

# Doing the Job Well

## (Ephesians 6:5–9)

A surprisingly apparent result of conversion is seen in one's daily work. When a person is called out of the darkness of sin and begins to walk in the light, becoming like God, there will be an incredible change in the way he works at his job. Why does such a change occur? The conversion process dramatically refocuses every aspect of life. Prior to conversion, one's life may have been consumed by selfish ambitions. After conversion, he lives with spiritual ambitions. Before giving his life to Christ, a person is interested only in asking, "What can I get out of this?" One who is in Christ asks, "How can I do this to glorify God?"

Leaving the darkness of sin for the light of the gospel results in a wonderful freedom. You have new power as a Christian because you have been freed from the slavery of self. This freedom has been explained as applying to our personal relationships (4:1–32), our lifestyle choices (5:1–21), and our families (5:22–6:4). In the present passage, 6:5–9, the inspired writer described how conversion offers a powerful freedom in our vocations and employment.

The Christian works in a manner that reflects the light of God. There once was a servant who constantly had to be reprimanded by her employer for ignoring instructions to sweep under the doormat. When this young woman was converted to Christ, her employer immediately noticed improvements in her attitudes and general conduct. He mentioned that she was different, but the servant was puzzled. She asked how he knew that she had made changes in her life. The employer replied, "Now you

sweep under the doormat!"<sup>1</sup>

Is conversion applicable only to religious practices, moral choices, language, and family relationships? Some seem to think that their conversion has no application to their jobs. In fact, people sometimes think that Christianity has no business in their business affairs! Such a conclusion is not what the Bible teaches. As a Christian, you have left the darkness of sin to walk in the light of truth in every facet of life. Walking in the light includes the way you conduct yourself as you work.

This section of the Scriptures addresses two groups: those who labor and those who supervise. In Roman times, these principles applied to slaves and masters. In modern times, the same principles apply to employees and employers. These verses clearly state that God expects us, as Christians, to conduct ourselves differently than others in the work force. The consequences of conversion include changes in one's performance on the daily job.

### THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EMPLOYMENT

Ephesians 6:5–9 sets forth six general principles of employment that apply equally to the employer and the employee. Now that you have become a Christian, you are obligated to govern your work ethic by these principles. You can no longer supervise or labor with the same stan-

<sup>1</sup>John L. Kachelman, Jr. *Studies in Colossians: The Savior's Supremacy* (Abilene, Tex.: Quality Publications, 1985), 61–62.

dards those in darkness follow. Now you are to work with qualities that shine brightly, demonstrating that you are God's child.

In today's labor force, it is not unusual for supervisors to make promises but not keep those promises. It is common for employees to steal from the companies that pay their wages and then rationalize their sinful behavior. Integrity, honesty, and truthfulness are sadly missing from today's business world. To their own shame, some Christians conduct their business affairs in the same way as those who are still living in darkness. There are Christian businessmen whose word cannot be trusted and whose integrity is constantly questioned. Some Christian employees are irresponsible and unrepentantly take advantage of the companies for which they work. Since you have been converted to Christ, you are to demonstrate your conversion by applying the following principles of employment in your business affairs.

*Principle 1: Work with fear and trembling* (v. 5a). This does not mean that your work is to be performed because you fear other people. Those in the world conduct business with the fear of others; they worry about offending someone and losing sales or being dismissed from a job. They are afraid of losing profits. Such fears prompt the business world to compromise standards and encourage irresponsibility. Because you have become a Christian, you are to work only with a fear as to what the God of heaven will say about your services and the way you treat others in your business transactions. If a Christian is indifferent about how his business affairs affect others, he ought to be filled with fear and trembling about standing before the judgment seat of God.

*Principle 2: Focus on your purpose* (v. 5b). What is the goal of your business? Do not forget that the entire purpose of earthly existence is to bring honor to God (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14). Today's business world is consumed with striving for success. People are deceived and are consumed with covetousness (Luke 12:15). They become so obsessed with gaining more and more possessions and honor that they lose their souls (Luke 12:16–21). Many will stand condemned on the Judgment Day because they allowed greed to control their purpose in life. As a Christian, you must be careful not to lose sight of your

purpose in working. Those who live "as to Christ" work with "sincerity" of the heart.

*Principle 3: Practice integrity* (v. 6a). A common problem in the working world is employees who work only when the supervisor is looking; when the superior's attention is elsewhere, their work slackens. Wrong attitudes rob work of its integrity. As a Christian, you are aware that God's eye is on you every minute of the day. Therefore, you work conscientiously—whether you are being watched by a coworker or are alone.

*Principle 4: Work energetically* (v. 6b). The Christian is known as a hard worker. He devotes himself to his task and is energetic in the work. Others may approach tasks with a "ho-hum," yawning indifference and invest no energy in their work. The Christian, however, works "from the heart."

*Principle 5: Spread good will* (v. 7). The Christian works so that good is produced for the employer, both within the company and in the community. He continues to be a hard worker, even if he is mistreated. He works enthusiastically, whether or not he receives the appropriate appreciation. He understands that he is really working for the Lord Jesus Christ! Even though selfless behavior is a challenge for the employer and the employee, it is the Christian's obligation!

*Principle 6: Recognize your reward* (v. 8). A Christian works energetically and seeks the good of the company because he knows that a Day of Judgment is coming—a day when the Lord God will render justice. Those who have labored according to the Christian work ethic will receive a rich reward. Those who have manipulated, lied, and taken advantage of others will receive the Lord's condemnation. God will render His judgment without regard to status or financial profits. Those who achieved a little by righteousness will be rewarded, while those who achieved much by insensitivity and callous regard toward others will lose everything. God's Word warns, "Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and turmoil with it" (Proverbs 15:16).

Some will stand before God thinking they have accomplished great good, only to find out that their accomplishments have instead brought them ruin because they did not work according

to godly principles. *What you do* in your daily work and *how you do* your daily work are eternally important.

## THE CONSTANT GUIDELINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN WORKER

This section of the Scriptures presents a sobering lesson: The way people conduct themselves in the work place is important to God. Some may not think that they can serve God in the working environment. However, Paul offered four guidelines that help the Christian employee or supervisor to work in a way acceptable to God.

*Respect must govern our working relationships because of our ultimate respect for God* (vv. 5, 6, 9). God expects all people to demonstrate respect toward each other. The employee is to respect the employer. Coworkers are to respect one another. The employer is to be considerate toward the employee. True respect cannot be demanded. Some demand this respect because they do not conduct themselves in such a manner as to earn it from others. When the Christian is working for a non-Christian, God still says for him to respect the one in authority over him.

A Christian must work sincerely and energetically in whatever his talents allow him to do. It is impossible for everyone to do the same thing, for we do not all possess the same talents. Christian workers and managers must use reason to decide what should be done. As a Christian, your primary purpose is to work in a way that will please Christ and bring glory to God. With this in mind, you can determine your abilities and decide on the limits of your work.

*Reliability must characterize our working commitments* (v. 7). The Christian is obligated to be a reliable worker. Within every work crew, some members have a reputation for being dependable. The Christian must be part of this group. Some managers are known for being wise, fair, and understanding. The Christian manager should be among them.

*Reward will be given in keeping with our working conduct* (v. 8). The Christian works hard, strives diligently, shows sincerity, and personifies integrity in word and deed because he knows that Christ is watching. The way one conducts business, makes contracts, and treats those around him is the way he will be judged. The

Christian must not forfeit heaven's eternity for a business deal that takes advantage of others. Everyone—boss or hourly worker, manager or crew member, director or laborer—will receive from God "whatever" he has given in work.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Having answered the call to leave the darkness and live in the light, you must separate yourself and live differently than those in the world live. When you obeyed the gospel, you were set aside as God's special possession. Although your distinction is clear in worship and service to others, it is especially visible in the way you work.

You are now able to let your light shine at the working place. Your supervisors or your employees will be amazed at how much you have changed. Christianity gives your day-to-day job a completely different purpose. Make sure you are the kind of employer or employee that God approves. You want to receive the blessings of God in judgment because you have followed the Christian work ethic. Do not lose your focus as you work, allowing Satan to lead you to strive for success because of pride. How terrible it will be on Judgment Day for some to hear "Depart!" because they dishonored God at work. Let us repent of wrong work ethics and be governed by the principles of Ephesians 6:5–9.

John L. Kachelman, Jr.

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## Making the Most of Time

In Ephesians 5:16 Paul spoke of "making the most of your time. . . ." The KJV uses the term "redeeming." Paul was talking about buying opportunities, making the best use of your time. "I don't have enough time to do that," we often say. The fact is that all of us have exactly the same amount of time in a day. It is what we do with our time that makes the difference. If we do not discipline ourselves to use our time wisely, we will use it unwisely. Proper management of time does not just happen. We must make plans and set priorities for utilizing our time. Benjamin Franklin said, "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of." Using our time the best that we can is part of maturing in Christ.

Jay Lockhart