

Message #18**Colossians 3:22-4:1**

Let me dogmatically state a perhaps shocking truth—if you are not a diligent and disciplined worker at your job, you aren't spiritual. If you aren't a hardworking, dedicated employer or employee for your company, you have a major spiritual problem and you are not right with God. That is exactly how Paul saw it.

Christianity is not some mystical or religious excuse for laziness. Christianity is very real and concrete. It is to be lived out and worked out in the real world and it is to be lived out and worked out on the job!

CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS ARE TO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDS AND RELATE TO THEIR WORK AND EACH OTHER IN WAYS THAT PLEASE GOD AND FEAR GOD, KNOWING THEY WILL FACE GOD.

Christianity is not some escapism from hard work on the job. Christianity is the motivation for hard work on the job.

POINT #1 – The commands to the employee. **3:22-25**

Now before we begin, we need to realize that when this text was written, it was written to believers, many of whom were slaves, not free men. Employment was not free like it is today. A slave was the property of a master and the master was the boss.

Command #1 - The employee is to continually obey his fleshly employer in all things. **3:22a**

Christian employees have been given a command of God to “obey” their employers. The word “obey” is a Greek word that means they have the responsibility to listen to, to submit to, and to obey their boss. The present tense of the verb indicates this is to be a continual and constant work ethic, and it is in all things. Obedience is not conditioned by whether we like or agree with the job.

- 1) Obedience to God is directly related to our obedience to humans who are in positions of authority.
- 2) Status in heaven will be directly related to how we submitted to God-ordained authority on earth.
- 3) Spiritual equality does not preclude fleshly superiority.
- 4) Obedience in all things implies all things not contrary to the Word and will of God.

Command #2 - The employee is not to obey with an eye service that pleases men. **3:22b**

In the first century, most slaves had one reason for working; avoiding punishment. Because of this, slaves were very careful to see to it that when the master was around, they worked in front of him in such a way that pleased him. In many instances, as soon as he was gone, the slaves would begin to slack off, to waste time.

Paul wanted these Colossians to realize that there was a far greater one monitoring one's work ethic—God. Employees are to realize that God has given them their job and they should work hard and diligently at their work, knowing He is the ultimate employer who always sees what kind or quality of work is being done.

The words of J. Vernon McGee are excellent on this point: “Sometimes Christians talk about being dedicated to the Lord and wanting to serve the Lord, but they are lazy. We had one boy working here at our radio headquarters who was like that. He stood around with his hands in his pockets all the while his mouth was going, but he thought he was dedicated! May I say something very frankly. If you are lazy on the job, you are not dedicated to Jesus Christ” (p. 185).

Command #3 - The employee is to obey with a heart that fears God.

“Fearing the Lord” is not a popular theme these days. Ladies and Gentlemen, God is a God to be feared—to be revered, to be afraid of. This is written to believers. He is to be feared on the job.

Believers are to stand in awe of God's authority over them on their job. Notice carefully, faithfulness on the job is a matter of the heart. The heart that fears God will be seen in hard work on the job.

Command #4 - The employee is to do his work for the Lord, not for men. **3:23-24**

Here is a great principle for everything we do—whatever we do, do it heartily for the Lord, not for men. The words “work heartily” in Greek literally read, “work out of your soul.”

In this world we have a program called “Soul Train.” We have “soul music” and “soul food.” We also have a concept called “soul brother.” In the Christian life, we have what is called soul-winning, but biblically speaking, we are to have “soul work”! We are to put our soul into everything we do, and everything we do we are to do for the Lord.

(Reason #1) - Because of the rewards for serving the Lord. **3:24a**

The term “reward” speaks of equivalent recompense. The term “inheritance” speaks of an inheritance of possessions or property.

There is no doubt from the use of these terms that one determining factor for the rewards one will receive in eternity will be his faithful work on his job on earth.

(Reason #2) - Because of the person we are serving. **3:24b**

In using this language, there is clearly the truth that Jesus is both the Lord and the Messiah of Christ.

(Reason #3) - Because of the consequences for not working heartily. **3:25**

In the workplace, there are political games that are played which can cause an employer to be partial.

God wanted us to realize that when it comes time for His judgment, there will be no partiality. The one who worked hard, who worked heartily unto the Lord, even when no one but God was watching, will be rewarded. But the one who does wrong, that is the one who doesn't work diligently, will receive the consequences of that when he/she gets before God. God will not show partiality in judgment. His judgments will be based on pure fact and pure truth. His judgment will be based on the real work ethic.

POINT #2 – The commands to the employer. **4:1**

The verb “grant” is one that commands the employer to supply, to furnish and provide for his employees continually.

Area #1 - The employer is to provide for his employee what is just . **4:1a**

The word “just” means that the employer has been commanded to provide for his employee what is correct and right.

Area #2 - The employer is to provide for his employee what is fair . **4:1b**

The word “fair” means that the employer is to provide what is equitable. This particular word comes from a root Greek word that means equal or same in size, number and quality.

What I understand this to be teaching is that employers are not to be way behind in their compensation of their employees. They are to impartially see to it that their people are treated justly and fairly in regard to their work and compensation.

During the first century, the master ruled. He owned slaves. On earth he called the shots. God wanted the master to realize that he may be a master on earth, but he was still a servant of heaven. There was another Master to whom he was responsible and accountable, and that is God.

I believe we are living in the end days. It is almost impossible anymore to find a hard worker who is faithful and loyal to his job. It is almost impossible anymore to find bosses who really care for and take care of their employees. Most companies are trying to figure out ways to get rid of people, not take care of them.

But regardless of how it is working in the lost world, God wants it to work differently with His people. God's people are to stand out in the work force—thus saith the Lord.

God has given you much more than just your job. He has given His Son so you can be saved from all your sins. Why not invite Jesus Christ into your life and with sincerity of heart live for God.