
How to Be a Christian in the Workplace Part I

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Employment: Blood, Sweat, and Tears!

Mel Brooks, the movie producer, said it best, “*Life stinks!*”

If you have spent any time in the workplace, you will have observed many different kinds of attitudes, personalities, and ways of approaching the job there. We all have different personalities, habits, desires, experiences, and expectations, all converging and conflicting, and the water cooler area becomes a gathering place for hearing the latest gossip, a hotbed of conflict and chaos. Somehow, in the midst of all this, we, as Christians, are called to distinction. This rubs us against the grain of our coworkers and employers, who have conflicting ideas. The Christian enters into a struggle with identity, values, attitudes, and feelings, all producing stress and fatigue.

We are Christians, yet we are also human, and we work with Christians as well as non-Christians. We are material beings who need a livelihood to provide for the daily substance of life. From food and shelter to leisure and entertainment, work becomes a necessary means for us to live and function in society. Work can also be a potential for so much more. A call, a vocation, or a job, whatever you call what you do in between your day of worship and church, whether it be a priest or a fry cook, we all have a purpose. We all have a job. Sometimes, it is the same, sometimes not, as we may be in the wrong place and job. Nevertheless, we have a call to be employed, to function in society, and to behave in that call.

We are also social beings, not just tools or devices, slaves or machines. We are spiritual beings who have been saved by our God and Creator and given the call to be virtuous and righteous. All our experiences, expectations, aptitudes, and attitudes come together in the workplace. And, all of these distinctions converge into our mindset and attitudes at work. So, what is the right attitude and approach with which to do our work? How do we get along with coworkers, bosses, and our God?

Work, Job or vocation is a word we use to start to describe what we do in life, *vocation* has its root from the Latin verb “*to call*,” thus, our vocation and job is actually a call, similar to a minister. So we need to understand its role and significance in our life and how we are to be in our vocation as well as what it means in our walk with our Lord. Let us venture into God’s Word and see what He has to say about what we do during the week. What and why we have *work* and what we are to do in that vocation and how we respond to others around us. The following passages are arranged so you can spend some time in the Word, which will help you to develop a Biblical attitude of work. Also, several thoughts based on Scriptural insights are provided for you to pray about to nudge yourself into being a better person at work. You may discover what we do is not as important as how we do it!

God’s Call for the Employee Ephesians 6:5-8

You may feel like a slave at work. Or, perhaps you treat others in that way thinking, *I am in command. They work for me, and they have to do what I say!* But, the key to this passage is the attitude we are to have, that of looking to Christ as our employer so we do our work for Him. Therefore, we are to be our best for His glory, regardless of our circumstances (Rom. 8:17; Phil. 2:1-11).

We may have a paycheck from McDonald's and a boss who may need some acne treatments, but our ultimate authority and manager is Christ Himself! We show our value--that Christ paid a price for us--so, we in turn can respond with a good work ethic (1 Cor. 7:23). We must adjust our mindset to see work as an opportunity to please Him, and in so doing, be a blessing to those around us.

As an employee we are called to Diligence! This allows us to operate with our best for Christ's highest with **excitement and passion in order to complete our work and call from the Lord.** It is practical obedience, which is the loving of our call and the pursuing of our work so we are doing our best for His glory. (**Prov. 10:4; Rom. 12:11; Colossians 3:23**)

Here are some more Scriptures about being an employee: Exodus 23:12; 35:2; Proverbs 10:26; 25:13; Ecclesiastes 2:4; 5:12; Colossians 3:17,22-25; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 6:2; Titus 2:9,10; 1 Peter 2: 18-20

God's Call for the Employer

God honors *diligence* and *fairness*. **As an employer you are called to Diligence and to Fairness!** These are the two characteristics we are to have in the workplace, and are especially essential for the manager. God hates the exploitation of people and will judge with severity those who do exploit others. So, why bother with the rotten characters of dishonesty and exploitation when we can have a much more efficient and happy workplace, where the workers are cared for and encouraged to produce instead of being forced and made to condescend.

Here are some more Scriptures about being an employer: Leviticus 19: 13; Deuteronomy 24:4,14; Proverbs 27: 18; Malachi 3:5; Luke 10:7; 1 Corinthians 9: 6-12; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:17; 4:1; 1 Timothy 5:17,18

God's Call for the Workplace

As a worker, or an employer, God has a lot to say to us regarding our virtue at work.

- **We are called to work with respect and honor to God and others:** Genesis 2: 15; 3: 15; Proverbs 6:6-8; 10:4,5,26; 12:9; 13:4; 14:23; 18:9; 22:29; 31:11-31; Ecclesiastes 3:22; 5:12; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5: 8!
- **We are called to work with integrity:** Proverbs 10:2; 15:27; Jeremiah 22: 13; Ephesians 4:28!
- **We are warned about laziness:** Exodus 20:9-11; 23:12; 34:21; Proverbs 16:27; 18:9; 19: 15; 22:13; 24:30-34; 1 Thessalonians 4: 11,12; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-15!

- **We are called to honor just remuneration:** Proverbs 3:27,28; 27:18; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5: 18; James 5:1-5!

Question to Ponder

After reading any of the above selected Scriptures, ask yourself these questions:

1. What attitudes, desires, and habits do you have that need to be changed?
2. How can you be encouraged by God's truths and encourage those who are in the workplace?
3. What warning is God giving you?
4. How can you lead a distinctive lifestyle in the workplace?
5. Have you considered the eternal results of a healthy work attitude, even in the face of strife and chaos?
6. How does a good worker reflect being a good witness for Christ and give Him glory? Why is Glorifying God so important? What would this mean to you in further practice?
7. What we think we deserve may not correspond to what we get. What does that mean? Have you experienced this?
8. What can you do to make sure that your prayers really and truly seek the Lord and are not just *me* based? How would this help you be a good worker of boss?
9. How do we trust Him and accept His provisions even when we may not see them?
10. Christ is calling us to faithfulness that looks to Him and not to what we think we want. How do our *wants* rob us of what is best and what is really prosperous?

Do a word study on *excellence* by looking it up in a concordance, and see what you find. Notice how these principles affected not only the people in the Bible, but also how they could affect you. Then take those precepts and attitudes and ask yourself, *How can I apply them in my workplace?*