

Pursue Holy Employment/Education  
February 16, 2003

I want to start this morning by reading you a humorous notice that appeared on the company bulletin board at one place of business. It was 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, 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."

This short series of sermons is about us becoming holy and some of the life areas in which we are to be holy. Jesus commands us to be holy in 1 Peter.

**1 Peter 1:15 (NIV) But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.**

Now, two areas of life in which to be holy are school and work. Many of our church family are either a student or an employee. And some are both.

Both work and school are huge parts of our lives. We spend a lot of time there. We spend a lot of our life there. While many of you are doing them at home right now, we are hoping that is a temporary situation. Even at home they both take up time and involve others. Both are activities in which we are commanded to be holy, fully committed to God.

In both activities we encounter other people. And that means we can be an influence upon them for Jesus. Look with me at what Paul commanded Titus. Now, he is writing about Christians who happen to be slaves, literal slaves. Slavery was legal in that place and time. And I know you are not slaves. But the principle of which he writes, the goal in this is still the same for us. That is what I want you to see.

**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 don't mean that your school or place of work is a place of slavery. But rather, it is a place to develop a good reputation, making the good news of Jesus attractive. So here is today's main point.

**Your behavior can attract people to Jesus or drive them further away.**

As followers of Jesus his goals must become our goals. Jesus' goal is for every person to be saved. He died for the sins of EVERYBODY. His concern for lost people must become our concern for lost people. So, we want to live our lives in such a way that people are attracted to Jesus. Now, how do we do that at work and or school?

**How to be holy on your job or in school.:**

**1. Be thankful for your job and education opportunities.**

Thank God for the job you have. Anytime is a bad time to be out of work. But in this pandemic is an especially hard time. Many employers have put hiring on hold unless they absolutely must hire someone to fill a position. I have friends and relatives who right now are out of work and it is tough. If you have a job, whether it is a good job, an okay job, or a bad job, be thankful for it. 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.

You may be saying, "That doesn't apply to school." It most certainly does. You need at least a high school diploma in this country to get a decent job. You need an education. And you have the opportunity.

Listen, there are millions of teens in this world who would do anything to get to go to school and get an education. In many countries school is neither free nor compulsory. School is only for those who can afford it. The parents have to pay for it. In some places children can't go to school because they must wear shoes to school and the parents can't afford to buy them shoes. In some places there are no schools at all. Children grow up to be just as poor as their parents, never having enough food to eat, eking out a life on what few crops they can grow.

In many countries, those who fail to get an education will spend their whole adult lives trapped in bad jobs or low paying jobs, if they can get a job at all. Those who can't find work will scrounge through dumps and dumpsters for food, clothing, and things to use for shelter. You must realize how blessed you are to be able to go to school at all. You are so blessed.

**2. Express your gratitude in worship and submission of your job/schooling to God.**

Remember that you do not belong to you. You belong to Jesus. He purchased you with his blood. He freed you from slavery to sin and hell. He has a right to every part of your life. Acknowledge that in prayer as you submit yourself in service to him at work and at school.

Your presence on the job is for more than earning you a living. Your presence in school is for more than getting an education for you. As followers of Jesus your behavior can attract people to Jesus or drive them further away.

### **3. Do all your work and do it well.**

Now you might think this should be first on the list. But we are really talking about making work and school a spiritual activity, a work of worship. The outward things we do in actions, words, and behavior, always start in the heart, mind, and will. This is why we pray.

**We pray to align our will with the will of God.** To do our jobs and school as acts of service for God we must do numbers 1 & 2 at the start of every workday, every school day. We must remind ourselves of the true nature of our work and school. We must be holy in these activities. We must do them for God. That is what holiness is.

So, do all YOUR work and do it well. Even better is to do more than your work. Remember, we want to make Jesus attractive. We want to attract people to Jesus by our behavior. One way is to do more than is expected of you.

If you are the kind of person who is always doing more than is asked of you, people will notice. It will contribute to a good reputation for you.

But at the very least do all that you are responsible for doing. This means you are not slacking off. You are not making coworkers have to cover for you. If you are working in school on a group project, make sure you do all that you are responsible for doing.

Here is a question to ask yourself. **If you owned the company, would you want an employee doing your job the way you are doing it?**

Do all your work and do it well.

### **4. Be on time for everything.**

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."

We must be committed to doing what is good and right and expected of us. Be on time for work, for meetings, for classes. Be on time when coming back from breaks or lunch. Build a reputation for being reliable, dependable, faithful.

**5. Encourage others in their work.**

Do not do the work of others for them. But ask how you can be of help to them as they do their work. Sometimes they need to know that someone else cares about the job they are doing. You can be that person. Offer encouragement and help to your coworkers or schoolmates.

**6. Take nothing that is not yours.**

Your employer may give you supplies with which to do your job. 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. And he is supposed to be a Christian."

**7. Avoid gossip, putdowns, complaining, or jokes at the expense of others.**

Do not be a part of these things. They reflect badly on you and on the God you claim to serve.

**8. Subtly, invite inquiries about spiritual things.**

- Have a Bible on your desk.
- Offer to pray for others in need. Write it down and don't forget. Pray for them and follow up with them. Tell them some days later that you were praying for them. Ask how things turned out.
- As people share weekend news, tell about your church experience.
- When listening to the problems of others, share how God has helped you.

**Now, if you do not intend to be such a holy employee or student, do God a favor:  
Do not tell anyone you are a Christian.**

Keep it a secret. Don't tell people you are a Christian if you are lazy, a complainer, boastful, or dishonest student or employee. We have a hard enough time sharing Jesus without overcoming the bad witness of those who call themselves Christians and yet don't live holy lives.

But if you, in your gratitude to Jesus, want to make Jesus attractive, then here is how you start that at work or school.