

2024 BIBLE STUDY SERIES
THEME: “GET YOUR HOPES UP!”

November 20, 2024

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN LIVING
“Christian Conduct in the Workplace”
Colossians 3:22-24

Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Scripture Reference
- Outline
- Introduction
- Background And Context
- Exploring The Text
- Check For Understanding

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

A. Describe an employment situation where you were subject to unpleasant working conditions and briefly explain how you managed it.

B. Describe a time when you were asked by an employer to do something that was not illegal but may have been unethical based on your Christian beliefs and how you responded.

Important Emphasis

“Spiritual Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us.” Richard Foster

Four Pillars are present in our main text

Our Actions- What we do

Our Applying- How we do it

Our Aim- Who are we doing it for

Our Avoiding- Why we do what we do (the motivation should not be for the praises of men)

Paul is very intentional here in his chronology of dealing with Christ and Conduct. He starts with the Family Conduct and then he moves to Field Conduct which is our interaction with those who are in society (preferably in the scope of this lesson the workplace)

The demand is for an inside job, and only God can work from the inside. Righteousness is a gift of God that is mentioned 35 times in this book.

In the Cost of Discipleship Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes it clear that grace is free, but it is not cheap. The grace of God is unearned and unearnable but if we ever expect to grow in grace, we must pay the price of a consciously chosen course of action which involves both individual and group life. Spiritual growth is the purpose of disciplines.

Brief Synopsis of the Community

Paul must establish his apostolic authority among the community. The focus is in three areas faith, love and hope. The hope is directed upward while the world's hope is faced downward. Where is this hope found it is in the gospel. This allows believers to bear fruit on the inside and on the outside.

Let us be mindful of the List of immorality (Colossians 1:5-9) and the list of morality (Colossians 1:12) among the Colossae Community.

Walk In Forgiveness Colossians 1:13 (Forgiveness of Christ)

Walk in Peace Colossians 1:15 (Peace of Christ)

Walk in the Word Colossians 1:16 (Word of Christ)

The community of Colossae was a blend of people. Native Phrygians had joined with Greek and Syrian settlers.

The industry of the land was wealthy in wool but during the time of the authorship by the apostle Paul this had greatly declined.

From a religious perspective, the religion was syncretistic there were many deities that were worshiped, and cults were flourishing.

“We must always remember that the path does not produce the change; it only places us where the change can occur.”

Seeking the things above Col 3:1

Setting of your mind Col 3: 2

Submitting unto Christ Col 3:3

Warning of Paul

There were issues with philosophical thinking among the community. There were heretical instructs which included erroneous teaching, offering salvation through knowledge of spiritual powers and observance of religious practice. There were some scholars that believe there was an early detection of Gnosticism.

However, it is refreshing that Paul complements and stresses the firmness of his readers faith.

The capital of the thematic thrust of Colossians is in Colossians 2:11-15 Christus Victor this is Christ defeat of the cosmic powers at his death. The second is Colossians 3:17.

KEY TERMS

Attitude
External Service
Excellence
Fearing the Lord
Heart
Heartily
Honestly
Inheritance
Integrity
The Lord Christ

Masters
Men-pleasers
Merely
Moral
Reward
Serve
Sincerity
Slaves
Whatever
Work

Scripture Reference (Colossians 3:22-24 NASB 1995)

²² Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Outline

- I. Work honestly as for the Lord
 - A. Submissively
 - B. Sincerely
 - C. Seriously
- II. Work heartily as for the Lord
 - A. Energetically
 - B. Emphatically
 - C. Enthusiastically
- III. Work hopefully as for the Lord
 - A. Expectantly
 - B. Excitedly
 - C. Exuberantly

INTRODUCTION

Colossians 3:22-24 primarily emphasizes the theme of working diligently and faithfully in all aspects of life, not just for human masters but ultimately for God, regardless of one's social status, as every action should be done with a sincere heart, motivated by the knowledge that the true reward comes from serving the Lord Christ.

Work is God ordained. “In the beginning...” the world and mankind were created through God’s work (**Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1**), and then God put man to work as He created us to do (**Genesis 2:15**). Because of sin, man’s work became a struggle (**Genesis 3:17-19**). God redeemed man to do good works once again (**Ephesians 2:10**).

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Letter to the Colossians, attributed to the Apostle Paul, was directed to Christian believers in Colossae, Asia Minor. It is one of the Prison Letters, linked to Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. Colossians shares thematic and structural similarities with Ephesians and references Philemon through Onesimus (Philemon’s slave) in Colossians 4:9.

Paul followed a standard form of salutation, _____, and _____ in the first part of the letter. It is perhaps longer than some of his other letters because Paul was not personally acquainted with the people of Colosse. The salutation carried greetings from both Paul and Timothy. Words of high commendation and thanksgiving follow for the well-being and spiritual health of the Christian community at Colosse.

Paul’s opening words are followed by his prayer for _____ and _____, focusing on spiritual blessings for the Colossian church in every aspect of their lives and relationships. He prayed for spiritual insight, genuine obedience, and moral excellence, countering false teaching (early signs of Gnosticism) that emphasized special insight and superior spirituality. The prayer aimed to "fill" them "with the knowledge of his [God’s] will," emphasizing being fully equipped and controlled by God's will, leading to obedience and moral excellence in every aspect of their relationships and lives—in the home, the community, the church, and in their work.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

I. Work honestly as for the Lord

²² Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

A. Work **submissively**

Christians are to put on the mind of Christ (**Philippians 2:5**). Jesus had a _____. This is a powerful statement that calls for believers to imitate the mindset of Jesus Christ,

who is the ultimate example of humility, selflessness, and love. He declared that he came to _____ and not to be served (**Mark 10:45**). Also see **Ephesians 6:5**.

B. Work **sincerely**

This verse addresses "slaves" (interpreted in modern terms as employees or workers) and instructs them to obey their earthly masters with _____, not just when being watched, because their true service is to God. Also see **Ephesians 6:6**.

Do everything without complaining or arguing. Then you will be innocent and without any wrong. You will be God's children without fault. But you are living with crooked and mean people all around you, among whom you shine like stars in the dark world.

C. Work **seriously**

Paul is urging the Colossians to take their new life seriously and to stand strong in the face of adversity. They are to do their work in fear (awe) of the Lord as if they were working directly for Him. Paul called the Colossians to willingly work and serve with _____ in all circumstances—even when the master or boss isn't looking! God will grant you the strength, wisdom and patience to perform your tasks with excellence and integrity.

Some examples of working with integrity:

- **Be honest:** Always tell the truth and ask others to do the same.
- **Be accountable:** Accept responsibility for your actions and the consequences they have.
- **Be respectful:** Treat everyone with dignity and equality and communicate professionally.
- **Be trustworthy:** Act with honesty, reliability, and loyalty.
- **Be prepared:** Come to work ready to tackle your responsibilities.
- **Be productive:** Complete your work to the desired quality and on time.
- **Be a good communicator:** Be transparent, acknowledge the needs of others, and show empathy.
- **Support your organization's values:** Support the values of the organization you work for.
- **Acknowledge others:** Acknowledge your colleagues when they do good work.
- **Don't gossip:** Don't share confidential information with others.
- **Help others:** Help others if you can, even if they are strangers'

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Paul open his Letter to the Colossians? (Background and Context)

thanksgiving, and prayer

2. What are some of the things that Paul prayed for in the opening of the Letter to the Colossians? (Background and Context)

- *Knowledge*
- *Godly conduct*
- *Spiritual blessings*
- *Spiritual insight*
- *Genuine obedience*
- *Moral excellence*
- *Countering false teaching*

3. How did Paul want the Colossian Church to interact with their earthly masters? (Colossians 3:22)

obey those who are your masters on earth

EXPLORING THE TEXT

II. Work heartily as for the Lord

²³ *Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,...*

In Colossians 3, verse 23, the apostle Paul says, “whatever you do, do your work heartily, as working for the Lord.” Those who take this biblical directive seriously will seek the respect of their colleagues for the quality and integrity of their work. This means having a track record of saying what we mean and doing what we say, following through on commitments every time, whether formal or informal, and being transparent and fair-minded.

A. Enthusiastically

“*Heartily*” is a term used in Scripture to describe actions done with sincerity, enthusiasm, and full commitment, particularly in relation to serving God. (*ek psychés*) “out of the soul “Gr from the soul.”,”

“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord [who sees the heart

and rewards “whatsoever good thing a man does”] and not unto men” (however they, your masters according to the flesh, may regard it). (1 Corinthians 15:58; and Ephesians 6:7.

B. Energetically

Having a positive attitude takes the limits off what God can do in and through us, it also helps us see our circumstances from God’s perspective and enables us to work energetically. (Ephesians 4:23; Philippians 4:13)

A bad _____ drains our energy. A bad attitude will determine who chooses to come around us. It determines the way we view ourselves and others. Believers in Christ are born again. They are new creatures in God’s creation who should model their lives after Christ.

C. Emphatically

Paul’s words remind us that regardless of our station in life, God is the one ultimately judging all we do, so all of our service is really for Him. From the most mistreated slave to the highest-paid leader, every person is called to work for God’s honor. We do not work “for men” or simply earthly goals, but to glorify our heavenly Father and Master. We must determine to set our mind to _____ take captive any negative thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:5)

CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

4. How did Paul counsel the Colossians to do their work? (Colossians 3:23)

Heartily

5. What Greek phrase describes the term *heartily*?

“out of the soul”

6. What can a bad attitude do to your ability to be effective on your job?

A bad attitude drains our energy

7. What must you do to emphatically work as for the Lord?

Take every thought captive

EXPLORE THE TEXT

III. Work hopefully as for the Lord

²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

The reward of the inheritance—Here [on earth], ye have neither lands nor property; ye are servants or slaves; be not discouraged, ye have an inheritance in store; be faithful unto God and to your employers, and Christ will give you a heavenly inheritance. (**Psalm 90:17**)

A. Expectantly

God is faithful. He will do what He says He will do. Even when we fall short and are unfaithful to God, He still comes through for His children. We can expect God to answer when we pray for our places of work, our colleague, our superiors, and every level of people in the company. (**Deuteronomy 28:12**)

B. Excitedly

To keep the excitement burning when we are required to do mundane jobs or thankless jobs, we need to tap into the indwelling Holy Spirit. For a fire to be kept lit, it needs oxygen and fuel. In the same way, for our spiritual lives to remain alight, we need the breath of the _____ and the regular addition of fuel in the form of _____. (**Romans 12:11-12**)

C. Exuberantly

Serve with _____: Your attitude should be one of gladness and excitement when serving God.

Focus on _____, not _____: Your primary motivation should be to please God, not to impress others.

Our joy lies in the hope to come. In the meantime, use your skills! Search for a job that grows, challenges, and opens doors for you! But do not neglect to work for what lasts. Legacy fades and names are eventually forgotten but life in Christ is eternal. Our hope isn't in worldly successes, it's in the return of Christ. Day by day continue to look upon him and you will find everything a job can't supply. There you will find hope, security, fulfillment, life, and incredible joy.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

8. What can we expect if we work diligently for the Lord? (Colossians 3:24)

reward of the inheritance

9. What gives us confidence that we will actually receive the reward of inheritance?

God's faithfulness.

10. What will keep us excited as we work for the Lord?

The breath of the Spirit and faithful prayer

Life Application

- How can we maintain a positive attitude and work diligently even when our tasks seem mundane or repetitive, knowing that we are ultimately serving God?
- What are some practical ways to remind yourself that the work you do is ultimately done for the Lord, not just for your earthly employer?

Resources:

Adam Clarke's Commentary.

“Colossians, Letter to the.” In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*.

Holman Concise Bible Commentary.

Keller, Timothy. “Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work.”