

## **Being Wise in Our Career Choices**

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Christians are obligated to work for a living; Scriptures teach this in places such as 2 Thessalonians 3. We also are obligated to work in a way that glorifies Christ, as seen in Colossians 4 and Ephesians 6. Careers enable us to fulfill spiritual obligations such as family obligations (1 Timothy 5:4), participation in the work of the church collection (1 Corinthians 16:2), and the obligation to be charitable to all (1 Timothy 6:18).

One of the great blessings we have is to be able to choose the profession or work we enter in life. We can choose anything we desire; to be a doctor, a farmer, a lawyer, a mechanic. In the New Testament we see Christian men and women who were soldiers (Acts 10), politicians (Romans 16:23), fishermen (Luke 5), business owners (Acts 16), jailers (Acts 16), philosopher teachers (Acts 17), and doctors (Colossians 4) just to name a few.

However, there are dangers we must be aware of in choosing our careers. As Christians we are to be committed to a local congregation. Some jobs can take us away from that obligation weeks or months at a time. Other jobs require us to move often or to places where there are no Christians with whom we can gather. Our service is to God first; “you were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men” (1 Corinthians 7:23).

Jobs are also places where sinful behavior can be rooted. Many different jobs offer social interactions where drinking is common place. Inappropriate socializing is also a temptation in the workplace. Some jobs require employees to entertain clients in inappropriate places. Sometimes we are asked to do things that are sinful for our work. As the apostles said, “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29).

Another danger the work place can have is the competing sense of comradery or fellowship some jobs offer. Some professions have a sense of “brotherhood”; this is not a bad thing of itself. However, sometimes we become more attached to that brotherhood than to our true brotherhood. Don’t find yourself bound to a group-think as we see in Acts 15:5 and the Pharisee brethren.

Yet perhaps the most dangerous thing about a vocation is the reason we work: money. We cannot live without money, nor can we fulfill many of our spiritual obligations. Yet money has an inherent danger we must always be aware of (1 Timothy 6:6-11). It is far too easy to be deceived by money (Mark 4:19), and for it to subtly take control of our lives.

One of the biggest mistakes Christians make with work is not looking ahead to the consequences of our decisions. We need to think more about what our labors will cost us rather than what they will pay us. Will this make me miss meeting with brethren? Will this prevent me from serving the church in roles like being a teacher? Consider Lot’s business decision in Genesis 13:8-11. He saw only the profit in his choice of land, not the unintended consequences. Ultimately, in Genesis 19:17-25 he lost much of his family, his home, and his wealth. We must be careful in our choices in life occupations; wrong choices in career can have devastating and eternal consequences.

We can avoid many of these dangers simply by being prepared ahead of time for them. We can make it clear to our supervisors that there are some things we cannot do, or some days we cannot work. We can find alternative actions that accomplish our goals without compromising our principles. Sometimes it will simply be necessary to turn down opportunities or promotions because they may cause a conflict with our spiritual growth.