

WORK AS WORSHIP
Changing the World at Work
Ephesians 6:5-9

The world at work is a different kind of place. It is filled with all kinds of people with all kinds of abilities, and viewpoints, and attitudes, and histories. The workplace is often a “dog eat dog world” where everyone is looking out for their own best interests, and many are threatened by others around them that may be more gifted or more intelligent than they are. And you are just ONE among them. You may not be the most gifted or most intelligent one in your workplace, but you are a child of the KING, he has PLACED you there at work, and HE LIVES WITHIN YOU. Therefore, you CAN make a difference in your work world. The question is: Do you WANT to? Or, are you just content to go to work and then come home and then do it all again?

We all want to be part of something that is BIGGER than just us. I believe that God built this into us at creation. This is why the KEY PRINCIPLE that I offered in last week’s message is so crucial. There is no purpose bigger than loving the God that created you and the people that he created around you. We can live for the glory of God; and by doing so, we direct people’s attention to the ONLY ONE that can fill and fulfill their lives completely. This is true in every area of life, including our work life. Here was the principle:

Work is not about your greatness, but about God’s glory.

There is no aspect of life that is so small that it cannot bring glory to God. God is a God of DETAIL, and we have the ability to point to his glory in even the MUNDANE things of life. The Apostle Paul said it this way: **1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV**

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

If you and I can bring God glory in the little moments when we are eating and drinking, then can we not do it as well during the HOURS and DAYS and WEEKS and MONTHS and YEARS that we are working? I believe we can. We must! Now, last week we began talking about the crucial CONNECTION between our WORK and our WITNESS. We said that your work ethic COULD be a way to bring God glory. We focused mainly on work ethic in the sense of the EFFORT that we expend by working hard and by the EXCELLENCE that we seek to achieve in the products that we produce. But there is MORE. Work ethic is not simply a concept about not being LAZY or CHEAP. It is also about the ATTITUDE we bring to work and the personal INTEGRITY that we display at work. Here is our key passage today.

Ephesians 6:5-9 NIV

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters **with respect and fear**, and **with sincerity of heart**, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 **Serve wholeheartedly**, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. 9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

I touched briefly on this last week, but some of you may take exception to Paul's counsel here to those who are SLAVES. You may wonder why he did not spend his time here CONDEMNING SLAVERY rather than instructing believers to be good slaves and do what they are told. This may seem like a COP-OUT, but it is just the opposite. **Let me remind you that Christianity and Christian leaders in history are predominately responsible for the fact that slavery has become something that is for the most part universally condemned in the world today. The concept that "all men are created equal" did not originate first as a POLITICAL value but as a RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE based on New Testament truths that came from Christ himself. But Paul was interested in MORE than just preaching principles that made life on earth better for people. He wanted men and women to be impacted by truth that literally changed their ETERNITY. Paul's words may seem offensive to us, but the SPIRIT that he called believers to express literally TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN in just a few centuries!** The way that Christians LIVED THEIR LIVES caused people to shake their heads in wonder and then ASK how they could get that same kind of life for themselves. That is the kind of work that changes the world. The Bible makes it clear that this has ALWAYS been how God has worked in this world. Think about it: How many of God's choicest servants were literal slaves at work? **[Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John, Paul]** All of these men and women helped to **RADICALLY** change this world. **And they did it at work as slaves!** Let's continue to look now at HOW we can glorify God ourselves in our little offices spaces all over the Mid-South as slaves of the Most High King!

God's glory is revealed in your ATTITUDE at work.

***Attitude can be a REFLECTION of what is AROUND you or what is WITHIN you!**

-Remember, you are to work AS IF Jesus himself is your BOSS!

-This must be MANIFESTED as an act of WORSHIP.

[“With SINCERITY of heart” = Without pretense or self-seeking; with generosity!]

-This is NOT a SIMPLE-MINDED view that ignores REALITY.

***Attitude involves what you DO NOT do at work! **Philippians 2:13-15 NASB** 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. 14 **Do all things without grumbling or disputing;** 15 so that you will**

prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

-Are you a GRUMBLER or a COMPLAINER at work?

*Are you always WHINING about how hard or unfair your work world is?

[Requirements for nurses: **Chuck Swindoll –The Quest for Character, P. 159]**

-Are you ARGUMENTATIVE at work?

*How much DRAMA do YOU create in your office complex?

***Attitude also includes the WAY that you DO your work!**

-Have you LOST the sense of PASSION that you used to have in your job?

-Perhaps you should ask God for ways to RENEW your sense of PURPOSE!

***Story of bus driver: P. 13-14, The Me I Want to Be – Ortberg.**

-How do you GREET people at work?

-How do you HONOR people at work?

*This requires you to NOTICE and even PRAISE OTHERS at work!

-ARROGANCE and FEAR keep us from praising others.

-This creates an ATMOSPHERE of ENVY and JEALOUSY at work!

God's glory is revealed in your INTEGRITY at work.

J.D. Greear tells the story of how Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the famous author who once worked with the British government once played a practical joke on 12 well-respected and well known men in Great Britain. He sent an anonymous telegram to each one of them from within the government that simply said, "Flee at once! All is known." He checked back in 6 hours, and all 12 were making plans to leave!

***INTEGRITY involves HONESTY.**

Integrity is a RARE QUALITY in this world today, but God calls his children to live lives that are CONSISTENT with his character and standards. **Proverbs 11:1 NIV**
1 The LORD detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him.

*Dishonest scales are things like using office supplies for personal use, keeping dishonest records on MILEAGE reports, taking credit for work done by others, cheating on your income tax, exaggerating business expense reports, etc.

[1994 - Story of man at CHC who confessed to stealing money at work.]

***INTEGRITY involves HONOR.**

-How are you bringing HONOR back to YOUR PROFESSION?

[Car Dealers, Lawyers, Preachers, Politicians, Doctors]

-Are you ONLY FOCUSED on the MONEY you can MAKE?

Ephesians 4:28 NIV

28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

***INTEGRITY encompasses BOSSES and not just employees! Ephesians 6:9**

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

*God CARES how you treat your employees!

[Bosses: How do you treat your workers?]

-Bosses are told NOT to THREATEN their employees!

*This is about how we TALK ABOUT THEM. **[Frankie and the Rock]**

*This is also about how we MOTIVATE them.

-Are you HARSH? Are you ABUSIVE and VERBALLY PROFANE?

-Bosses are also told to treat their employees with JUSTICE and FAIRNESS.

Colossians 4:1

1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

*This is about PAYING them a FAIR SALARY.

*This is also about ACTUALLY PAYING them when their payment is DUE!

*This is a REMINDER that GOD will DEAL with your failure to do this!

Work CAN be a DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD where everyone is looking out just for his or her own self. But it can also be a place where God's people STAND OUT in the crowd because of the way that they live and act and talk differently because they do not just have ONE BOSS at work. They serve God himself, and they know that God is not only WATCHING THEM in order to REWARD THEM, but he wants to USE THEM FOR HIS GLORY every day that they work at their job.

DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOU?

Let's pray.

Week 3 – A Working Attitude

Key Passage: **Colossians 3:22-25** and **Philippians 2:12-16** ; Ecclesiastes 10:4;

Jeremiah 29:4-16

Key Concept: Our work is meant to GLORIFY GOD in ATTITUDE as well as ACTION.

***Story of bus driver: P. 13-14, [The Me I Want to Be – Ortberg](#).**

*This is for Business Owners AND for Employees

*Ethic INCLUDES ATTITUDE! Ephesians 6:5-8

-Work ethic includes the WAY that you do your work! **[Enthusiasm!]**

-What has happened to your PASSION for work?

-What could help you REENERGIZE at work?

-Our work ethic impacts the ENVIRONMENT at work!

*This includes factors like HONESTY and INTEGRITY and HUMILITY

-Tie honesty to HONOR: Bring HONOR back to your profession (lawyers)

-Tie humility back to GRATITUDE.

-Talk about how ARROGANCE refuses to PRAISE others. Creates envy.

-Tie INTEGRITY to GENEROSITY! **Ephesians 4:28 NIV**

28 Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

*We are THIEVES when we do not WORK WELL.

*The goal of work is NOT just your OWN NEEDS, but the needs of others.

*How can you learn how to NOT be driven simply by the bottom line at work?

*A word to EMPLOYERS: God CARES about how you treat your employees!

-Do not THREATEN your workers. **Ephesians 6:9 NASB**

-Grant them JUSTICE and FAIRNESS. **Colossians 4:1 NASB**

*Work that glorifies God . . . [Great way to give the points in this message]

*God promises to REWARD all work that is done for his glory! **Colossians 3:23-25**

-God WATCHES your work in order to REWARD it.

*Work is NOT about YOUR greatness but about HIS glory!

[Another way to say and see this is to talk about how much more fulfilling it is to do a job that you KNOW is about MORE than just the BOTTOOME LINE! Bigger than you!]

What do you do when you feel STUCK in your job? JEREMIAH 29:5-15

-Learn to THRIVE where you are no matter how DEAD END it feels.

-What does it mean to “build houses, plant gardens, and pray for the good. . . “

*This is the BEGINNING of how God ESTABLISHES the work of your hands! **Ps. 90**

-God will only ESTABLISH work that reflects the CHARACTER of God!!

*ADDRESS THE REALITY that some jobs are CONTRARY to the VALUES and PRINCIPLES that we hold. It is important to handle this with WISDOM and COURAGE.

People all over the world are also realizing something remarkable. They are learning that making a lot of money or reaching a pinnacle of power is not as fulfilling as they once thought. They are learning that money and power and position are ultimately EMPTY if there is not some BIGGER PURPOSE than just one person’s happiness. This is why men like Bill Gates and Warren Buffet and George Soros have given billions of dollars away to charitable foundations and organizations that help people. Even major corporations are learning this important lesson. [I read a very interesting quote by the daughter of Rupert Murdoch, the Chief Executive of News Corp. She stated, “Profit without purpose is a recipe for disaster!” She went on to say, “Personally, I believe that one of the biggest lessons of this past year has been the need for any organization to discuss, affirm, and institutionalize a rigorous set of values based on an explicit statement of purpose!”](#)