



### **Colossians 3:22-4:1**

<sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. <sup>25</sup> Those who do wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

<sup>1</sup> Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

## LIFE Community Leader's Guide

### Sunday, January 7

**Big Idea:** Work is Good for God.

**Key Verse:** <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters

**Opening Question:** It seems like most everyone has had a job where their boss was overbearing, incompetent, difficult to please, a poor leader, or challenging to work for in some other way. In groups of two or three, share your 'bad boss' stories with each other.

Alternative Opener: What word best describes your work situation right now and why?

#### **Study/Discussion Questions:**

- Read Colossians 3:22-4:1.
- If you had to summarize these verses in one sentence, what might that sentence be?
- Read the following Commentary on Verse 22 From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

“Slavery, with all its attendant evils, was not only universally accepted in ancient times but also considered a fundamental institution, indispensable to civilized society. More than half the people seen on the streets of the great cities of the Roman world were slaves. And this was the status of the majority of "professional" people such as teachers and doctors as well as that of menials and craftsmen. Slaves were people with no rights, mere property existing only for the comfort, convenience, and pleasure of their owners. Paul deals with the duty of slaves in the context of the family because slaves were considered a part of the household.

It is a matter of concern to some that neither Paul nor the other apostles denounced slavery and demanded its immediate overthrow. The apostles, however, were not social reformers; they were first and foremost heralds of the good news of salvation in Christ. Then again, the church was a very small minority in the Roman world, and there was no hope that its stance on the matter of slavery would influence Roman policies. We should be careful to understand, though, that they did not condone slavery. Indeed, they announced the very principles (such as that of the complete spiritual equality of slave and master) that ultimately destroyed the institution of slavery.”

- Imagine yourself as an early Christian slave living in Colosse. What objections might you have to Paul's words about how to relate and respond in your working environment? How do these objections relate to your own working experience?
- How would your work day look differently if you were working as if the Lord were your direct supervisor?
- What about your work right now makes it difficult to work this way?
- In his message, Bryan encouraged us to 'think theologically' about our work. This means asking different questions about it – questions that matter to God. What questions about your work might you begin to ask?

- Did anyone attend any of the Workplace forums on Sunday where people gathered with others in their similar field? What was that experience like?
- What is Paul's challenge to the masters in this passage? How does this translate in our current work environment? What does it mean to provide for your employees what is right and fair?
- Paul mentions a few incentives for obedience in these verses. What are they?
- How would tomorrow morning (or Monday morning) look different if we approached our work day as an act of worship to God?