

Your Work for Jesus
June 14, 2015

I want to start this morning by reading you a notice that appeared on the company bulletin board at one place of business. It is a notice to all employees.

"Due to increased competition and a keen desire to remain in business, we find it necessary to institute a new policy. Effective immediately, we are asking that somewhere between starting time, and quitting time, and without infringing too much on the time usually devoted to lunch period, coffee breaks, rest periods, story telling, ticket selling, golfing, vacation planning, and the rehashing of yesterday's TV programs, that each employee endeavor to find some time that can be set aside and known as the "work break".

"To some this may seem a radical innovation, but we honestly believe the idea has great possibilities. It can conceivably be an aid to steady employment and it might also be a means of insuring regular pay checks. While the adoption of the "work break" plan is not compulsory, it is hoped that each employee will find enough time to give the plan a fair trial. It is also hoped that those employees not in favor of adopting the "work break" idea will have fully completed their vacation plans."

The origin of work is shown us in the Bible. In the opening passage of the book of Genesis, God is working. He is creating the world. God is good and everything God does is good. Therefore work is a good activity. Work is not something we do as a result of sin in the world. Work is something we do that reflects the activity of God. When we do work, we are acting like God.

Now look what God said about His work.

Genesis 1:31 (NIV) God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

God evaluated the quality of His work, and decided that He had done a good job. He took pleasure in what He had accomplished. Many of us have experienced that feeling too. A job well-done, gives us joy. This reflects our creator's mark in us. **Joy in working is part of being created in the image of God.**

This points us to how we should do our work, whatever work it is. We are the people of the Living God. We represent the creator, the sustainer of life, and Savior of the world. We should want to bring glory to Him. One way we can do this is in our work.

Paul emphasizes this in his letter to the church at Colossae.

Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV) Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

We have been baptized into the name of Jesus. We have received Him as our Savior and our Lord. We have given our lives to Jesus. In giving our lives to Jesus, we must also give our work to Him.

One benefit of doing so is that it attracts others to Jesus.

"The purpose of your life at work is to show that God is at work in your life."

- Jeff Henderson

When you do a good job at your work, it boosts your reputation and makes Jesus look good. This is true no matter what your work is. This applies to your place of employment. It applies to your chores at home. It applies to the work you do in the church. It even applies to what you do at school.

Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...

For many of us the people we most come in contact with, other than our family are those with whom we work. Therefore I urge you to adopt a missionary attitude toward your workplace. Adopt the idea that your place of employment is your mission field. For it may be that the only true Christian that your coworkers come in contact with is you. Therefore how you do your job may attract them to Jesus... or... drive them away from Him.

Being a missionary at work does not mean pushing Jesus all the time or constantly talking about religion. It means doing the job you were hired for and expecting your coworkers to raise the subject because of the way you do your job.

Think with me for a moment of a doctor that we send overseas to work in a Baptist hospital. His most time consuming activity is to treat patients for medical problems. But his most important activity is telling people about Jesus. And the two are connected. No one will want to know about the God he serves if he is a lousy doctor or a lousy person.

The same is true for you at work. Your most time consuming activity is the job assignment itself. But your most important activity is to be a witness for Jesus. Obviously your employer did not hire you to be a missionary for Jesus on your job. But you can earn opportunities to be a witness by the way you do your job. We must strive to be the best employees. And expect that God will, thru your good work, attract others to Jesus thru you. They will bring up the subject of faith, which is then an invitation to you to be a witness for Jesus.

Work to the glory of God. Do all you do for the glory of God. That means to work in such a way that God will become attractive to others through you. So how do you do your job to the glory of God?

1. Prepare for your workday with prayer.

To glorify God in your work you need to have the right attitude towards work. If you don't wake up in the morning with the right attitude, you can adopt and feed the right attitude in prayer.

- **In prayer, give God thanks for your job.**

Thank Him for the job you have. If you do not start with thanks for your job, it will be hard to do the rest of what I suggest.

I have relatives and we have had church members who have been laid off, both in this recession and the previous one. While unemployment is way down in Maryland there are still many who can't find a job that will pay the bills. If you have a job, whether it is a good job, an okay job, or a bad job, be thankful for that job. Having a bad job, a job you don't like, is better than having no job at all. Some of you teens may disagree with that now. But when you have rent to pay and a family to feed you will know the truth of those words.

- **In prayer, dedicate your job to God.**

Let God know that you intend to do today's job for His glory.

- **In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit for Help to do your job well.**

God is concerned about the work you do because how you do your work reflects on God. So the Holy Spirit is ready to help you do your job in such a way that others will be attracted to Jesus.

2. Show up on time, all the time.

That usually means walking in the door 15-20 minutes before it is time to actually start work. If your hours start at 9:00, you should be ready to start working at 9:00. You should not be walking in the door at nine, put your lunch in the fridge, take your coat off, and catch up with coworkers. You should do all that before nine. At nine, if not before, you should start working.

A new employee had been caught coming in late for work three times and the fourth morning the foreman decided to read the riot act. "Look here," he snapped, "don't you know what time we start work around here?"

"No, sir, " said the man, "they're always working when I get here."

Show up on time, all the time. This will mark you as someone who is dedicated to doing what is right, what is expected by your employer. Be on time for work. Be on time for meetings. Be on time back to work after breaks and lunch. Show up on time, all the time.

3. Do all your work, plus.

One of the gripes I hear from you about the place you work is other people who don't do their own work. These people do not pull their own weight and expect others to take up the slack. You don't want people to ever accuse you of that. Instead you want to be known as the person who does more than is asked of them.

At the very least do all that you are told to do. But as Jesus taught, go the extra mile and do more than is asked of you. Most people do not do this. So if you consistently do more than is asked of you, you will stand out from the crowd. You will leave a good impression on others and will make Jesus look good.

Here's a question to ask yourself. **"If I owned the company where I work, would I want my employees doing the job the way I am doing it now?"**

4. Do your best at every task.

Remember, you are making your work an offering for God. While He accepts whatever we give, He is not automatically honored by everything we give. In the book of Malachi, the prophet is berating the Israelites for the kind of offerings they are bringing to God.

Malachi 1:8 (NIV) When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?

Offer God your best in everything you do, because you do it for God. Think of the worst part of your job, or your least favorite part. How would you do that if you were doing it for God's glory?

There is an old movie about a man in the army, titled No Time for Sergeants. In it this private is being punished and told to clean the bathroom. He does so and gets it ready for the colonel to inspect. He cleans it the best he can, and then rigs the toilet seats to all jump up in salute when the colonel enters the room. The Colonel wasn't impressed. Its very funny. But the point is that he takes a least favorite job and does the best job he can do. That is what we should do for Jesus.

Now, not everyone will be happy that you work this way. You'll hear things from some co-workers like this: "Would you slow down, you are making the rest of us look bad." I faced this on one job where, when we finished out work, would be sent to another department to help them in their work. And their work was more physically demanding than our work. So some of my coworkers would drag our work out as long as possible. When they get on you for doing your best, you can answer that you are working as you do to honor Jesus.

5. Encourage others in their work.

This is an extension of what we do in the church. In the church we are told to love each other as Jesus loves us. That means going out of our way to be kind, helpful, encouraging, and more. Church is the training ground for learning to do this so that when we go out there it has become a habit with us. Be the helpful person at work, the encouraging person at work, the kind person at work. Love them as Jesus has loved you, and it will draw people to you and to your God.

6. Take nothing that isn't yours.

Your employer may give you supplies to do your job with. Make sure you only use them for the job. How many of us have seen those pens that say "U.S. Government" on them? Now your boss may say, "Go on, take them home." But when you do, and other people see them, what do they think? "Oh, he's stealing stuff from work."

Titus 2:9-10 (NIV) Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

I know, it is about slaves. But the principle is the same in employer/employee relationships. We are trying to make Jesus more attractive to people. If you are truly on mission for God, then that must apply to every part of your life, especially your work.

7. Avoid gossip, critical jokes, put-downs, and complaining about the job.

This goes along with loving others. But it also has to do with your reputation, what kind of person you are. If you are someone who is always putting people down behind their backs, then the people you are with will know you talk about them behind their backs. Don't be a part of these things. They reflect badly on you and on the God you serve.

8. Don't be pushing religion at work. Rather, let the way you do your work be your lure to Jesus. Doing your job to the glory of God may produce natural opportunities to tell people about Jesus. People will want to know why you work like you do and you can then tell them what Jesus has done for you.

You might do some low key things like keeping a Bible on your desk, or a book on prayer, a blue ribbon (reminding you to keep Jesus first in your life), or offhand comments about a church activity over the weekend. But let others raise their own questions about God and the Bible and your faith. God can move hearts to ask the right questions at the right time. Expect God to work in this way.

Now, some of you may not agree with me on this missionary attitude towards work. If you are one of them, let me suggest that you do God a favor on your job. And this is how to do God a favor on your job. Don't tell people your coworkers that you are a Christian.

If you don't intend to do your job for the glory of God, then don't tell anyone at work that you are a Christian. This is true most especially if you are lazy, a complainer, boastful, dishonest, or someone who climbs over others to get ahead, someone who speaks ill of coworkers, God, other religions, or your family members. If you consistently do such things at work, don't tell anyone you are a Christian. You will make Jesus look bad. So if you do not want to do your best for Jesus at work, then don't tell anyone there that you are a Christian.

But I urge you to take a missionary attitude towards your work.

Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV) "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Invitation:

We are fortunate that Jesus did His job well. If Jesus had slacked off in any way, He would not have been perfect. And if Jesus had not been perfect, His death on the cross would not have been an acceptable substitute in our place.

But Jesus was perfect. He did His job perfectly well. He died in our place. And God accepted His death as payment for all of our sins.

Today, put your faith in Jesus and be forgiven of your sins. Receive Jesus as your savior and turn your life over to Him as your Lord.