

**EPHESIANS: THE CHURCH FROM START TO FINISH**  
**"Part XV: Solving Job Income And Working Conditions Needs"**  
**(Ephesians 6:5-9)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

People are often experiencing a lack of fulfillment in the workplace either in terms of the paycheck or working environment:

(1) Starting on Monday with the DOW drop of over 500 points, many people nationwide felt either panic or relief, depending on whether they still had their life savings in stocks or if they had moved them safely into U. S. government Treasuries! The thought and fear of losing it all seemed overwhelming, forcing a Monday drop of 300 points in the last hours of trading as worried investors stormed to sell!

(2) On December 11, 1995, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, a fire hit the Malden Mills and burned the much of the mill down. That left 3,000 people without jobs in the Northeast.

Bessie Arsenault, 40 was watching TV coverage of the fire when her phone rang. "I've just come from the mill," said her brother Michael Goujon, 36. "The fire's out of control. Our jobs are gone."

(3) Besides problems with income, there are times when working conditions are the problem. Who hasn't heard of the sweat shops issue involving a major clothing retailer pushing Kathy Lee Gifford's clothing line? Kathy worked hard to distance herself from this workplace abuse as she had not known of such abuses in her line!

(4) One day while driving near Greely, Nebraska, my Dad had me go off the highway onto a dirt road near Plum Creek. There, to my fascination, he showed me the old homestead that Grandpa had left during the Dust Bowl days of the Great Depression. Dad explained that Grandpa's land was on a hill, too poor to raise a good crop as dry land corn, so he had gone to work for a valley farmer at a **dollar a day!** From there, Grandpa's poor health led to his leaving that job and driving in the old Model A to California to pick orchard apples just to stay alive! I remember wondering how they ever made it!

**Well, how are people supposed to make ends meet at their jobs, or how can they function in their jobs when working conditions are sometimes almost impossibly difficult?!**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need: "As epitomized by reactions to this week's NYSE volatility, many face insecurities or work conditions frustrations in making a livelihood! Is there a comprehensive solution to such challenges?!"***

**I. God has a plan to meet man's job income needs TODAY:**

**A. God's employment plan meets employees' income needs TODAY:**

1. Though Ephesians 6:5-8 addresses Christians under slavery, Paul clearly also applies this section to **freemen employees** in Eph. 6:8c.
2. Now, Christian employees **ultimately** get their wages from **GOD!**
  - a. The KJV term "receive" (NIV = "reward") in Eph. 6:8, translated from the Greek *komidzo*, and used in the **middle** voice as here means to "receive **job wages**", UBS Grk. N.T., p. 678; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N.T., p. 443.
  - b. Well, Eph. 6:8 has **God** as the Wage-payer who **overrules** the Christian's **earthly** human **employer**, making the **believer** have to please **God** to get an adequate **paycheck**, Eph. 5:8, 5-7.
  - c. Thus, if the **employee can DO** what **God** wants him to do at work, his **current** income needs will work out for fulfillment!

**B. God's employment plan meets employers' income needs TODAY:**

1. Having dealt with employees in v. 5-8, Paul turns to masters in v. 9.
2. Since masters could be either masters of bound slaves or **employers** of **freemen employees**, Eph. 6:9 applies to today's employers.
3. Paul then states that the Christian **employer** is subject to his heavenly **Lord** just like the Christian **employee** is, making even the **self-employed employer's income** a matter of **reward** set by **God!**
4. Thus, if the **employer** does what **God** wants him to do in Eph. 6:9, his **current income** needs will be **satisfied!**

**II. God has a plan to meet man's working conditions needs TODAY:**

- A. Each of the sections on submission in Eph. 5:22-6:9 (wives & husbands, 5:22-33; children & parents, 6:1-4; slaves & masters, 6:5-9) grow out of Paul's order for believers to be "submitting" in Eph. 5:21.
- B. That participle, "submitting" modifies the verb "be filled" in Eph. 5:18.
- C. Thus, when the employer or employee (a) believes in Christ to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:38-39) and then (b) relies on the Holy Spirit, he functions well in **any divinely assigned** job (James 4:13-15), finding power to function **well** regardless of the job's **work conditions**.

**III. Thus, we outline steps for fulfillment in income/workplace issues:**

- A. **Step One** - To enter God's employment program, one gains God as his Overseer by believing in His Son as personal Savior from sin, Acts 17:30f; Jn. 3:16. The Spirit then indwells him **on the job**, Jn. 7:38-39.

- B. Step Two - The employee **OR** employer must **then** view his **income** as *really* coming from **God**, and so view **God** as his **real Employer**:
1. Just as the employee is to see that his real Wage-Payer is God (Eph. 6:7), Paul orders masters likewise to see God as their Superior, 6:9.
  2. Well, as the employee is rewarded financially **really** by *God's* overrule (Eph. 6:8), the **employer** is *also* financially paid by **GOD!**
- C. Step Three - One then is "filled" by the Spirit, meaning he comes under His control in contrast to being controlled by wine, Eph. 5:18. That occurs by (1) confession of sins unto God (1 Jn. 1:9) and (2) leaning on the Spirit for behavior control in his job functions (Ga. 5:16, 22-23)
- D. Step Four - One checks to see if he is in the **right job**, the one that is in God's *will*, James 4:13-15! He **must change** if it **IS** God's *will!*
- E. Step Five - **Then**, he can function with blessing on the job as follows:
1. God lays out the following job functions for employees, Eph. 6:5-8:
    - a. Armed with the Spirit's will to express the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22f), an employee obeys his **human** boss with the regard an animal has for its master ("fear & trembling" [v. 5] is from the fear animals have for man in Gn. 2:9, Ibid., Arndt & G., p. 834)!
    - b. He is to work not only when the boss sees him, but always at peak capacity and with goodwill toward the employer as he knows the Lord in heaven always sees his efforts, Eph. 6:6-7.
    - c. God in heaven then rules or overrules in the job situation to arrange for a paycheck equal to the quality of work done, 6:8.
  2. God lays out the following job functions for employers, Eph. 6:9:
    - a. Armed with the Spirit's promptings to express the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23, an employer can abandon threatening his subordinates as he knows he will answer to God, and knows that God, his **real Employer**, controls his own income in the end!
    - b. Hence, such an employer leans on the Spirit for the motivation and the ability always to treat his employees with honor.
    - c. Then, God arranges for the *employer's* income to be blessed!

***Application:*** *Whether we view the employee or the employer both in the small business or in the large corporation, one's getting right with God and heeding God's directives for him in the workplace will yield God's financial sufficiency and working condition blessings!*

***Lesson:*** *All the money one needs from the job assigned to him by God, and the capacity to function in the job environment supplied so as to earn that adequate income is attainable through God's Eph. 6:5-9 plan!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

(1) If we invest in **obedience** to Eccles. 11:1-6, we would have **easily** ridden out this week's stock market swings! That text tells us to invest **VERY long-term** and in **aggressive** ventures, **adding** to our investments **regularly**. Norman Fosbeck in the Sept. '98 Mutual Funds magazine (p. 116) reports that had one started to invest a set amount per month into stocks just before the 1929 **Crash**, and **kept at** it, though the market **lost 90%** of its value in that Crash, he would have **recovered ALL** of his financial losses by 1935! Other figures show that had one **started** to invest just \$2.70 a month into quality aggressive, small stocks just before that Crash hit, and **kept at** it until now, his total \$2,230.20 invested would be worth \$1,001,616.46 today! That's an increase of over 44,900%! **It pays to heed Scripture!**

(2) We mentioned in our introduction that the Lawrence, Massachusetts Malden Mills burned down December 11, 1995, stranding 3,000 workers without jobs just two weeks before Christmas!

However, the mill's owner, Aaron Feuerstein, recalled being told as a child, "Your friend's property should be as precious to you as your own." This idea contrasted with what other mills believed as they had moved their operations down south to cut labor costs. Feuerstein thus entered a room where over 1,000 of his employees gathered after the fire to say, "When all the textile mills in Lawrence ran out to get cheaper labor down south, we stuck. We're going to stay -- and rebuild ... Remember, everyone, we're playing to a **higher Judge**. Don't tell me the job can't be done."

The room erupted with applause. Feuerstein then handed out paychecks with a Christmas bonus of \$275 in each envelope. His note to the employees read: "Do not despair. God bless each of you."

Because of Feuerstein's announcement at great **personal cost** as he was offering paychecks without any business income, the **workers' UNION overlooked** violated **union workplace regulations** so the employees could help get the plant running. The mill was running at 75% capacity in 90 days. Five months later, Feuerstein had started to construct the most advanced textile mill in the **world**.

**Relating properly to God so we obey Scripture leads to sufficiency in income AND the ability to function well in the job environment**  
He assigns us!