

**1 Corinthians 7:17** Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

**DOCTRINE:** *That the Lord himself has portioned out a unique assignment to each man, and it is your duty, therefore, to lead well the life that the Lord has assigned to you.*

The duty...

## I. YOU MUST LEAD THE LIFE THAT THE LORD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU (1 Cor 7:17a)

**1 Corinthians 7:17** Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

### I) YOU MUST RIGHTLY DISCERN WHAT LIFE THE LORD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU

- **Q.** How are you to discern what vocation to enter into?

#### 1. YOU MUST LABOR ACCORDING TO THE GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU

- **Exodus 36:1** "Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the LORD has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded."
- **WILLIAM PERKINS** those that enter into any calling, being utterly unable to perform the duties of it, were never called by God.

#### 2. YOU MUST LABOR ACCORDING TO THE ALLOWANCE OF MEN

- **1 Timothy 3:10** And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.
- **WILLIAM PERKINS** men are to be set apart to their particular callings by the appointment of men whom God has left on earth as his instruments for the ordering and disposing of vocations.

#### 3. YOU MUST LABOR ACCORDING TO WHAT IS LAWFUL

##### 1) This requires that your vocation seeks lawful ends

- **Ephesians 4:28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands

##### 2) This requires that you labor according to lawful means

- **Proverbs 17:8** A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of the one who gives it; wherever he turns he prospers.
- Bribes work, but God has forbidden you the use of bribes (**Deuteronomy 16:19**)

#### 4. YOU MUST LABOR WHERE YOU CAN MOST GLORIFY THE LORD

- **1 Corinthians 7:21** Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)

### II) YOU MUST LEAD THE LIFE THAT THE LORD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU IN THREE ARENAS

- **WILLIAM PERKINS** God in His word has ordained the society of man with man, partly in the Commonwealth, partly in the Church, and partly in the Family.

1. **IN YOUR HOME** (Husbands, Wives, Parents, and Children)

2. **IN YOUR CHURCH** (Pastors, Deacons, and Members)

3. **IN THE COMMONWEALTH** (Magistrates, Subjects, Masters, and Servants)

### III) YOU MUST FAITHFULLY LEAD THE LIFE THAT THE LORD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU

#### 1. DUTIES OF SERVANTS

### 1) You must rightly choose your earthly masters

**So far as you are able:**

- i) Seek out a man who fears the Lord
- ii) Seek out employment where you can be a member of a healthy local church
- iii) Seek out employment where you will be able to worship the Lord on the Lord's Day
- iv) Seek out employment where you will be able to provide for your family
- v) Seek out employment where you can steward your God-given gifts to serve others

### 2) You must rightly serve your earthly masters

- **Colossians 3:22-24** obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

## 2. DUTIES OF MASTERS

### 1) You must rightly choose your servants

**So far as you are able:** seek out servants who fear the Lord

- **Psalms 101:6** My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; One who walks in a blameless way is one who will serve me.

### 2) You must rightly use your servants

- **Colossians 4:1** treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

i) You must care for those under your charge

- **Proverbs 12:10** Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast

ii) You must provide clear expectations for those under your charge

- **Luke 12:48** Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required

iii) You must inspect the work of those under your charge

- **Proverbs 27:23** Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds

iv) You must provide those under your charge with their due wages (when they are due)

- **Luke 10:7** The laborer deserves his wages

v) You must forbid those under your charge from laboring for you on the Lord's Day

- **Deuteronomy 5:13-14** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you

## IV) YOU MUST DILIGENTLY LEAD THE LIFE THAT THE LORD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU

- **BRAKEL** Diligence is the exertion of the spiritual and physical powers of a believer whereby he willingly, joyously, and earnestly executes that task which God assigns him, doing so because it is the will of God.

**USES: Q.** Are you diligent? Try yourself by the mirror of the Word:

1. The diligent are employed (while the lazy lament that no work can be found to properly suit them)

**Proverbs 14:23** In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.

2. The diligent are tired (while the slothful take every opportunity to sleep the day away)

**Proverbs 26:14** As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.

3. The diligent are careful (while the sluggard leaves his station a mess and his work unfinished)

**Proverbs 24:30-31** I passed by the field of a sluggard... and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.

4. The diligent are unrelenting (while the slothful idly dream about miraculous profits)

**Proverbs 13:11** Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

5. The diligent are uncompromising (while the sluggard makes every excuse to absence himself from work)

**Proverbs 22:13** The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!"

6. The diligent are patient (while the sluggard cannot tolerate delayed gratification)

**Proverbs 20:4** The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

## V) YOU MUST WISELY LEAD THE LIFE THAT THE LORD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU

### 1. WISDOM PROMOTES FAITHFULNESS

• **Proverbs 9:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,

### 2. WISDOM MULTIPLES THE FRUITS OF DILIGENCE

• **Ecclesiastes 10:10** If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.

**USES: Q.** Are you a wise man? Make trial of yourself by these:

1. A wise man gives thought to his steps

**Proverbs 14:15** the prudent gives thought to his steps.

2. A wise man does not presume upon tomorrow

**James 4:13–14** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring.

3. A wise man increases his wisdom by the Word

**Proverbs 1:5** Let the wise hear and increase in learning,

4. A wise man learns from the failings of others

**Proverbs 24:30–32** I passed by the field of a sluggard... and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. *Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction.*

5. A wise man seeks the counsels of others

**Proverbs 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

*Three motivations unto this duty...*

## II. ...BECAUSE IT IS THE LORD WHO HAS ASSIGNED IT TO YOU (1 Cor 7:17b)

**1 Corinthians 7:17** Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

## III. ...BECAUSE IT IS GOD WHO HAS CALLED YOU INTO IT (1 Cor 7:17c)

**1 Corinthians 7:17** Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

## IV. ...BECAUSE IT IS CHRIST WHO COMMANDS IT OF YOU (1 Cor 7:17d)

**1 Corinthians 7:17** Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

# Recommended Reading: Vocational Duties

## **William Perkins, *Works (Volume 10)***

Treatise on Vocations (p.31)

The Master (p.184)

The Servant (p.186)

## **William Gouge, *of Domestical Duties***

An Exposition of That Part of Scripture Out of which Domestic Duties Are Raised (Chapter 1)

Duties of Servants (Chapter 7)

Duties of Masters (Chapter 8)

## **Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory (Part II: Christian Economics)***

General Directions for the Holy Government of Families (Chapter IV)

Directions for the Right Choice of Servants (Chapter II, Part I)

Directions for the Right Choice of Masters (Chapter II, Part II)

The Duties of Servants to Their Masters (Chapter XIII)

The Duties of Masters Toward Their Servants (Chapter XIV)

The Duties of... Fellow-Servants to One Another (Chapter XV)

## **John Gill, *A Body of Practical Divinity (Book IV)***

Of the Duties of Masters and Servants

## **Wilhelmus À Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service***

The Fifth Commandment (Volume 3, Chapter 50)

Diligence (Volume 4, Chapter 86)

Prudence (Volume 4, Chapter 88)

## **Thomas Boston, *Works (Volume II)***

The Fifth Commandment: The Duties of Servants and Masters (p.231)

## **Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments***

Masters and Servants (p.125, I.4)

## **John Angell James, *A Help to Domestic Happiness***

The Duties of Masters (Chapter VIII)

The Duties of Servants (Chapter IX)

## **Ezekiel Hopkins, *Works (Volume 1)***

The Fifth Commandment: The Duties Between Masters and Their Servants (p.426, iv)

## **Paul Bayne, *Commentary on Ephesians***

Ephesians 6:5-9, The Duties of Servants and Masters (p.563)