

## **Work Unto The Lord**

Colossians 3:22-4:1

August 4-5, 2007

### **Introduction**

1. Authority. We want it, but we find it hard to submit to it!

### **ILLUS – Young Adam’s desire for authority over his big sister**

2. Paul’s letter to the church at Colossae emphasizes the fact that Jesus Christ is without peer, superior in His person and in His redemptive work at Calvary.
3. The logical application of this truth is that Jesus Christ has complete authority over our lives. He set us free from slavery to sin so that we can live for Him, following His ways.
4. Now we come to a section in this letter where Paul applies the reality of this truth to every aspect of a believer’s life; marriage, family, and now work.
5. How should Christians serve their employers? How should Christian employers treat their employees?

### ***READ Colossians 3:22-4:1***

#### **I. Employees, Obey Your Employers (22-25)**

##### **A. Obey in all things (22a)**

1. Survey of slavery in Paul’s day
  - a. Approximately 60 million slaves
  - b. By definition slaves were:
    1. Doulos – obedient to another’s will
    2. Completely under master’s authority
    3. Couldn’t exercise their own free will
    4. Families belonged to their master
    5. Many churches had slaves and masters, now fellow Christians (Philemon and Onesimus)

**APPL – Though many of us feel like enslaved to our work, in reality it is impossible for us to relate to this kind of existence. Yet, the principles listed here can be applied to our work place and life in general.**

2. Measure of obedience – all things (22a)
  - a. “Obey” is a command meaning “to listen”
  - b. **All** means all
  - c. Assumption: God honoring things!

**ILLUS – A family housekeeper’s response to a U.S. President**

**Titus 2:9-10, “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”**

**Daniel 6:1-5**

**APPL – Christians should have a testimony in the workplace as employees who get the job done, whether the task is little or large**

##### **B. Obey from the heart (22b-23)**

1. Notice the manner of service which reveals the heart
  - a. *No eye service* (negative): “The boss is here”  
- Defined as all actions which originate from a dishonest heart/attitude

**ILLUS – Confession of a former Levitz employee**

**ILLUS – An employee bulletin board instruction**

**ILLUS – A sign in a San Francisco wholesale florist shop**

- b. *Not a man pleaser* (negative): An employee who seeks to please man before God (Serve to be seen)

**Proverbs 29:25, “The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.”**

- c. *Sincerity of heart* (positive): Free from pretense and hypocrisy, no ulterior motive, a pure heart (Just for the promotion/raise)

**ILLUS – Eddie Haskell syndrome**

- d. *Fearing the Lord* (positive): Revere God for He knows what is and is not done in secret

**Psalm 139:7-10**, “Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Thy hand will lead me, and Thy right hand will lay hold of me.”

2. “Whatever you do, labor at it” (Literally)
  - a. *Heartily* means “from the soul” (A command)
  - b. Give your best, give an honest day’s work
  - c. You are working for the Lord, not man!

**APPL** – *The Problem: To sustain this we need a heart change...*

**Quote**, A businessman once asked his Bible study group, “**How can you tell if you have a servant attitude?**” “**By the way you react when you are treated like one,**” was the reply.

- *You deserve better than this/not my job description*

**Mark 10:43-45**, “but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- *You never get recognized*

**Matthew 6:1**, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”

- *You are going nowhere, it’s a dead end job*

**Proverbs 3:5-6**, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

- *What would they do without you?*
- *You’re the only believer in this forsaken place (Good!)*

**Matthew 28:19-20**, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

- *My boss has a demon!*

**1 Peter 2:18**, “Slaves, be subject to your masters with all reverence, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are perverse.” (NET Bible)

- *My boss is a believer so he will understand...*

**1 Timothy 6:2**, “And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.”

### **C. Your Master is watching (24-25)**

1. The One you are ultimately serving is just
2. Great perks and benefits for the faithful
3. Loss of eternal rewards for those who are unfaithful

**ILLUS** – Making shoes the right way

**Matthew 25:20-21**, “And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’”

## **II. Employers, Treat Your Employees Well (1)**

### **A. Be just**

1. In Paul’s day, masters had the power of life or death
  - a. Little accountability – “lord it over people”
  - b. Treated slaves like property with little concern for their welfare
  - c. Masters were only concerned about profit!

**APPL – Stories about corrupt corporate executives occur often. Authority is frequently abused. This must not be true for Christians in positions of authority**

2. Authority is given by God and it is a sacred trust which opens opportunities to impact people for Christ

**ILLUS – Former pastor turned corporate executive’s testimony**

3. You set the standard

**Proverbs 29:12, “If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, all his ministers become wicked.”**

4. Therefore, be just
  - a. This is a present tense command
  - b. It means to act rightly and righteously towards your employees
  - c. Bless, don’t take advantage of employees
  - d. Don’t withhold wages earned and pay bills

**James 5:4, “Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”**

- e. Don’t treat them harshly or threaten

**Proverbs 28:16, “A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.”**

### **B. Be fair**

1. Each person has value, even after the Fall
2. So, don’t show favoritism, partiality, or nepotism

**Romans 2:11, “For there is no partiality with God.”**

3. Partiality will cause others to fall

**Proverbs 28:21, “To show partiality is not good, because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.”**

### **C. Your Master is watching**

**Ephesians 6:9, “And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”**

1. God has raised you up, He can bring you down
2. Don’t “lord it over” your employees
3. Be a servant leader:
  - a. Commit your business to the Lord
  - b. Seek God for wisdom/vision
  - c. Pray for those under your covering
  - d. Set a godly example of diligence & grace
  - e. Be humble

### **Conclusion**

**Employees, are you working unto the Lord?**

**Employers, are you leading those under your covering in a way that is consistent with the character and ways of our Lord?**