

Victory of the Lamb – Called – Ephesians 6 - Employers –Undercover Boss –

June 6, 2021 - Pastor Bill Limmer

In the TV show *Undercover Boss*, hidden cameras capture high-level corporate execs leaving the comfort of their offices and secretly taking low-level jobs within their companies to find out how things really work and what their employees truly think of them. In the process of this undercover mission, they learn of the perceptions about their companies, the spirit of their work forces and, maybe, something about themselves as well. Stephen Cloobek is CEO of Diamond Properties. Diamond Resorts International is a world-renowned hospitality and vacation-ownership company with a reputation for service excellence that extends to every facet, everywhere. The cornerstone of Diamond's reputation lies in its motto, "The Meaning of Yes." Once you've experienced the comfort and relaxed elegance of one of their resort complexes, you'll be saying "Yes!" as well. By going undercover, Stephen Cloobek was able to see what really happened on the front lines and where he and his company needed to improve.

Today as we continue our series entitled *Called*. We are going to see what God's calling is for employers. **What is the bottom line for employers?**

Every one of us has at least some moments of being bosses. Whether that is being a parent or some other position of authority. For example: when you go out to eat and the busboy picks up your dishes, it is your job from God, your act of worship, to take an opportunity to be a blessing to him! Remember: you represent Jesus!

Employees, what is the bottom line for your employer? Employers, what is your bottom line? CEOs, CFOs, and COOs need to be aware of the financial situation of their company but that is different than God's calling for employers.

To answer our question, we are going to look back into God's word because as much as sometimes people want to set it aside or discount it, its principles continue to be the anchor that stabilizes every society that follows it, and even more it points to God's rescue plan of salvation for all people. We are going to pick up where Pastor Ben left off last week.

Ephesians 6:5⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ 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. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. ⁹ 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.

One of the things that Stephen of Diamond Resorts International learned he got so busy being about the business that he forgot what business he was actually in. He so wanted the guests to feel great that he forgot the first step in that was to have his employees feel great. He was so intent on the guests being served that he forgot to serve his employees.

Ephesians 6:7 **Serve wholeheartedly.** Serve not halfheartedly, serve not some of the time. Serve wholeheartedly. Mark 10:42-44 ⁴² **Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are**

regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

In his book *Love Works*, author Joel Manby takes a short verse from the Bible that gives divine direction to all employers and as you listen in you will find that whether you are an employer or not, they are for you as well. Luke 6:31 **Do to others as you would have them do to you.** Employee and employer are of the same substance. They are cut from the same cloth. They don't have the same title or authority, but they both have the exact same value to God.

Here are six characteristics from the book that Manby referenced that work in the workplace and everywhere else too. As we are going through these characteristics, I want you to ask yourself two questions: How am I doing with these characteristics? And where have I heard about these characteristics before?

Patience. Patience is often underappreciated and misunderstood. Patience is behaving with self-control. Patience is not ignoring poor performance but setting clear expectations and making sure the employee has the training and the supplies to accomplish what is being asked. Employers, how are you doing?

Kindness – As an employer you represent God. Don't miss that. You can make someone's day better or worse. Kindness and encouragement start at the top. Manby and others have defined CEO not as Chief executive Officer but **Chief Encouragement Officer**. Truett Cathy, founder of Chick-Fil-A, said he had a failproof method to see if someone needed encouragement. He said, "If their heart is beating, they need encouragement!" Employers, how are you doing?

Trust – Listening builds trust. I know how to shut down a conversation. Maybe you have seen it too, where the boss or CEO speaks definitively first. It shut down all conversation. Bosses, do you shut down conversations or do you open up conversations with open-ended questions? Asking questions facilitates discussion. Not listening says the other person is unimportant. People want to be involved in decisions and for that to happen you need to listen. Decisions are to be made with not for people. Think how that would change things.

That is one of the things that the undercover bosses learn. One way to make sure the other person knows that you trust them is to show that you are listening to them by repeating back what they said. Another way to build trust is involve people in the discussion who are responsible for the decision, must approve of the decision, consult people who are going to be directly affected by the decision, and inform all the people of the decision. One of the keys elements of a great boss is they let others make decisions that they are responsible for. Employers, how are you doing?

Unselfishness – it is not self-seeking – think of yourself less and give more than you get. Give until it helps. Years ago, when the US was not near as affluent as it is today, a small-town farm machinery business was forced to close its doors as the bigger companies came into existence. After the company closed for good, John, the boss, continued to pay his only employee for three months until he could find another job. John paid the man out of his meager savings. John felt such an obligation to the man, he had no choice. Employers, how are you doing?

Truthfulness – Defining reality. I don't mind disagreement. I can't stand conflict. To me, conflict is someone wanting to get their way, disagreement is looking for the truth, the best possible answer. Truthfulness for a boss is so important - - who am I? Where do I need to grow? Where am I wrong? Where are my patterns that are not always helpful? Define reality.

Forgiving – as many of you know forgiving is very easy to do, until you need to do it. Jeff Henderson said, "The longer you hold a grudge, the longer the grudge holds you." Second chances are important. The ripple of effect of a rock being tossed into a lake up north is cool to see but it is nothing like the ripple effect of forgiveness. I was talking with a friend the other day in my office, and he said, "not forgiving someone is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die."

Any number of companies showed tremendous compassion during the pandemic. Among them Cisco Enterprises. The company with 77,500 employees. When the world started shutting down, Cisco delayed already announced layoffs and extended pay and benefits for affected workers. Cisco also continued to pay hourly employees even when office shutdowns kept them from coming to work. Placing a focus on employee well-being, Cisco ramped up communications, expanded benefits and access to mental health services, and provided multiple "Days for Me" for employees to step back and recharge. Long known for its community engagement, Cisco created a website to help remote students and donated unused videoconferencing gear to bolster telemedicine offerings at local medical facilities. "The attention that the executive team pays to the health and welfare of the surrounding community is extraordinary," one employee notes.

Here is a way to put those 6 characteristics into practice, wholeheartedly: First question: How are you doing? Not a greeting but inquiry. How are you doing really? What can I do to help? Caring about the person really matters. If you can help them in their person life, understand there is a ripple effect in all they do. What are you working on? What obstacles are you facing? How can I help? One of your chief jobs as employer is to help you employees win.

You know who does all this perfectly? Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who is patient with us in every way or every day. Jesus' kindness to us never fails. In his grace, Jesus trusts us. He asks us questions. He gives us guidance. Jesus showed how unselfish he was by taking on human flesh, by washing the disciples' feet, by giving up his life even though he was innocent. Jesus always brings us the truth. In fact, he is the truth. He gives us second chances to this degree by paying for and forgiving all our sins, even the ones we haven't done yet. He serves us wholeheartedly.

Patience, Kindness, Trust, Unselfishness, Truthful, Forgiving is all about serving wholeheartedly. Galatians 5:13 **Serve one another in love.** You know what another word for serving wholeheartedly is? Love. Check it out. 1 Corinthians 13:4 **Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.** ⁵ **It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.** ⁶ **Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.** ⁷ **It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.** Leading with love attracts and keeps the best people and most importantly leads people to Christ.

Employers are to remember that they are God's representative to their employees. And so while they have responsibility for the finances of the company God has a different bottom line. **What is the bottom line for employers? LOVE.** Love is a verb. And it acts like patience, kindness, trust, unselfishness, truthfulness, forgiveness. And if you ever want to know what that look like, look to Jesus because that is what he has done and is doing, and will always do for you!