

## **The Personal Work of Being an Employee**

### **10-29-17 AM**

As we come to understand the meaning of the term “personal work” or “the Lord’s work”, we see in Scripture that it is most aptly applied to the work we do every day. It is being parents, being obedient children, being submissive wives and loving husbands. Many are surprised to find out that one of the most discussed topics of the New Testament is the personal work of being an employee.

Of course, that word is not used in the New Testament. Instead, the passages that speak to those who work address them as servants, bond servants and slaves. Yet the meaning of these words speaks to anyone who works for someone else. They include Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:22, 1 Peter 2:18-20, and Titus 2:9-10. These parallel passages contain a list of expectations a Christian has in serving in his profession/vocation. A Christian is to be obedient (from the heart), not verbally insolent, not taking what is not yours, and genuine service with goodwill. They can all be summarized by the following: “*working as though it is for the Lord*”. This is why we call our lives in Christ “the Lord’s Work”.

There are many examples in the Bible of this mindset.

First of all consider Joseph, Jacob’s second to youngest son. In Genesis 39-41 we read about his being sold into slavery. He worked diligently for his master, even though it resulted in being cast into prison. Then in prison he labored again with the same diligence. Ultimately, this led to his being raised up to the position of the prime minister of Egypt.

Another example is that of Zacchaeus in Luke 19. As a tax collector he was working in a disreputable field full of many dishonest laborers. In response to this he worked to maintain his reputation by good works (he gave half of his goods to the poor). As well, none could accuse him of dishonesty, as he was diligent to receive honest incomes.

We need to consider that Christian is to have Christ’s Work Ethic. We need to see that our labor is to Christ, and not simply for the money it produces. In fact, we need to be careful that we do not have two masters. We work so that God will reward us (Matthew 6:1). We need to trust His promises; He is the ultimate CEO of any work we do.

As well, we need to work heartily. This means we need to be putting our heart into our work. In Ecclesiastes 2:19-26 Solomon pointed out that working for wages is meaningless; it will only end up with those who did not work for it. Instead, he saw that joy could be found in life if we would find joy in our labor. Set your heart to enjoy your labor.

All of these things are very different from the world’s view of work. This is how the world will know us; we will work as though for the Lord, and they will wonder. They will want to know where the joy we have comes from, and we can be ready with an answer: we labor for Christ.