. He is a respecter of believing, a great principle that He set forth. As you believe, you receive. This principle applies to everyone, not just to born-again believers.

The greatest example of this, that God is no respecter of persons when it comes to believing, is that no matter what our previous background, when we confess Jesus as lord and believe God raised him from the dead, we are saved (Romans 10:9). Anybody can be saved.

This great truth was actually alluded to by Jesus Christ himself. Acts 1:8 records that, just before his ascension, Jesus said: "...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem,

and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” On the Day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy ghost (holy spirit). For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:38-39). Even so, because of the influence of the apostles’ Judean background, it was many years before the first non-Judeans were witnessed to and became born again, first with the Samaritans as recorded in Acts, Chapter 8 and then finally with the Gentiles themselves as recorded in Acts, Chapter 10.

Acts, Chapter 10 records how the Roman centurion Cornelius received instructions in a vision to send for Peter. While his men were approaching Peter’s lodging, God worked with Peter to prepare him for the welcoming of Gentiles into the family by giving him a vision with the message that “what God hath cleansed, that call thou not common (defiled).” When he went to Cornelius’ house and heard why he was sent for, Peter finally “got it”, the truth that salvation was not just for the Judeans. Acts 10:34 reads: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.” He finally, after all those years, realized that salvation is available to all, no matter what their background. I Timothy 2:4 states: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

#### Romans

- 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.
- 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
- 10:11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.
- 10:12 For there is no difference between the Jew (Judean) and the Greek (Gentile): for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.
- 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This truth can also be seen in other verses:

#### Romans

- 3:22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

#### I Peter

- 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:
- 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (behavior) *received* by tradition from your fathers;
- 1:19 But with (by) the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Once we are saved, knowing that God (and Jesus Christ) is no respecter of persons, we also are not to be respecters of persons. We are not to exercise partiality when dealing with others in the household. Instead, as sold-out bond-slaves (*doulos*), we are to submit to one

another, not treating one believer (or ourselves) better than another in the household. Let's consider a few scriptures that portray this truth:

### James

- 2:1 My brethren, have (hold) not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.
- 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly (splendid) apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;
- 2:3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing (splendid apparel), and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:
- 2:4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of evil thoughts?
- 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith (believing), and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
- 2:8 If ye fulfill (keep) the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:
- 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of (by) the law as transgressors.

### Galatians

- 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in (of) Christ Jesus.
- 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
- 3:28 There is neither Jew (Judean) nor Greek (Gentile), there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

### Romans

- 12:10 *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;
- 12:11 Not slothful in business (the business of life in the household); fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.
- 12:16 *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate (*with humble hearts*). Be not wise in your own conceits (*don't get egotistical*).

### Philippians

- 2:2 Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.
- 2:3 *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.
- 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

All members of the Body of Christ are equally important:

### I Corinthians

- 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are (comprise) one body: so also *is* Christ.

- 12:13 For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one spirit.  
12:14 For the body is not one member, but many.  
12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Even back in Old Testament times, God discouraged the Israelites from having respect of persons among themselves:

### II Chronicles

- 19:6 And (Jehoshaphat) said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment.  
19:7 Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do *it*: for *there is no* iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts (bribes).

### Proverbs

- 24:23 These *things* also *belong* to the wise. *It is* not good to have respect of persons in judgment.  
24:24 He that saith unto the wicked, thou *art* righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:  
24:25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.

### Deuteronomy

- 1:17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment *is* God's...

Not only is God not a respecter of persons, but He doesn't even look at the outward, five-senses appearance of a person: God looks at the heart:

### I Samuel

- 16:7b ...for *the Lord seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance (*which might lead to respect of persons*), but the Lord looketh on the heart.

The walk of Jesus Christ demonstrates how he and his heavenly Father showed no respect of persons. One great record of this can be seen in John, Chapter 4, where Jesus spoke to a woman at a well in Samaria, then ended up teaching a whole group of Samaritans.

Another great example of the fact that God is no respecter of persons, but of believing, can be found in Matthew, Chapter 15. Let's look at this record, beginning in verse 21:

### Matthew

- 15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (*cities in Phoenecia, on the Mediterranean coast*).  
15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan (*a Gentile*) came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

- 15:24 But he (Jesus) answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (*God sent Jesus specifically to minister to the Israelites, not to the Gentiles*).
- 15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.
- 15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast *it* to dogs (*what Judeans considered Gentiles*).
- 15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.
- 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her (*God gave him the revelation "green light"*), O woman, great is thy faith (believing): be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

This record clearly shows that God is not a respecter of persons, but of believing, a principle that He set up. Even though this woman was not of the house of Israel and thus had no right to expect to receive the blessings brought by the Messiah who was sent to Israel, because of her operation of the principle of believing she received healing deliverance for her daughter.

We see the same today: the principle of believing works whether one is a Christian or a non-Christian. God really is no respecter of persons when it comes to His principles.

What about the future? When Christ returns, there will be judgment, and it's comforting to know that God will not show any partiality.

### Romans

- 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds (works):
- 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:
- 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
- 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;
- 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile;
- 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

There will also be no partiality when rewards are given out to us when Christ returns and we all stand before the *bema*, the award stand. We already saw a bit of this in our record in Ephesians 6, verse 8 ("Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free) and also in Colossians 3:24-25.

We see this great truth expanded upon in I Corinthians, Chapter 3:

### I Corinthians

- 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day (*the day of Christ, when we are gathered together and stand before the bema*) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire (*compared to the truths of the seven Church epistles*): and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

- 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath build thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
- 3:15 If any man's work be burned (*if it does not line up with the Word*), he shall suffer loss (*will not get a reward for that work*); but he himself shall be saved (*he's already born again*); yet so as by fire.

We have seen that no matter who you are or what your background, God, our loving heavenly Father, is not a "respector of persons". He never shows partiality in dealing with anyone. The same is true for His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God does respect application of Biblical principles, such as believing: anybody who applies these principles, whether believer or unbeliever, can expect to benefit from the results.

Not only is God not a respector of persons, but we believers are not to be respecters of persons as we interact with fellow members of the household, because we are each equally important to God and we each have a function in the Body that pleases Him. We also know that when Christ returns and we stand before the *bema*, our receiving of rewards for what we have done in this life will be without any partiality, giving us peace as we look forward to the hope of Christ's Return.

- Dr. Rick Batt