

Marks of Maturity @ Work

Titus 2:9-10

We've been looking at various qualities, marks of maturity, the last several weeks, mostly as they pertain to *leaders*

This morning we turn our attention to marks of maturity in *followers*, especially in the workplace

Going to temporarily skip some verses to do so, and come back to them later

Kent Shaw – charge to our elders, v7-8

January – 6-8 week series on marriage and family, v4-6

But this morning – Marks of Maturity @ Work

Whether you work or not, this is for you

If you work, these are the marks of maturity that God calls you to in your workplace

If you don't, these marks of maturity apply in any situation in which you are the follower as opposed to the leader

Not only that, but they are the standards of conduct, the heart attitudes, with which to hold those close to you accountable in their workplace

Whatever the case, it's important to see that your maturity at work is a big thing in God's eyes, because what people think of him and his word, is at stake

More important than your reputation here, is God's reputation

We either glorify him and make the good news attractive in our work

Or we shame him and diminish the truth

Read Titus 2:9-10

Intro – Slavery

The very first word of v9 is a problem – *Slaves*

If we don't understand what he is saying we're going to . . .

Get hung up thinking the Bible is condoning slavery when it's not . . .

And miss the truth for our own lives in the process

It's true that the Bible does not come right out and condemn slavery, but neither does it condone it

Rather, it introduces the seeds for abolishing it by teaching a radical new ethic (standard of morality) for those held in it's ugly grip

Those seeds of destruction started in the OT with God's instructions in the law to show compassion to those enslaved

Continued to be sown in the NT with the admonitions to . . .

Love your neighbor as yourself; Love those who hate you

Do to others as you'd have them do to you

Cease from distinguishing between slave and free, in Christ (Gal 3:28)

As men and women grew in their *spiritual* freedom, they began to take a stand for *social* freedom, leading to the overthrow of slavery that plagued our world and country

So while the Bible doesn't come right out and condemn slavery, it does plant the seeds for its destruction by focusing on our behavior and attitudes in the midst of it

➤ It's that God-honoring behavior that we need to look at

While slavery has been abolished in our culture, there are some principles here that still apply in our workplaces – truth for our own lives

If Christians, *involuntarily* enslaved, were expected to live by these guidelines. . .

How much more should you and I, *voluntarily* employed, live by these marks of maturity @ work

The first of which is . . .

• Submission

Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything (9)

21st century Christian – submit to your boss

Voluntarily follow, willingly yield to their leadership; Do what you're told; Respect

Lest you think that you're exempt because your boss is a bad person . . .

Realize that *Masters* translates the Greek word “despotes” from which we get despot

Dictator, tyrant, oppressor, authoritarian; A person with absolute, abusive power

Am I describing anyone's boss? If so, you're not exempt from submitting

Doesn't mean you have to stay there, but while you are, you need to submit and do what your manager says *in everything*

The only exceptions is if they ask you to do something morally wrong (sin)

In that case, take a stand, refuse to do it, and get ready to be fired or demoted

1 Peter 2:18 – *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust.*

Also to the unjust – your boss may be unfair, but that doesn't get you off the hook

Question for me: Do I submit to my employer grudgingly or willingly?

Submission – the first mark of maturity @ work

• Excellence

If polled 100 employers, near the top of their list for what they desire in an employee, would be excellence in their work

To do it well, to do it like they want it to be done – that's *well-pleasing*

Often involves going above and beyond the call of duty; Doing the extra thing

Doing more than what's required; Doing it faster, Doing it better than last month

It's okay to try to please your boss

Along with that is working hard

If I had to choose, I'd rather have a person with mediocre intelligence and a strong ethic, than a genius who's lazy

A strong work ethic covers a whole host of shortcomings re excellence

Strong work ethic doesn't mean you walk in at 7:59 every day, and stand around the coffee pot until you catch up or wake up

Get there early; Work efficiently; Work steadily; Be mindful of “water cooler” time

Always strive to do better, do more, work more efficiently

Col 3:23 – *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.*

Work thoroughly; giving it your all, your best; Do your work with excellence

Question for me: Do I do the bare minimum to get by, or do I go above and beyond?

If it's the bare minimum, you're not working as for the Lord

Lest you're a work-aholic, and I just added fuel to the fire of your 60-70 hour work weeks, let me just clue you in to 4 warning signs of being a work-a-holic

If your . . .

Walk with Christ suffers or doesn't grow because of your work schedule, you're working too much in the name of excellence

Marriage suffers because of your desire to go above and beyond, you're doing too much

Listen to your wife; Talk to your SG; Seek counsel of godly men; Stop rationalizing

Kids are essentially growing up in a single-parent home because of your desire to please your employer, you're working too much

Ministry commitments are suffering because of your work, you're out of balance

Please your employer with a mark of excellence in everything you do, but not at the expense of your walk with Christ, your marriage, your family, or your ministry

A third mark of maturity @ work is . . .

- **Compliance**

Not talking about the typical grudging/forced compliance that is so common today

"I gotta do this because I'll get fired if I don't"

Nor are we talking about a fake compliance where your boss tells you to do something and you stomp off to do it; or roll your eyes when you turn around; or go complain to a co-worker as soon as you're out of ear shot

That's not compliance

Happened a lot with big egos on the trading floor

Trade one account/book; Someone make a trade and I'd hate it – "Get out of it"

Their compliance or lack thereof made all the difference in how well they traded for the rest of the day; and how preoccupied I was with what they were doing and thinking

Compliance is about being agreeable; conforming to the desires of your employer

Not arguing with every decision made or questioning every word out of their mouth

I'm not saying that you shouldn't offer alternatives

Or respectfully voice your opinion at times

But in general, you should be quick to listen and slow to speak

And when you do, speak with with an attitude of genuine respect

Phil 2:14-16 – *Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.*

More and more it takes less and less to shine at your workplace, because we live in a crooked and perverse generation

Question for me: Am I easy to lead?

If not; if you're a pain in your bosses neck, you're not marked by compliance . . .

And you're not blameless and innocent before God at work

- **Integrity**

The most obvious example of which is *not pilfering* or not stealing

Ex 20:15 doesn't say – Thou shall not steal, unless you can; unless your employer is a jerk; unless your company has deep pockets

That's not showing integrity – It says, *thou shall not steal*. Period

Remember a guy who worked for my Dad

Always bringing in new power tools and selling them in the office for dirt cheap

He said he was buying them from a wholesaler, and then reselling for a small profit

But it didn't ring right

If I remember correctly, one day Dad noticed that several of the company trucks that were supposed to have new tires, still had the old ones on

Start looking around even more – found he was stealing telephone company equipment and then trading it for stolen power tools that he then sold to his friends

That's an obvious lack of integrity that showed itself in pilfering/stealing

But integrity, or a lack thereof, also shows itself in more subtle ways

Need to show integrity with . . .

Our time – shouldn't be using company time for personal things (phone calls, errands)

Company equipment – shouldn't be using company equipment for personal use (car, computer, phone)

Attention – shouldn't be exchanging personal emails and instant messages all day long

There's no integrity in that because it affects their bottom line through a lack of productivity, just like stealing money from their vault adversely affects their profit

So many people rationalize dishonesty, petty theft, shoddy work . . .

Because they can, they're mistreated, the company can easily afford it, their boss is a pompous incompetent, company policies are burdensome and ridiculous, or everybody else is doing it

There's no integrity in that; No maturity; I hope that's not you

Eph 4:28 – *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands*

If you're abusing company time, slacking off, using company equipment when you shouldn't, or stealing company things . . .

You're a thief, and you need to stop

But for most of us, it's much more subtle

Question for me: Do I work the same way with my boss absent as I do when they're present?

If yes, you're marked by integrity at work; If no, you need to make some changes

5th mark of maturity @ work . . .

- **Sincerity**

We are to *show all good faith @ work*

If you show good faith, you show yourself trustworthy, loyal, faithful – Sincere

We are to be earnest, dependable, reliable, genuine

Doing what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, the way it needs to be done . . .

With the *best* of intentions

Motives are huge here

Many people can fake sincerity for a short period of time

They can act like they're whole-hearted and genuine, but over time, it comes out

As follower of Christ, you shouldn't be going through the motions in front of your boss and then complaining about everything with the guys in the break room

Show good faith in what you do; Be sincere

If you're not, and you hate your job – either ask the Lord to change your attitude before you get fired and do irreparable damage to your testimony . . . or get a new job

Col 3:22 – *Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.*

Sincerity is a mark of maturity @ work . . .

Question for me: Is my heart in my work?

Do you give your full faith and effort every day?

About now, you should be asking – What’s the reason for all this?

To be obedient for obedience sake?

To be good for goodness sake? Yes and yes, to some extent

But those aren’t the reasons for working with maturity given here

The main reason we are to be marked by maturity at work is to make the truth of God as attractive as possible

So that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior (10)

That’s the *purpose* for showing maturity @ work; And it’s a *mark* of maturity as well

• **Purpose**

Certainly one purpose for work is to provide for our families (1 Tim 5:8)

But right along with that is the purpose to make the truth of God appealing to those we work with and for

It’s to win them to the Lord by our behavior in less than ideal circumstances

It’s to make them scratch their heads and wonder what in the world would cause you to persevere, and put forth so much effort with so much joy, for so long

It’s to get them to see the reason for your behavior, and be drawn to it

This purpose is the mark of maturity that distinguishes you as a follower of Christ, from a nice person with good intentions who also strives to work this way

Matt 5:14-16 – *You are the light of the world . . . [so] let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Your maturity @ work is a light for others to see

If you don’t get that, growing in these marks of maturity is going to quickly drain you

But if you do, it will fuel you in your maturity like never before

Question for me: Does my maturity @ work make the good news of Jesus attractive?

Summary

Submission, Excellence, Compliance, Integrity, Sincerity, and Purpose

These are the marks of maturity @ work that God expects you and I to grow in

And he blesses that; You can count on it

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