

Working for God
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How would the way you work change if you were working for God? I mean if Jesus Christ showed up in the flesh at your work place every day and was your supervisor – would anything change in your work ethic?

If God was your boss, would you show up late or on time?

If God was your boss, what would your attitude at work be like?

If God was your boss, would you steal office supplies thinking no one would know?

If God was your boss, would you do your best all the time?

If God was your boss, would you call in sick when you're really not?

“Hello God? I won't be at work today.”

“Why not?”

“Because I'm sick.”

“No, you're not.”

“Okay, I'll be right in.”

We are preaching through the book of Colossians in a sermon series entitled Christ Above All. Our passage today is Colossians 3:22-4:1

Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

I preached on this passage last week to cover what the Bible teaches about slavery. Today I'm preaching on Working for God.

The contemporary application of this passage has to do with employers and employees and how they work together. So, we can paraphrase this passage to say:

Employees, obey your bosses in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are working for. Employers, provide your employees with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

We're talking about work because work is very important to God.

1- God Cares About our Work

God cares so much about work that over half of Jesus' parables were about work or money. God cares about work because it is God's main way of providing for us! Proverbs 14:23 says:

All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

That's why the Bible is so hard on laziness. You'll never be financially free apart from hard work!

God cares about our work, but He also cares about how we work. Ephesians 6:7 says:

Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

The key to work is to work as if God is your boss. Work as if God is watching, because He is! God cares how we work and He wants to empower us to work! It's one of the reason God fills us with the Holy Spirit.

By the way, do you know who the first Spirit-filled person in the Bible was? Not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua or David. In fact, the first Spirit-filled person in the Bible was probably someone you've never heard of. We find that person in Exodus 35:30-33

And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel... and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship."

The first Spirit-filled person in the Bible was filled with the Spirit of God in order to work creatively. I find this fascinating. We usually think of spirit-filled people doing things like preaching, prophesying and speaking in tongues. And they do those things. But what if being filled with the Spirit could also make us more creative in our work, more able to work with wisdom and understanding?

I believe the ultimate purpose of being filled with the Spirit is to become more like God. And God works! Since God works, your work matters to God!

You might think, "You're a pastor. I see how God matters to your work. You're doing the Lord's work, but I'm not." That's one of the wrong views about work that some Christians have. Other wrong views range from making work an idol to those who see work as meaningless. That's why we need a biblical view of work!

2- God Created Work

Some people erroneously think that work is a curse, a result of the fall of man into sin. Not true. Work was created for man before the fall, before the curse. It was one of the things that God created that He called "good."

Work was God's idea and it was a good idea. After all, we are created in God's image and God is a worker. In John 5:17

Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

God works and God created us to be His coworkers. When God created man in Genesis 2:15:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

The first place God put man was in His presence in Eden.

The first thing God gave man was His image.

The first thing God told man was work.

Work is not part of the curse – it is part of God's purpose for your life!

The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary!

Show me a successful person and I'll show you a hard-working person.

Now I want to make an important distinction today: There's a big difference between a job and work. A job is just something you do. Work means to discover and become the person God created you to be.

Work is not just something you do – it is becoming who you are. And a job is not necessarily your work! Your job is what you are paid to do – your work is what you were born to do! A job can be temporary – your work is permanent! Your job they can fire you from – your work they can't touch because they can't fire you from being yourself! Your job you can retire from – your work you can never retire from because it is who you are.

3- God Calls us to Work

There is a general call to all of us to glorify God in whatever we do. Colossians 3:17 says:

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Glorifying God is not limited to singing songs on Sunday. We are called to glorify God in whatever we do, and that includes work. Work is worship!! Some people think that going to church, praying, and witnessing are spiritual and then we

stop being spiritual to do our jobs. Actually, we should go to work for the same reason we go to church – to glorify God by worshipping Him and serve others.

We don't have to be a professional minister to glorify God in our work. Martin Luther said, "A maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays – not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps, but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship. Even a dairy maid can milk cows to the glory of God."

If you think about it, most of the people in the Bible had what we would consider to be blue-collar jobs. They were fishermen, carpenters, farmers, and shepherds. Even Jesus was a carpenter.

Can you imagine what it would have been like to have called Joseph and Sons Carpenters to have an addition built on to your house and Jesus showed up to do the work?

What kind of work do you think He would have done?

Do you think He would have done His best?

Do you think He would have used shoddy building materials?

Do you think He would have done the work for a fair price?

Do you think He would have glorified His Father through His work?

Certainly – and we can do the same.

So, how do we glorify God at work? First – by doing our best with all our heart as unto the Lord! Then, we glorify God by permeating our surroundings like salt and light. Salt preserves, provides taste, and produces thirst. Light dispels darkness and opens eyes to truth.

People are usually drawn to Christians before they are drawn to Christ. They see something in us that is different, not weird. Something that is tasteful like salt and creates thirst for more. Something that is eye opening like light that draws people closer. Eventually, they will learn that the source of the salt and light is Jesus Christ.

We also glorify God by:

Caring about people

Being honest

Working with excellence

Providing servant leadership

Submitting to our authorities

Managing our time well

Always choosing right over wrong

Not only do we have a general calling to glorify God, we each have a specific calling from the Lord. How do we know our specific calling?

God can call us by name as He did Moses and Abraham, but this is rare. For most of us, it's a process. And I encourage you to find that out as soon as possible. If you work 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week – that's 2,000 hours a year. If you work 50 years, that's 100,000 hours. That's too much of life to be misspent.

How do you know when you are doing what you were born to do? Your work will give you a sense of purpose and meaning!

God calls by placing desires in our heart, placing gifts and talents in our lives, by arranging circumstances and ordering our steps. Your calling is a reflection of who you are; it's not something totally foreign to you. When find it – you will be fulfilled and work with joy!

Your calling is determined by the way God created you and the place God placed you. Adam was created by God to till the ground and he was placed in the Garden of Eden.

What did God create you to do? You can find a job through a job-placement agency. But you find your work through God! There is something God created you to do! Ephesians 2:10 says:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

There is a work that God prepared for you to do before you were born! Here's how the Amplified Version says it-

For we are God's [own] handiwork, recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live].

Wow! God has plans for you! Purpose for you! A path for you! And if you follow his purpose, plans and path for your life – you will be living the good life!

The good life is not getting rich and then lazing around doing nothing!
The good life is finding out what God created you to do and then doing it as unto Him!

Too many people never find their work because they're trapped in a job! They hate their job and they live to say, "Thank God it's Friday!" But when you find the work God created you to do, you say, "Thank God it's Monday!"

When you discover the work God created you to do – you will enjoy it. You will be fulfilled by it. You will be great at it.

By the way – God gave man work before He gave Him a woman.
That's why men get their worth from work, not from a woman.
This can be dangerous because it's easy for a man to put his work before his family. That's why men must work at making God and family a priority.

Single ladies - when Eve met Adam he was already in Eden – in the presence of God - and he was already working. So, when you find the man who will be your husband, he should be living in God's presence and working in God's calling for his life! Don't even think about dating a man unless He loves God and works as unto the Lord!

Men – a woman needs to know – Where are we going in life? What will we accomplish together? She needs a vision and plan. If you don't know your work – your purpose in life – it not only frustrates you – it frustrates your woman. The woman was created to help the man. In Genesis 2:18

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Your wife was created by God to help you. So, if she is there to help you – you must be doing something! That's why if you don't do your work – she will make you her work. She will spend her life working on you! If you don't have a life project to work on together – you become her project!

She calls it helping – you call it nagging. But all she's doing is what God created her to do. She's trying to help you! Your wife is a gift from God to help you! Help you with what? If you don't know the answer to that – she surely won't know. She needs you to find your vision for your life! Proverbs 29:18 says:

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

My wife is a happy woman because I have vision. My wife is fulfilled because together we created a place for her to use her gifting and flourish in her calling.

Your wife needs security and that comes from you having a vision for you and your family. That comes from you knowing God and knowing and doing your work. That come from spending time in Eden – the presence of God – hearing from Him and doing what He created you to do! Not only did God create us to work, but...

4- God Commands Us To Work

Exodus 34:21 says:

Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 says:

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 – Paul admonished those who were lazy and did not work. He told them to follow his example of hard work. He went so far as to say:

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

The Bible is very hard on lazy people. Proverbs 18:9 says:

A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.

1 Timothy 5:8 says:

If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

God hates laziness because God loves work and He loves us. And work is the way God provides for us and our families. Work gives us the opportunity to become financially free.

Through the way we work, we can bring glory to God.

Through work we can earn money to give to God's kingdom.

Through work, character is developed because when we work, God works on us.

And when we work – God promises to reward us! Remember Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

The great thing this verse promises is that when God's your boss, you will be rewarded. The reward consists of the blessings which God promised to give to those who work like they are working for God.

Yes – some of that will not be received until we are in heaven. But some will be received in this lifetime.

You will be blessed when you do things God's way! When you bless God in the way you work – He will bless you financially. You will have the peace that comes from knowing that God said that all work leads to profit! That literally means increase and abundance. It also means advancement.

Proverbs 12:24 says *Hard workers will become leaders.*
That's a promise from God.

Can it be that the way you work is hindering the release of God's blessing of increase and advancement in your life?

God promised that when you do your work for Him – He will bless you!
You will increase and advance.
You will also have the satisfaction of fulfilling your purpose!
You will have the joy of doing what you love as worship unto God.