



Reflecting On A New Attitude At Work

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

What I Need Is A New Boss!

Think about this for a second...

If Jesus came to you before you left for work today (now, you can just flat-out rest assured that that ain't ever gonna happen! And I realize, that's terrible English, but it is terrific theology! Just remember, we're pretending...maybe I should have said it that way--PRETEND that Jesus came to you before you left for work today...), and asked you to do something for Him, or to serve Him in some way. I ask you, is there anything that He could possibly ask you to do that you wouldn't literally knock yourself out trying to get accomplished? For real, now, is there? Is there anything—and I do mean ANYTHING He could ask you to do that you wouldn't do with an absolutely impeccable attitude, just because it was Him that asked?

Really, I can't imagine anybody who genuinely knows the Lord, and has any clue whatsoever about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for them, who would or could possibly refuse His request, regardless of how "menial" it might seem, or even as "demeaning" as it might seem from the perspective of others. No, we'd gladly do it, because He's our "Lord," and we love Him!

Listen now, that's the point God makes in the "twin Epistles" (Ephesians and Colossians) when He talks about how we conduct ourselves at work. He lets us know something that most Christians either haven't understood, or have somehow overlooked or bypassed—that one key factor in the equation of our job that changes everything! Namely, this...

That regardless of whether our boss is a man or a woman...whether he or she is good and gentle, or "not-so-much" (1 Pet. 2:18)...whether they compensate us well, or even if they don't...our REAL BOSS is actually JESUS! And, when our boss at work asks us to do something, all they are is the human instrument the Lord Jesus Christ is using to communicate what it is that He wants us to do. It is how our Lord communicates to us how He wants us to SERVE Him, and what His WILL for our lives is at work!

Colossians 3:24 tells us that we must "KNOW" that when we go to work, we "SERVE" the Lord Jesus Christ! Ephesians 6:6 calls what our boss tells us to do at work, "THE WILL OF GOD," and tells us that for that reason, do it "FROM THE HEART"! Colossians 3:22 adds, that we are to do it with "SINGLENES OF HEART." In other words, we don't go to work and "ACT" like we're there to serve, and "ACT" like we have a good attitude. No, we go to work and serve with a good attitude because that's what's in our HEARTS! We "get it"! When we're there, it's not LIKE we're serving the Lord—we ARE serving the Lord! And when we serve the company, or serve our boss, we're serving the Lord! And when we obey our boss, we're obeying the Lord! Which makes the opposite also true, when we're not obedient to our boss, we're not obedient to the Lord!

No wonder the Holy Spirit's instruction to us then, is "OBEY in ALL THINGS your masters (bosses) according to the flesh" (Col. 3:22). And, I can't help but notice that phrase, "IN ALL THINGS." It's almost like God knew (because we're humans!) that if He just told us to "OBEY" our bosses, that we might get the idea that because we do what our bosses tell us to do "MOST" of the time, that we qualify as "obedient." But, God makes it clear that He's not looking for us to obey the MAJORITY of the time—He's looking for us to obey ALL the time! He's not looking for us to obey our boss when what he or she tells us to do makes sense to us—He wants us to obey even when it doesn't make sense! We don't simply follow the boss's instructions when we agree that the way they told us to do it is the best way – we follow their instructions even when we don't think it is the best way, because the way they told us to do it is the way Jesus wanted us to do it! End of conversation! Yes, sir! Yes, ma'am! Gladly! With a cherry on top! What do you want me to do next?

Because Jesus Christ is our "MASTER in heaven," (our "LORD"—note that the word "Lord" in Colossians 3:23 and 24 is the same word for "Master" in verse 22. You see, that's why He qualifies our bosses as our "masters according to the flesh"), and because when we go to work, we are actually serving our Lord and Master, and obeying His will, there is never a time when we are not required by God to carry out in 100% obedience what our boss has told us to do. And again, it doesn't matter if we feel like it or not, or agree with it or not, or if it makes sense to us or not, we are called upon to do it. "Just do it," to borrow a phrase from Nike! Now, of course, the only exception to that is, if by obeying our boss on the earth, we would violate our Boss in heaven, we don't do it. In the world in which we live, some of us may have a boss who asks us to do something underhanded, immoral, or illegal. In those cases, we follow the counsel of Peter in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

So, Colossians 3:22 gives us that blanket instruction that God is looking for us to carry out at work—"Obey in all things." Then, from there, He gets a little more specific about what that actually means, and what that actually looks like in our lives. And He gives us two negative commands, or two things "obeying in all things" DOESN'T mean. And then, He gives us two positive commands, or two things "obeying in all things" DOES mean.

First of all, He says in Colossians 3:22, "Not with eyeservice." "Eyeservice" is working hard when the boss is watching, but kind of "kicking back" when they're not around. I'm sure all of us know somebody that works like that—and I'm sure it's none of us! If that is you, do us a favor, and don't tell anyone where you go to church, okay? And do the Lord a favor, and don't let anyone know that you claim to belong to Him, okay? Really! This is serious stuff! 1 Timothy 6:1 says that servants (employees) are to count their masters (bosses, employers) worthy of all honor for this reason—listen to this now... "THAT THE NAME OF GOD AND HIS DOCTRINE BE NOT BLASPHEMED"!!!! Listen, when we do our job as "eyeservice," we dishonor God, we blaspheme – or bring reproach to His name, and we give reason to people to reproach the teaching (doctrine) the Bible gives about Him. In other words, we blow it for anyone where we work to witness to those folks who are "eyewitnesses" of our "eyeservice." If our co-workers see us work hard when the boss is around, and "goofing off" or "slacking off" when they're not around, we blaspheme the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! And maybe instead of "goofing off," when the boss isn't around, we take out our Bibles and have our devotions. Listen, we might "feel" spiritual while we're "spending time with Jesus," and not even realize that what we're doing is actually "blaspheming that name of Jesus," and blowing any opportunity that we or any other Christian may have of reaching them with the gospel.

Then, He adds a second negative command in Colossians 3:22, "Not...as menpleasers." In other words, don't allow your motivation to be to find favor with your boss, or simply to please your boss, let your motive be a passion inside of you to PLEASE THE LORD!

Now, some of you have a boss that you respect and love—and they're good to you. It is natural, then, to want to please them—and that may be what motivates you. Others of you have a boss that is mean

and hateful, and makes life rough on you, and you struggle with having any kind of drive to do a good job. But, God says, either way, our motive should not be to please our boss; it should be to please the Lord. He tells us, "Not...as menpleasers."

So, what does it mean to "OBEY" your boss "IN ALL THINGS?" First of all, it means that we don't just work hard when the boss is watching, because the fact is, our real Boss is watching all the time! And, secondly, it means that we don't do what we do for the approval or recognition of our boss—to please him or her...we do what we do because of our passion to please the Lord.

Then, on the positive side of the negatives He just listed in Colossians 3:22, the verse goes on to tell us that "obeying in all things" means to obey with "Singleness of heart." And, you see, this is the opposite of doing "eyeservice." As we saw, "eyeservice" is a hypocritical kind of service—serving when we know the boss is watching. We're acting like we don't know they're watching, and acting like it doesn't matter—you know, kind of a "this is just the way I work all the time!" But, it's a sham...a show...an act. "Singleness of heart" means "to be free from pretense and hypocrisy." Nothing changes when the boss is around, and nothing changes when they aren't. We aren't driven from an external source—but an internal one...our HEART! A heart that belongs to Jesus Christ and is bent on pleasing Him, and therefore, doesn't have to put on any show when the boss is around. It is a heart that has one single focus.

Then, He adds the second positive command concerning our obedience at the end of Colossians 3:22. He says, "Fearing God," or reverencing God. And this is the opposite of being a "manpleaser." He's saying, "Do what you do because you reverence the Lord, not because you reverence your boss – or his position, or because you fear him or his position." And again, it's the idea of remembering Who it is that we're actually serving!

And God is telling us in this passage in Colossians 3, and the passage Pastor Harrell preached from in Ephesians 6, that these are the things we need to have in our minds and our hearts when we go to work. Could I ask you, is THAT what motivates you on your job?

But, you know what motivates most people to work hard and to do a good job? Working hard and doing a good job is going to mean being "rewarded" with a promotion and/or an increase in pay. Now that's fine, but God says that our motivation should be different than that. He tells us in Colossians 3:24 that we are to work the way He told us to work "KNOWING" this! "That of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance!"

You see, folks, we may break our back working hard at our job, and we may never be rewarded with a promotion, or with financial compensation. We may spend the rest of our lives working in unfair working conditions. But God says in verse 24, "Don't let that bother you!" He says, "You just be assured that one of these days I am going to reward you – with an eternal reward! Or, as Peter called it in I Peter 3:4, "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." And He tells us in verse 24, "KNOW that! Be reminded of that! Don't forget that! You'll be rewarded! For ye serve the Lord Christ!" And He reminds us of that overarching principle: The Lord is our Boss, and He's the One Who signs our ultimate paycheck!

And then, in verse 25, He adds something else that we also need to keep in mind—something else we need to be sure that we "KNOW," and that is, "He that doeth wrong"—now just stop there for a second. "He that doeth wrong" is someone who doesn't work the way that He described in verses 22 and 23. And He says, that "he that doeth wrong" is also going to "receive"! But, he isn't going to "receive the reward of the inheritance" – he'll "receive for the wrong which he hath done!" I mean, it's the law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7-8). And notice the last part of Colossians 3:24, "And there is no respect of persons." In other words, God is an "Equal Opportunity Employer." God is telling us, that

we're going to reap, not according to "who we are," but according to how we sow – or in this case, how we WORK! It's like Paul is saying in verse 24, "I've got good news and bad news. The good news is, you are going to receive what you deserve! And no, your boss on the earth may not give you what you deserve – but, you remember Who you're serving, and you just live and work with an abiding confidence that your real Boss is going to ultimately give you what you deserve."

And then, Paul says, "But, the bad news is, you are going to receive what you deserve! It's the same news, it's just "good" for those who work "as unto the Lord"—and "bad" for those who work "unto men." And the point is, we're all going to "receive" from the Lord concerning how we work. And, it will be a good thing for those who do what is RIGHT when they're at work. And, it will be a bad thing for those who do what is WRONG when they're at work. And again, God ends verse 24 saying, "And there is no respect of persons." That's God's way of saying, "And that means YOU!"

Now, folks, I don't know how all of this is hitting you today, but I believe God has given us in Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Ephesians 6:5-9, all the motivation we need to punch in today on a brand new job, with a brand new Boss, and a brand new attitude! (That's what we've asked God to give to us!) We may go to work today, and work under the same exact circumstances as they've been for the last six months. It may be the same exact people all around us—people who cuss, make fun of us, or whatever else they may do. And we may not get a raise for another three years—but if we'll be conscious today, and every other day, that we are actually serving the Lord Jesus Christ through the work that we do, it will put dignity behind what we do...regardless of our position, or our wage. And it will put a quality into our work, that provides an incredible platform for the gospel (I Peter 3:15-16).

Have a great day today at your "new" job, working for your "new" Boss, with your "new" attitude. Praise the Lord, He really does "make all things new" (Rev. 21:5)!