
How to Be a Christian in the Workplace Part III

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Keys to Building Better Relationships with Co-Workers

Matthew 20: 1-19

What we think is of worth and importance usually is not. We seek wealth and power; He seeks reconciliation and relationship. This parable also portrays God as sovereign, gracious, and concerned with humanity. It shows the contrast between the people society throws away as being *first*, and what the world considers *first* as really being *last* because their true colors come out as they complain and blame.

This is also about grace in the workplace. Grace is very hard for some people to understand because it is without merit. Nobody likes to work hard and see someone who does not do so get a reward. But, grace is not about rewarding those who are lazy or foolish, it is about God's control, and His vision sees all; ours does not.

- Real Grace does not criticize or tear others down!
- We are not to keep our focus on what others are doing or the rewards they seem to get. Rather, we are to focus upon our Lord and what He is seeking to do within us so we can give it to those around us. Let Him deal with you fairly, that is, what He thinks is fair—not what we think!
- Grace is impossible to understand or receive; that is why we need the work of the Holy Spirit.
- This is a reflection that He is the ultimate *last* in faith and humbleness. Submitting to God to be last, as He modeled, exalts us in ways we cannot fathom, as God is the One who brings us to be first. God is the One who vindicates us (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 19:30)!
- Salvation has more to do with our worship of Christ and less about our rewards!

Passages that help us see God's call in relating to others in our vocation: Colossians 3:23; Galatians 6:9; Proverbs 12:24; 13:4; 19:15; 24:30-32; Titus 2: 9-20; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; James 1: 8.

- To be interesting and liked, you need to be interested in and like others!
- Be open to others around you who can teach you more about your job!
- Care about what you do, and show you care.
- Be a pleasing and warm person, not a gossip or conniver and schemer!

- Find an expert from whom you could learn insights about your job, so you can seek how to be better in it. No matter how long you have been there, you can always learn more, and ultimately become the best you can be for our Lord!
- Avoid laziness and procrastination like the *plague* (Proverbs 10:4,5,2:11, 15:19; 18:9)!
- Remember, your work is an act of worship, since it is God you are serving!
- Reevaluate your attitude toward your employer and fellow employees as much as you can.
- Notice others in your workplace, how you can learn from them, and how you can come along side and help them!
- Focus on objectives, not obstacles, and make sure your objectives are clear!
- Be totally honest with your time, expenses, and relationships!
- Remember your workplace is also your most effective outreach. You may not be able to verbally share the gospel, nor should you on work time, but you can be a Christ-like example so others will seek you out and ask you what makes you different!
- Keep your focus on Christ. Look at your work as worship, and as serving Him, not just a labor or chore. Be open for opportunities, and take them as gaining insights and experience so as to be better for Him and others around you! If you get stuck, consider a new perspective. Try to look at your work from a different viewpoint. You cannot always control your situation, but you can control your attitude and respond as our Lord has called us to do!

What would we have to gain if we put all of ourselves and our time in our career, giving up all the other aspects of life? Nothing! When I visit rest homes with youth groups, I ask the youth to get life stories and perspectives from the elderly residents to catch sight of what they have learned in life, and what youth can learn from them. These were very rewarding. With dozens upon dozens of visits over twenty years, we never had anyone say they regretted that they did not spend more time in their career. The regrets expressed, if any, were about losing time with family by being workaholics, forfeiting relationships, and such. All could have been avoided just by adhering to Jesus' simple words in Mark 8:36. Look it up and see for yourself!

The key to a great work environment is possessing the attitude that Christ is our employer so we do our work for Him. We should view our job as a mission field and keep coworkers and bosses in constant prayer. If you feel stress, hatred, lack of accomplishment, or if you are unhappy and in the wrong place, then pray more! We are to be our best for His glory, regardless of our circumstances (Rom. 8:17; Eph. 6:5-8; Phil. 2:1-11; 1 Pet. 2:18-25). 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 with our practical obedience and diligence! This allows us to do our best for Christ's highest with excitement and passion in order to complete our work and call from the Lord. He asks us to love our call and pursue our work so we are doing our best for His glory. (Prov. 10:4; Rom. 12:11; Col. 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

Questions

1. How do you feel when you see co-workers who are lazy and do not do their work, yet they get a raise or are promoted over people who do work hard? Has this happened to you? Did you get mad at God?
2. How would you define the "me first" mentality? How is it a part of our sinful nature? Why is it embraced so much, even by people in the Church?
3. How does our selfishness deprive us of God's power? Have you been deprived by your misdirected deeds and ideas?
4. Which would you rather live under, an oppressive régime, or freedom and liberty? Why? In what category is God's régime?
5. Why do you suppose the workers demanded the amount by contract? Does this mindset work in business? What about in the church?
6. If you demand that God meet your demands, He just might do that. How would you feel to receive what you want when you could have had so much more? How do trust and faith come into play?
7. What do you think of the expectations of the different workers? How does this relate to how some Christians tend to expect God just to bless them?
8. Why do you think Grace is very hard for some people to understand? How do you understand it?
9. What do you say when someone says that God is unfair? Have you ever felt that way?
10. What do you need to do to have a better attitude at work and display the wonders of Christ without opening your mouth?