

Call to Obedience #124/ #520
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.joyfulabiding.com

Principles of the Christian Work Ethic

Reimar A.C. Schultze

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 7:12). This verse is often referred to as the Golden Rule. It could also be called the foundation of the Christian work ethic.

The Bible is a wonderful book, and it contains the work ethic for the working man and woman. If you are a Christian, you are not to act like the non-Christians at your workplace and you are not to copy the ways that they work. Christians should be governed by the law of God and by His voice even at their places of work. You have a distinct Christian work ethic to take with you to your workplace. You need to meet with God every morning in prayer and then, because of God's grace given to you, your actions and your attitudes at the workplace will reflect that you have been with God.

If others in your company go on strike, it does not mean that you should also go on strike. Being a Christian, you have a work ethic to consider. If and when others complain, you should not complain. A Christian should never take a sick leave day unless he is sick. If others take sick leave when they are not really sick, you should continue to go to work unless you are sick. Being a Christian, you will not abuse the privileges that your employer provides. A Christian will not lie. A Christian will not take advantage of the company he works for. A Christian will not steal. You will not take anything from your workplace that does not belong to you: not a machine part, not a tool, not a pencil, not a notepad—unless you have permission to do so or you are required to do so.

If you are a Christian, you will be punctual. You will not create any anxiety in your boss which will cause him to wonder whether you are going to show up for work or not. Because you are a Christian, you will not stretch your coffee break or your lunch break another five or ten minutes. You will not use the telephone at work for personal calls unless it is an emergency or unless you have permission to do so. Because you are a Christian, you will be working and not loafing when you are at your workplace. You will diligently put yourself into the assignment that has been given to you and you will go the second and third mile when appropriate. Ask God each day to give you wisdom and the energy to

work as unto the Lord because the Bible commands: *In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground...* (Gen. 3:19).

Working diligently and sometimes to the point of sweating is the first principle of the Christian work ethic. Man was not made to be a loafer. Men and women who loaf on their jobs violate natural and spiritual laws, and they will come apart within themselves. They will not have the blessing of God. When man no longer works or he no longer has clear-cut responsibilities that advance the common good, he loses his dignity, his self-esteem, his self-worth and his inner strength. He not only becomes a burden to society, but he becomes a burden to himself. He will suddenly discover that he does not know what is wrong with himself and why he is not happy. He will be miserable. His problem is that he is violating God's law requiring him to work diligently and sometimes in the sweat of his brow.

So dear ones, you must work. If you are on disability, give yourself to doing something that can help others in your community. Give yourself to some worthy cause and do not allow your personal pleasures, your family affairs or your grandchildren to get in the way. Even though you may be a volunteer worker and do not receive any pay for the work you do, treat that work as if your life depends on it. It is a tragedy that so many retired people allow their lives to circle around socializing with their relatives or grandchildren, or around their own whims and wishes. This is not God's plan and purpose for you as a Christian. If you are not responsible to anyone and you can do whatever pleases you from morning to night, day after day, you will begin to disintegrate within yourself spiritually and emotionally. As a Christian, you can give yourself to the work of the church, to the work of prayer, to the work of teaching or encouraging others. Ask God to show you how you can be a helper and then do it.

The second principle of the Christian work ethic comes from the words: *till you return to the ground*. This does not mean that you are only to work until you retire or until you are sixty-five, but it means that you are to work until the end of your life. Because of this admonition, I have a great concern with people retiring at forty-five, fifty-five or sixty-five. Many of these people then begin to live a life of loafing during the rest of their lives. This type of lifestyle does not fit the Christian work ethic. You may say to yourself: "Well, I have worked hard all those years. I have earned my retirement." But you need to first consider that you may have not worked nearly as hard as your parents may have worked. And secondly, even if you have, you are still supposed to work hard

until *you return to the ground* because that is what the Bible says. Of course, your pace may have to slow down as you get older. You will not have the same strength that you had when you were younger. Some of you may have debilitating physical ailments. Some of you may have to retire when your employer makes you retire, but that does not mean that you have liberty to waste the rest of your life and only do what your Self wants to do. God is looking for thousands of men and women who will pray faithfully each day for revival. As a retired Christian, will your work that you are doing now be pleasing to God and Jesus on Judgment Day?

The Golden Rule: *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...* (Matt. 7:12), describes the third principle of the Christian work ethic. You should do your work for others as you would like for them to do their work for you. I have been told that the five most spoken words at the work place are the following: “This is not my job.” And I would say because Americans are often saying these words, there are now many foreigners moving into the United States and taking those jobs. They are buying up land, buildings, stocks and bonds, and they are even building their factories in or near many small towns and cities. As an employer, foreman or supervisor, you may have asked one of your employees to do something and they have answered you by saying: “This is not my job; I wasn’t hired for this; I am not getting paid to do this.” If you are an employee, do everything the boss tells you to do with a smile as long as it is moral and never, never say “This is not my job.”

Following is the fourth principle of the Christian work ethic is: *...be content with your wages* (Luke 3:14). This is what John the Baptist said to the Roman soldiers. Apparently, the soldiers had been striking or they had been murmuring about their pay and therefore John told them to repent. “Repent of what?” was the question. The answer was that they needed to repent of having a murmuring, striking or complaining spirit because they were not embracing: *...be content with your wages*. The Apostle Paul said a similar thing when he said, *...be content with such things as you have...* (Heb. 13:5). Here is the point: remember that as a Christian, you do not really work for your employer, factory, hospital, lawyer or other entity. You are working for God. God is your boss. You are working in your workplace, first and foremost, for the glory of God! God is the one who made you. God is the one who has given you the job, and He is the one who will give you a raise when He thinks it is called for. In the meantime, remember: *Now godliness with contentment is great gain* (1 Tim. 6:6). That means that you are gaining ground for God’s kingdom with the help of the Holy Spirit as you are working.

The fifth principle of the Christian work ethic is: *Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest..* (Ex. 23:12) even as God rested; *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy* (Ex. 20:8); and *Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy...* (Deut. 5:12). It is nearly impossible for you to build a strong Christian home when you, as the father or mother, are working on Sundays. Firemen, policeman, hospital personnel and ministers need to work on Sundays, but there is no need for Christians with other types of employment to work on Sundays. Six days of work has been the norm for centuries. You must be careful that all of your days belong to God.

Certainly, there are other aspects of the Christian work ethic, but above are some starters for you to consider. Pray that your work will glorify God and your attitude towards your work will be pleasing to Jesus.

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