

COLOSSIANS 3 : 2 2 - 4 : 1

DOING OUR WORK FOR JESUS

Paul has just finished explaining that acceptance of Christ not only secures our eternity, but empowers us to think and live life differently. He first gave the example of how our family relationships can be changed, and now he turns to our work-life.

I. **“Slaves, in all things obey... your masters on earth...” (v. 22).**

- A. **Our natural tendency is to rebel against authority.** Our flesh wants the “freedom” to do whatever, whenever. It has swift and convincing arguments and justifications for why it should have such “freedom.” But God knows that true freedom and strength is found in righteousness and humility.
- B. **God doesn’t like slavery in any form.** But spiritual slavery is worse than physical slavery. When a slave chooses to submit to his master, spiritually he has been freed. In the same way, although God doesn’t like the curse that we’re under that makes us all slaves to our jobs so that we can earn a living, if we work as unto Jesus, then spiritually we’ve been freed. Because we’re serving Jesus, we should be the most loyal, punctual, and diligent employees.
- C. **There are limits to what we should submit to.** We are called to submit to every authority and law, regardless of whether it is just or fair, as long as it does not require us to do something God has specifically told us not to do (Rom. 13:1, 1 Peter 2:13, Acts 5:29).

II. **“Do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men” (v. 23).**

- A. **Our natural tendency is to do things to please people.** At work, our tendency is to do just enough to keep our boss happy; at home, our spouse; at church, our leaders, etc. We tend to think this way because then we can justify giving less than wholehearted service. Because they’re human, they don’t deserve receiving the best we have to offer, and they have no right demand it, either.
- B. **Doing things to please people leads to selfishness and laziness.** These people whine about how difficult life is, how tough their boss is, and how busy and tired they are. But really they are lazy and they haven’t learned how to do their work for the Lord rather than for people. It’s impossible to work “heartily” when we’re just doing things to keep others happy. But when our heart is in our work, we are more productive and we have more fun.
- C. **Laziness robs us of who we are made to be and what we are called to do.** Instead of being a blessing, our lives become an annoying, exhausting drain on the people around us (Prov. 10:26).

III. **“From the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance” (v. 24).**

- A. **Beyond laziness is also the fear that if we don’t keep people happy, we won’t get from them what we need.** If we put our trust in people, we will always be stuck serving them instead of serving the Lord.
- B. **Choosing to be happy with what God gives is a small key that will unlock huge doors (Psalm 16:6).** So many problems in our life can be traced back to being dissatisfied with God’s provision (1 Tim. 6:10).

IV. **“He who does wrong will receive the consequences... and that without partiality” (v. 25).**

- A. **Sadly, we sometimes try to keep God happy just like we try to please people,** thinking that going through the motions will earn us special privileges. Thankfully, He is fierce enough in His love for us not to be satisfied when we try to bribe Him with half-hearted service (Deut. 10:17, Zeph. 1:12, Rev. 3:16).
- B. **A sense of worthlessness and meaningless gnaws at many of us** because we think things like, “It doesn’t really matter...” We imagine that nothing we say or do will ever really affect anything. Obedience doesn’t seem worth the effort and disobedience doesn’t seem to carry much consequence. But nothing could be further from the truth.
- C. **What gives our lives significance is that it really matters what we do.** God doesn’t have a select few kids who get to do whatever they want without consequences. He judges all equally. We will never be singled out for special treatment, nor will we ever be written off as insignificant or disqualified from receiving His attention. The fact wrong choices lead to painful consequences is not something to be frightened of; it’s something to be grateful for.

V. **“Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven” (4:1).**

- A. **Paul isn’t defending the institution of slavery.** Actually, this teaching undermines the foundation and spirit of slavery by making master and slave peers before God.
- B. **Our natural tendency is to use our authority to our own advantage.** But God uses His authority to come under His kids and lift them up.