

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORKPLACE

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The workplace is an important place in our society. Work is a God-given responsibility for mankind. Adam, the first man, was put in the Garden of Eden “to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Since that time man has filled various capacities of work to benefit society and to make a living for himself. Though the woman has always had the God-given work as a “homemaker” (Titus 2:5), the number of women in the secular workplace has increased in recent times. Christians should be concerned that they maintain themselves in a godly manner at all times, including in the workplace, whether it is an office, a warehouse, a station, a department store, or a factory. Let us notice some principles that should guide us as employees and employers at work.

The Golden Rule

The words of Jesus commonly called the “Golden Rule” should be a daily guide in our relationships with others: “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Matt. 7:12). This is an excellent principle to keep good relations with our fellow workers and bosses. If we do not care how we treat others, why should they care how they treat us? Without a mutual concern for one another, the workplace will become a place of strife instead of production, which can get everyone in trouble. Treat your fellow employee with the same care and concern as you would want them to show to you.

Work for the Lord

The Christian must always remember that he serves the Lord first and foremost. This is as true at work as anywhere else. Just substitute “employees” for “servants” and “employers” for “masters” in the following passage of Scripture:

*“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And 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”
(Col. 3:22-24).*

When the Christian remembers that he serves the Lord Christ in everything, he will be the best employee that he can possibly be. Why? To please the Lord and to go to heaven someday. Those who are lazy and unproductive are a disappointment to their bosses and to the Lord. Such Christians should be ashamed. We serve a great Master who expects great things of us. Being a good, honest, and productive worker is doing a great work in the eyes of God.

Honesty and Fairness

Both employees and employers should be honest and fair. God condemns businesses that are dishonest with their customers (Deut. 25:13-16). Also, an honest day’s work should be rewarded with an honest day’s pay. Unions were formed to protect the rights

of workers because businesses were taking advantage of them. Unsafe conditions and unfair wages are a constant concern of employees.

Productivity and theft are concerns of employers. An employee has no right to steal from his workplace. If we have agreed to a certain wage, we should not strike and break a contract to work. We are to honor our word and obey the rules of those in authority. This is true regardless of whether the boss is nice or not, and as long as he does not ask us to violate God's word (1 Pet. 2:18). Of course, unethical business practices should not be engaged in by anyone. No job is worth losing one's soul over. If one is fired for *not* lying to a customer, *refusing* to "cook" the company's books, *rejecting* the sexual advances of a boss or client, or *turning down* an invitation to go to a bar or strip club with other employees, then he should rejoice to suffer wrongfully for the Lord's sake (v. 19; Matt. 5:10) and find a better job. We need to put our trust in the Lord that He will provide in those difficult times and never compromise our godly principles in order to keep a job.

Conclusion

The workplace can be a wonderful place, or a place that torments a righteous soul. If a situation is not what you wish it could be, be patient. Things can change, bad people can leave, and promotions can come to those who quietly mind their own business and work hard. Remember that we are working to lay up treasures in heaven. If we are faithful, the Lord will never cast us off, but will reward us as faithful and good servants. Make your workplace better by being the best Christian you can be.