

14. The rules of engagement of godly living – Part 7

9/13/2020

Mark Twain, a 19th-century American writer said, “Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” I am one of those blessed people to have two jobs that I love to do – being a pastor and an artist. Oh, at the end of the day, I get tired, but I love what I do. From time to time, I’d like to wring someone’s neck or my own, but I still love my two jobs.

A recent global poll conducted by Gallup has uncovered that out of the world’s one billion full-time workers, only 15% of people like what they do at work. It means that an astronomical 85% of people are unhappy or hate their jobs.

Why is the statistic so high? It begs the question. There are actually a large number of reasons as to why employees might be feeling disengaged from their work or employer, and I’m sure that a lot of them won’t really come as much of a surprise.

Here are a few reasons:

- **Boss:** This relationship has, perhaps, the most impact on how people feel at work. If you don’t get along well with your boss, getting up and going to work in the morning can become a chore and a burden.
- **Coworkers:** Likewise, if you don’t like the people you work with then, likely, you won’t enjoy the time you spend at work.
- **Type of Work:** Sometimes, we find ourselves doing any old job just to pay our bills. You might have an extremely boring job that any half-brain-dead-monkey can do. No challenge, nothing to look forward to.
- **Commute:** On average, we spend around 1/3 of our lives at work in a lifetime. Now add on top of that a long and stressful commute, it can be one of the biggest reasons for people feeling unhappy in their job – even if they love the job itself.
- **Underappreciated, no place to advance, etc.**

The Bible is so practical to teach us how we are supposed to handle ourselves at our workplace. Let’s hear from the Lord

A. WHAT EMPLOYEES SHOULD DO

Colossians 3:22-25 *Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

Employees should have a God-assigned role of obedience and submission to their employers or supervisors. God wants every Christian worker to see that ultimately, they work for Him. Therefore, they should do it whole heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. God promises to reward those who work with that kind of heart.

When a Christian worker does poorly in his job, he should not expect special leniency from his boss, especially if his boss is a Christian. Being a Christian employee should make us more responsible, not less.

Here are a few things we should do and should not do:

1) Work with all our might

Ecclesiastes 9:9-10 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.

This is one of my favorite Bible verses on employment because Solomon says that whatever our job is you are to do it with all of our strength. Wherever God has placed us, it is a holy vocation, not just a job. We work for Him and not just our employer. Ultimately, God will reward us, if not in this life, surely in the life to come.

For those who hate your current job, realize that where you are is no accident. Since you work for God and so we should do our jobs the very best that we can because we are an example to those who are outside of the household of faith. We can make a good impression for the Lord or we can bring shame to the cause of Christ so we ought to obey in everything those who are your employers, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. In other words, don't just start looking busy when the boss is watching but even when he isn't because God is always watching everything we do.

2) Working for the Lord

Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

The Lord is the One who will reward us at the end, not the employer. I am not saying that our employer won't reward us for our hard work and diligence but that financial reward cannot be brought with us to heaven. What God rewards us for is for all eternity and can be enjoyed in the Kingdom of Heaven. That is our inheritance, not what we gain while on earth. We do it for the Lord and not for men.

This should be our frame of mind, no matter what kind of job we have. Someone once said, "There is no job below our dignity as long as it is honest work."

Before I was called to be a pastor by the Lord, I was a graphic designer of a Yellow Pages company that published phone books in 13 western states of the US. In that company, there were 300 graphic designers. When I got the job, I promised the Lord that I would be the best employee they could find. I don't know whether I accomplished it or not, I was the lead graphic designer in that company for 13 years.

3) We should not get into get-rich-quick-schemes

Proverbs 12:11 He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread, But he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding.

There is no shortcut to hard work and having sustenance. Nothing can replace hard work. For those who follow get-rich quick-schemes, these are really worthless pursuits that lack integrity. Work is its own reward but hard work always pays off, if not in this life, in the life to come. There are so many welfare frauds who are really robbing those who work hard and pay taxes. These people lack bread because they

lack the effort of working hard and someday those things done in secret will be exposed openly. After all, all hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

4) Work is a divine institution

Genesis 2:15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

Here is another indication that it is God who places us where we are. The Lord took Adam and put him in the garden to tend and keep it. Work is a divine institution because Adam was commanded to work and this was before the fall had occurred so we see work, once again, as a holy vocation from God because He puts us where we are and tells us to tend and keep it wherever that might be. Work is not a curse from God but a blessing. The curse of the hard toil of work only came after the fall in the Garden, not before.

5) No work, no food

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Paul had problems with the church at Thessalonica because they were expecting the Lord to return at any moment. There is nothing wrong with that in itself because He could come at any time and we should be watching, waiting, working, and witnessing to unbelievers.

The problem was that many in this church had just stopped working and while waiting for the Lord's return, they were asking for handouts from the other people in the church who were still working. This angered Paul and rightly so because he said that if they do not work, neither should they eat. He heard that many were walking in idleness, not busy at work but only being busybodies by doing gossips. Paul commanded that these people earn their own living and not leach off of those who are still laboring.

Proverbs 24:31-34 And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down. 32 When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: 33 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest; 34 So shall your poverty come like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.

When king Solomon wrote that he saw a field and a vineyard that was overgrown with thorns and the ground was covered with weeds, and its stone wall was broken down and he understood why. It was the owner saying a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest but this would result in poverty. I am not talking about those who are not capable physically, but those who are capable physically yet lazy. This is what Paul was saying. If a man doesn't work, he will go hungry and end up in poverty.

There are some people who are flat out lazy. They'd rather come up with lame excuses why they cannot work than look for jobs to make something out of themselves. They expect handouts from the kindness of others. As Christians, we shouldn't be this way.

B. WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO

Colossians 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

We all want fair treatment. If you are an employer, you need to be fair, firm, and friendly to your employees. If you do, your employees won't need a labor union to fight for them.

I don't care about the personality of Richard Branson, the owner of Virgin Atlantic Airlines because he is rather flamboyant and ostentatious in my opinion. But I like his business principle: "Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients."

Christian employers or supervisors need to remember that they have a Master in heaven that they must answer to. Would they like God to treat them with the same measure of justice and fairness they have treated their workers with?

Deuteronomy 24:14 "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates.

Whether you are an employer, a boss, or a supervisor, God warns us to not oppress those who work for us and especially the poor and the needy. God tells us through James:

James 5:4 Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

This is aligned with Deuteronomy 24:14 and should be taken seriously because the cries of your employees will reach the ears of the Lord and He will not be happy if you exploit or take advantage of them. You ultimately will answer to God for that. It is nothing less than robbing an employee if you are not paying them what is their due.

"Just and fair" means paying employees what was agreed upon in a timely manner, providing a safe and pleasant work environment, and treating each employee as a valuable human being. Most employees, whether Christian or not, appreciate a work environment free from jealousy, favoritism, foul talk, and dishonesty. An employer can set that standard in the office and refuse to tolerate behavior that violates that standard.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) 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.

2) Before displaying outward symbols of Christianity, whether you are an employee or an employer, you must be certain that your lifestyle is not a contradiction. Any attempt to bring Christianity into the workplace will backfire if your employees or coworkers see the hypocrisy in your personal life or ethics.