

***HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN AT WORK***

**Titus 2:9-10**

**By Andy Manning**

**June 27, 2017**

The title of this sermon is “How to be a Christian at Work.”

I am what some call a “Bi-vocational Pastor.”

That’s just a fancy word that means that being a pastor is not my only job; I also have a part-time job for a major corporation.

And being bi-vocational is not my dream. It’s not something that I want to do forever. It’s something that I’m doing right now so that our church is better off financially, but my goal is eventually to be full-time as your pastor again.

But being bi-vocational is not all that bad because it helps me to better relate to what you have to experience at work.

Most pastors sort of live in a Christian bubble; they are surrounded by church-people who act, talk, and think just like them almost all the time.

But not me. Because I have a second job, a job outside the church, I can relate to what you have to experience at work.

I understand the challenge

of trying to please your boss, and trying to satisfy the customer, and at the same trying to please Christ above all.

I understand the challenge of getting along with difficult coworkers on the one hand, and glorifying Christ on the other hand.

I understand the challenge of trying to succeed professionally, and at the same time trying to succeed in your spiritual and family life.

I know the challenge of working in an unethical environment, with an unreasonable boss, with bullying coworkers.

I understand the challenge of being surrounded by people who use offensive language and who live in total rebellion to God. I understand.

And so today, as we talk about how to be a Christian at work, I can speak from experience. I'm right there with you in the trenches. I understand the challenges.

How do we live as a Christians at work? How does God want us to live at work? That's the question before us.

Turn with me to Titus 2:9-10 (CSB 2017).

9 Slaves are to submit to their masters in everything, and to be well-pleasing, not talking back 10 or stealing, but demonstrating utter faithfulness, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in everything.

Now let's get a couple of obvious points and questions out of the way.

**First of all, we are not slaves, we are employees.**

Our bosses are not our masters, they are our managers.

But the commands given to slaves and masters are applicable to employees and managers.

Similar to slaves, the role of an employee is to do the work that manager tells him to do.

And so the Bible passages about masters and slaves are very instructive about how to be a Christian at work.

**A second obvious question is does the Bible condone slavery?**

The **first** thing to point out is that God did not create the institution of slavery.

God created the institutions of marriage, the family, the church, and the civil government. God created work.

But God did not create the institution of slavery.

Man created slavery.

And rather than condemning slavery altogether, I believe the Bible does something better.

The Bible gives regulations and instructions for how masters and slaves are to relate to one another.

Masters are to be just and fair and merciful.

Slaves are to be obedient and respectful and loyal.

It also gives us many ethical and moral instructions about how people are to be treated,

such as the idea that all men are created in the image of God and are therefore equal,

the command to love your neighbor as yourself,

and the commandments to avoid adultery, and stealing, and murder, etc.

So if one were to be a slave owner and simultaneously live according to Scripture, that kind of slavery wouldn't look anything like the kind of slavery that over 640,000 American soldiers gave their lives to abolish.

In other words, the Bible does not altogether condemn slavery, but it does provide regulations and instructions that would make slavery much more humane.

Now let's talk about slavery in the first century A.D., when the book of Titus was written.

Paul wrote this letter to a young pastor named Titus, who was responsible for several churches on the island of Crete.

And in this particular passage Paul is giving Titus instructions for how Christian slaves should behave.

Why? Because slavery was a huge part of the world at that time. During the first century, 50% of the population in the Roman Empire were slaves. So that means that many of the first Christians were slaves.

So several of Paul's letters included specific instructions not merely for husbands, wives, and children, but also for slaves and masters.

Just to give you an idea of what it was like to be a slave back then, a slave was the legal property of the master.

The *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* says that slaves were "part of the Roman social and economic order. They were commonly mistreated and sometimes treated as subhuman."

The *MacArthur Study Bible* says that slaves "often were accorded little more dignity or care than domestic animals."

Commenting on Ephesians 6:5, the **MacArthur Study Bible** says, "Slaves in both Greek and Roman culture had no rights legally and were treated as commodities. There was much abuse and seldom good treatment of slaves."

So if you think you've got it bad at your job, try to image the situation that many of these Christian slaves were in during the first century.

At least you have legal rights. Your boss can't whip you, or torture you, or kill you, or rape you. Your boss can't make you do anything he wants. He can't force you to work non-stop. You can quit. You can negotiate for better benefits.

In other words, if God expected Christian slaves to be obedient, and submissive, and respectful, and to do quality work, then we have no excuse.

Take a look at the text again.

First, Paul describes how Christian slaves should behave: Be submissive, be well-pleasing, don't talk back, don't steal, be faithful;

and then Paul gives the ultimate motivation for behaving like that. "So that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in everything."

What does it mean to adorn something? It means to make something look more attractive.

A woman adorns herself when she puts on makeup and jewelry and accessories.

A man adorns his vehicle when he washes it, and tints the windows, and gets custom wheels, and custom tires, and axle extensions, and a special

muffler, a lift kit. To adorn something is to make something look more attractive.

So Paul is telling the slaves to behave in a certain manner in order to adorn something – in order to make something look more attractive.

What? “The teaching of God our Savior.” In other words, the Christian religion, or Christianity.

Paul was telling slaves that they needed to behave in a way that would make the Christian religion more attractive.

And then notice the word “everything” at the end of verse 10. Paul was saying that just in case he left something out, just in case he didn’t mention some aspect of the slave/master, employee/employer relationship, then just remember to make the Christian faith more attractive in everything you do at work.

So here’s the big idea of this passage for us. **The ultimate purpose of your life at work is to attract others to Christ in everything that you do.**

In other words, your ultimate purpose at work is to attract others to Jesus in everything you do.

Your highest priority is **not** to make sure you are treated fairly. It’s not to rise up the ladder. It’s not to earn as much money as possible. It’s not the actual work. Your ultimate purpose is to attract others to Christ in everything you do.

In other words, in everything you do at work, you want to attract people to Christ.

When your boss sees what a great employee you are, maybe he will say, “Susie’s a great employee! And Susie’s a Christian. I need to hire more Christians. And maybe I need to go to Susie’s church and learn more about Christianity, because it sure produces outstanding employees.”

And then Paul gives us five specific ways to do that.

## 5 Ways to Attract Your Coworkers to Christ

1. Submit to your boss.
2. Be well-pleasing to your boss.
3. Don't talk back to your boss.
4. Don't steal.
5. Be completely faithful.

Let's look at each of these in more detail.

### 1. Submit to your boss.

The Greek word for "submit" is *hypotassō*.

The NKJV uses the word "obey."

**Ephesians 6:5** says, "Slaves, obey (Gk. *hypakouō*) your human masters...."

**Colossians 3:22** says, "Slaves, obey (Gk. *hypakouō*) your human masters...."

And **1 Peter 2:18** says, "Household slaves, submit (*hypotassō*) to your masters...."

It means to obey, or to follow their orders.

The first way to attract your coworkers is to be obedient to your boss. To those who are over you in authority, obey them. Submit to their leadership.

This doesn't mean that you can't ask questions. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't offer advice if you have a good idea. This simply means that you need to do what your boss tells you to do. Don't be rebellious, or insubordinate, or disobedient to your boss.

Is there ever a time when you shouldn't obey your boss? Yes. When your boss orders you to do something that goes against a clear teaching in the Bible, then

you are obligated to obey God rather than your boss. Other than that, when you are on the job, your boss is in charge, and you are called to be obedient to his or her leadership.

When is it hard to obey your boss?

When they order you to do a job that you hate doing.

When they order you to do something that you think is pointless.

When they order you to do something in a certain way, but you know a better, faster way of doing it.

When they order us to work with someone we don't like.

When they aren't watching.

When they order you to do something that is really hard. I could keep going.

There are many instances of when it is hard to submit to your boss.

But look at what the Bible says. **Titus 2:9** says, "Slaves are to submit to their masters *in everything.*"

In other words, unless you have a clear, Biblical reason to disobey, it's a sin to disobey your boss.

## **2. Be well-pleasing to your boss.**

The second way to attract your coworkers to Christ is to be well-pleasing to your boss. Try to be fully-pleasing to your boss.

Let me ask you something. At my job we do performance evaluations every year. If your boss evaluated you today, how would you do?



To be well-pleasing to your boss means that at any given time throughout the year, if your boss were to evaluate your performance, he would give you an excellent grade. A+.

What are some practical ways to be well-pleasing to your boss?

Let's start by looking at the other passages that have to deal with slaves and masters.

**Ephesians 6:6** has a couple of good insights about how to be well-pleasing to our bosses. "Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart."

First of all, "**don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers.**"

In other words, don't do just enough to keep yourself from being fired.

Don't do just enough to get by; or just enough to keep from getting fussed at.

Instead, "**do God's will from your heart.**"

In other words, don't settle for acceptable, but pursue excellence in your work. Don't settle for good enough; aim for outstanding; aim for awesome.

I like how **Colossians 3:22** puts it. "Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but **work wholeheartedly**, fearing the Lord."

Do your work with all your heart. Aim to do the best job you can do.

Look at **Colossians 3:23**. "Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people."

This is an amazing verse. “**Whatever you do**”:

Whatever job you are given; whatever task you are given; whatever responsibility, no matter how menial, mundane, or boring. “

**Do it from the heart.**” Do your very best.

**“As something done for the Lord.”**

In other words, do your work with all your heart, the best that you can, as if Jesus is your boss.

**3. Don’t talk back to your boss.**

This means that when your boss tells you to do something you respond by saying, “Yes sir.”

**Respond to your boss’s orders respectfully.**

What if you have a question?

Say, “Yes sir. Can I ask you a question?”

But when your boss gives you an order, don’t complain, don’t argue.

Remember **Philippians 2:14.** “Do everything without grumbling and arguing.”

What if your boss tells you to do something that you cannot do because it violates your Christian beliefs?

You can say something like this. “With all due respect, I want to help, but my Christian faith doesn’t allow me to do that. I’ll do anything you want, but I can’t do that.”

Not talking back to your boss really has more to do with just talking. It has to do with your attitude at work.

Look at **Ephesians 6:5**. “Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as you would Christ.”

What does it mean to obey with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart? It means to obey with a good attitude. Follow orders with a good attitude. Work with a good attitude. Be cheerful at work. Be enthusiastic at work.

What does your countenance look like when your boss tells you to do something?

What does your body language look like at work?

Does it look like you hate your job, and you hate your life? Does it look like you'd rather not be there? Does it look like you hate your coworkers and your boss?

That doesn't attract people to Jesus. Obey and do your job with a good attitude.

Remember that the Bible says in **Philippians 4:4** to “rejoice in the Lord always.”

We are to live our lives, wherever we are, no matter what we are going through, in a state of rejoice and celebration.

Why? Because even if we don't have anything else, we have Jesus! Even if we hate our jobs, we have Jesus, and that's something to celebrate all day long.

You have a moral and spiritual mandate to wipe that frown off your face at work and start celebrating Christ!

#### **4. Don't steal.**

This one is easy to understand, but I'm afraid many Christians don't obey. A fourth way to attract people to Christ at work is to not steal.

This is one of the Ten Commandments.

**Exodus 20:15** says, “Do not steal.”

**Ephesians 4:28** says, “Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.”

Let’s be honest. When you are at work it’s tempting to steal – from your boss, from your employees, from customers, from vendors, from coworkers.

What are some common ways that people commit theft at work?

People clock in and leave.

People sleep on the job. We used to call that scurving at a job I had years ago. People would find a hiding spot and take a nap when they were supposed to be working.

Some people have to write down how much time they worked, and so they write down more time than they actually put in.

People steal supplies and equipment.

People steal money.

People lie to customers.

My uncle Rodney owns an air conditioning repair company in Lafayette. And he told me about a competitor of his who steals from the customers. What he does is that whenever an AC breaks down, instead of fixing it, he tells the customer that they need to replace a very expensive part, or even buy a whole new unit. And so he makes a ton of money by stealing at work.

You won’t attract people to Christ by stealing at work.

## 5. Be completely faithful.

The last way to attract your coworkers to Christ is to be completely faithful.

That means trustworthy, reliable, loyal. Be a man of your word. Be the kind of man who does what he says he is going to do. Always be honest.

Let me ask you some questions about faithfulness?

- Do you do what you say you will do at work, or do you sometimes forget, and sometimes just choose to flake?
- Is your boss fully confident that you will remember to do what he asks of you, or does he always have to remind you?
- Would your boss trust you with a key to the building?
- Would your boss trust you with a key to the safe?
- Is your boss fully confident that you won't steal from the company?
- Is your boss fully confident that you will continue to do excellent work, even when he's not watching?
- Would your boss trust you with more responsibility?

Be faithful. Be reliable. Be trustworthy. Be honest. Be a man of your word.

## CONCLUSION

Your job is not just a place to make money. It's a place to serve God. And we don't just serve God at work by telling our coworkers about Christ and inviting them to church. We serve the Lord by being great employees. By having a good attitude. By being obedient. By being faithful and honest and trustworthy. And by doing excellent work at every task we are given.

And the ultimate goal is that people would be impressed with how Christians work. And they would be attracted to Christianity. And they would become Christians themselves.