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[MT.10:8]

THE
BELIEVER
AT
WORK

OVERCOMING

LAZINESS,

DISHONESTY,

&

GREED

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THE
BELIEVER
AT
WORK

The Lord God put the man in the garden of Eden
to care for it and work it [Gen.2:15]

**Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life,
to mind your own business and to work with your hands,
just as we commanded you [I Thess.4:11]**

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. “Yes,” says the Spirit,
“so that they may rest from their labors,
for their deeds will follow with them” [Rev.14:13]

IMPORTANCE OF WORK

From the beginning of creation, the Lord God has given man work to do. The Lord saw all that He had done and said that it was very good.

Giving work to man was very good. It is good to work. What we do in this life will follow us into eternity, whether good or bad.

Most of our waking hours are occupied with work. It is therefore of great importance that the main occupation of our lives be done to the glory of God.

All of life is to be for the honor and praise of God. Even the very simple activities of daily living are to be for His glory. Hear what the Word of God says about this:

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God [I Cor.10:31].

This certainly includes our work. All work, whether at home,

office, factory, or farm, is to be done for the glory of God. Both what we do and how we do it is to be for the Lord's glory.

What we do, why we do it, and how we work is all the concern of the living God. All of our works will be brought into judgment. The Word of God warns us of this:

More than anything else, we want to please Him, whether in our home here or there. For all of us must appear before Christ, to be judged by Him, so that each one may receive what he deserves for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad [2 Cor.5:9,10].

We want to please the Lord Jesus in our work. He will judge us for all we have done in this life. The key principle of our work according to the Word of God is this:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. It is the Lord Christ you are serving [Col.3:23,24].

Whatever we do, we do for the Lord and not for men. He is the One we serve and the One who will judge all our works. He is the One we are to please, whose approval we seek. He sees everything we do and knows why we do it.

This makes the Christian worker different than other workers. The believer has another motivation than his unbelieving co-workers. He works in a manner other than the rest.

The Christian who is glorifying God in his work ought to be the finest worker to be found. He should be the most honest, trustworthy, and diligent worker among them all.

THE 3 TEMPTATIONS

There are three main temptations facing the believer in doing his work for the glory of God. They are Laziness, Dishonesty, and Greed.

LAZINESS

Since it is the Lord Christ whom we serve, diligent hard work ought to characterize every Christian. Will we lazily sleep in His presence? Will we carelessly sit idle when He is waiting for us to do the work He has given us? No, not at all. Listen to the Word of God:

Go watch the ants, you lazy person. Watch what they do and be wise. Ants have no commander, and no leader or ruler, but they store up food in the summer and gather their supplies at harvest.

How long will you lie there, you lazy persons? When will you get up from sleeping? You sleep a little; you take a nap. You fold your hands and lie down to rest. So you will be as poor as if you had been robbed [Prov.6:6-11].

The ants work hard without direct supervision. They know what must be done and go about doing it without waiting to be told. They faithfully work for the benefit of others besides themselves.

Ants do not stop working because no ruler is watching them. The ant does not put off until later what could be and should be done now. They make the most of the present opportunity to work well for the good of all. This is how the true believer is to work.

Laziness is a great sin. The Bible has nothing good to say about a lazy man. **A lazy man does not roast his prey, but the precious possession of a man is diligence [Prov.12:27].**

The lazy man does not finish what he begins. He grows weary of the effort of doing good and quits before the good result is obtained [Gal.6:9]. He does not bring to completion what he starts.

This is not godly. The Lord always finishes what He begins. **God finished the work He had been doing, so He rested from all His work [Gen.2:2].** God rested when His work was done.

The lazy man rests often during his work and it does not get done. If we are to be godly, to be like our God, we must work in the same manner that He does.

Those who work hard make a profit. But those who only talk will be poor [Prov.14:23]. The Lord commands that we love **not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring [I Jn.3:18].** Many people talk much and do little. They are lazy. God is

not happy with this waste of time.

A person who doesn't work hard is just like someone who destroys things [Prov.18:9]. If the work is not done well and on time, others will have to make up for our laziness. They will have to "repair" what we failed to do. It is unloving to others and unfaithful to God to be lazy. To be this way is to destroy opportunities, lose profits, and ruin our own testimony as a Christian.

Trustworthy messengers refresh those who send them. Trusting unfaithful people is like eating with a broken tooth or walking with a crippled foot [Prov.25:13,19]. Laziness is a great hindrance in the workplace. Being diligent and faithful is a great blessing.

The true believer, at work, is not lazy. He will serve the Lord Jesus diligently, wholeheartedly, and consistently. He finishes what he begins. He works hard and well whether anyone else is watching him or not.

He does what he knows needs to be done without regard for his own ease. He is full of action at work and not merely empty words that accomplish nothing.

Those who lead the church, who serve the Lord by serving the believers, ought to be the best example to the others. The Apostle Paul was great because he was this type of lowly servant. Here is what we learn about him in the Word of God:

You should live as we live. We were not lazy when we were with you. We worked very hard night and day so we would not be an expense to any of you. We worked to take care of ourselves so we would be an example for you to follow [2 Thess.3:7-9].

Amos, the prophet of the true God, did the same thing. **Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I do not make my living as a prophet. I make my living as a shepherd and I take care of sycamore trees. But the Lord took me away from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel'" [Amos 7:14,15].**

Even the Lord Jesus Christ spent most of His life working hard as a carpenter before He began His other work of teaching, healing, and dying for our sins. Some people did not think that a

simple carpenter could actually be the Son of God. The Bible tells us that men said, **He is but the carpenter, the son of Mary** [Mk.6:3].

All true believers should follow these godly examples of hard work. Laziness is never to be found among Christians, especially not among their leaders.

DISHONESTY

Uprightness in All Things

Truth, uprightiness, and honesty are to always be present in every work of the true believer. The Lord Jesus said, **I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of My people here, you also did for Me** [Mt.25:40].

Here we discover again that our every dealing with men and all of our work is for the Lord Jesus. It is as if our every action is directly a service to the Lord Jesus Himself.

If we lie to someone, we are lying to Him. If another is cheated, we cheat our God. The person we are bribing is like bribing the Lord Jesus. The thing we steal is as if we took it from the hand of Christ Himself.

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God [Cor.10:31].

Honesty and uprightiness is to be in every genuine believer at all times and in every work he does. The Word of God tells us: **Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than he who is crooked though he be rich** [Prov.28:6].

Nothing is worth being dishonest; no gain, no post, or promotion. Better to give them all up rather than disobey the Lord God. **Wealth gotten by fraud disappears quickly, but the one who gathers by labor increases it** [Prov.13:11].

Lying

Fraud is deception and lying. It is misrepresenting facts in order to take from others and gain for self. The living God does not approve of this at all. **A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will perish** [Prov.19:9].

Many times in our work we are tempted to lie; to our boss, thinking to keep ourselves out of trouble, or to customers, trying to keep their business. But, at the end of the day, we have lied to God.

Any momentary gain we imagine that we have obtained thereby will only ruin us. **Wealth that comes from telling lies vanishes like a mist and leads to death** [Prov.21:6].

Cheating

Cheating is another form of dishonesty which the Lord greatly hates. It is a wicked practice described by the Word of God:

Listen to Me, you who walk on helpless people, you who are trying to destroy the poor people of this country, saying, “When will the Sabbath be over so we can bring out wheat to sell?

“We can charge them more and give them less, and we can change the scales to cheat people. We will even sell the wheat that was swept up from the floor” [Amos 8:4-6].

The Lord hates this deceitful taking advantage of people. We must not charge one person more than another for the same thing. The Bible condemns this practice.

The Lord hates both these things: Dishonest weights and dishonest measures [Prov.20:10]. The God of heaven sees every time we take more money than is right to do. He watches every cup of beans sold which is not full.

Bribery

The living God knows all that we do. He knows every arrangement we make with others. He sees what passes from our hands to others. What we receive in secret is no secret to Him. We must be upright in all our dealings at work. Bribery is an evil that the

God of Truth will never bless or approve of. Bribery corrupts the heart of man. The Word of God says this:

A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice [Prov.17:23]. It is wickedness for a believer in the Lord Jesus to accept a bribe. It is wickedness to give a bribe. **Do not take away my soul along with sinners...in whose hands are wicked schemes, whose right hands are full of bribes** [Ps.26:9,10].

Bribery destroys all sense of justice. Nothing can be right when bribery is practiced. It corrupts the one who gives it, the one who receives it, and the people who tolerate it. It was a cause for the judgment of God to come upon His people. The Word of God warns us about this evil:

Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. Therefore the Lord Almighty declares, "I will avenge Myself on My enemies. I will turn My hand against you" [Isa.1:23-25].

Those people said that they were believers. But no true believer can give or take bribes. Their rulers loved bribes and were judged by the Lord who hates such things.

The godly man is blessed because he hates bribes. **He who hates bribes will live** [Prov.15:27]. In our place of work, as well as in every area of life, bribery must not be practiced by the believer in any form.

Stealing

Neither shall the believer steal anything, in any amount, at any time. The Word of God is very clear about this: **You must not steal** [Ex.20:15].

This is a great temptation for the believer at his place of work. Small items such as pens, fruit, or cloth seem to be unimportant. They are not unimportant. If you steal even small things, you are stealing, not from men, but from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thinking that it is only a small matter spoils our character and corrupts us entirely. The Word of God is clear. **Whoever can be**

trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much [Lk.16:10].

He is the One we serve in our work. He will reward or punish us. We must not take anything that does not belong to us without the permission of the owner.

The essence of true belief is in giving, not in the selfishness of getting; and certainly not in getting by stealing. Hear the Bible:

Those who are stealing must stop stealing and start working. They should earn an honest living for themselves. Then they will have something to share with those who are poor [Eph.4:28].

Earning an honest living is the will of God for all His workers. There is to be no deceit, injustice, corruption, or theft among believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. He will reward you if you honor Him in your work.

GREED

Coveting

Coveting wealth and promotion do not make the Lord happy at all. The Scriptures command us to keep our hearts free from these things. **Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. God has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"** [Heb.13:5].

Work is not for the purpose of making us rich. It is not to provide many comfortable things for our enjoyment. Work is what God has given for us to glorify Himself by doing His will on earth as it is in heaven. By working, provision for the basic needs of life is obtained. Through honest labor we will have **something to share with those in need** [Eph.4:28].

Greed has no place in the heart of a true Christian. The Word of God strongly warns us against this:

Those who have evil minds and have lost the truth think that serving God is a way to get rich. But godliness with

contentment is great gain. If we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that.

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

But you, man of God, run away from all those things [I Tim.6:5-11].

Coveting leads to dishonesty in order to obtain what the heart is set upon. Wanting to be rich and longing for money have been the destruction of many men. The Lord God commands us to be content with having food and covering.

Coveting turns the focus of the heart from God and spiritual things to self and the things of this world. The Word of God warns us: **You cannot serve God and Mammon** [Riches] [Lk.16:13].

Coveting makes us serve riches rather than the Lord. And when we do, we become idolaters. This is what the Word of God calls this longing after prosperity. **Put all evil things out of your life; wanting things that are evil, and greed, which is idolatry** [Col.3:5].

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person – such a man is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God [Eph.5:5].

Debt

This evil desire for wealth has led many to the foolish practice of borrowing money when they have no means to repay it. We are not to allow greed to lead us into the evil of indebtedness.

The Word of God forbids this. **Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another** [Rom.13:8]. Our God has promised to **supply all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus** [Phil.4:19]. He has not promised to supply for our greedy desires; and if He has not supplied, it is not a need.

The one who borrows out of his desire for immediate gain rather than patiently waiting upon the Lord to supply his needs will not be blessed. He will find what the Word of God warns us of: **The borrower becomes the lender's slave** [Prov.22:7].

Believers are not to work with a greedy heart. We are to seek to please the Lord Jesus in all our efforts. It is Him we are serving. And this we do diligently, honestly, and free from the love of money. This brings glory to Him as well as blessing from Him.

A good name is more desirable than great riches, loving favor is better than silver or gold [Prov.22:1].

May we seek the Lord's grace to be genuine believers in our homes and at our work, for His name's sake. Amen.

A FINAL WORD TO MINISTERS

The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you [Rom.2:24]

A leader among God's people **must be above reproach as God's steward** [Tit.1:7]. He is to prove **to be an example to the flock** [I Pet.5:3].

Yet your homes are in shambles and your works corrupt. Hear then this word, O foolish men who are leading the saints of the Most High astray.

Woe to you, Ministers and Pastors, hypocrites, **having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, seducing unstable souls; they are experts in greed – an accursed brood!** [2 Pet.2:14].

Woe to you, Ministers and Pastors, hypocrites, who halfheartedly perform your clerical tasks without zeal or burden for the souls of men. **Cursed is he who does the Lord's work negligently/deceitfully** [Jer.48:10].

Woe to you, blind guides, liars, who deceitfully promise prosperity for planting seeds of "faith," breakthrough for tithes, and gain for giving. How like Simon the Sorcerer you are! The gift of God

cannot be obtained with money! [Acts 8:18-24]. You are yet in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity!

You fools and blind men! Peddling the Word of God [2 Cor.2:17], making merchandise of men by your false words and greed [2 Pet.2:3], and devouring widows' purses to fatten your own bellies [Mt.23:14]. You will receive greater condemnation!

**You serpents, you brood of vipers!
How shall you escape the damnation of hell?**
[Mt.23:33]

May you repent of your wickedness:

O, turn back from the traditions of men and your own sloth
which are scattering homes, destroying souls,
and plunging men into ruin and destruction!

May you yourselves overturn your own money tables
and stop making the house of God a place of merchandise!
[Jn.2:14-17]

If you will not repent, zeal still consumes the Son of God
who has not forgotten how to make a scourge of cords
and drive corrupt men out of His Father's house!

**Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers,
because you know that we who teach
will be judged more strictly**
[Jas.3:1]

HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR

People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. So God left them and allowed them to have their own worthless thinking. And so those people do the things that they should not do. They are filled with

every kind of sin, evil, selfishness, and hatred. They are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying, and thinking the worst about each other. They gossip and say evil things about each other. They hate God. They are rude and conceited and brag about themselves. They invent ways of doing evil. They do not obey their parents. They are foolish, they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or mercy to other people. They know God's law says that those who live like this should die. But they continue to do these evil things and approve those who do them [Romans 1:28-32].

The wrong things the sinful self does are clear: taking part in sexual sins, worshiping false gods, doing witchcraft, making trouble, being angry, being drunk, and doing other things like this. I warn you: Those who do these things will not be in God's kingdom [Galatians 5:19-21].

The Lord Jesus said, "I tell you, if you don't repent [change your hearts and lives], then you will all likewise perish!" [be destroyed too] [Luke 13:5].

Jesus is the only One who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. And we must be saved through Him! [Acts 4:12].

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son. God gave His Son so that whoever believes in Him may not be lost, but have eternal life. He who believes in Him is not judged guilty. But he who does not obey the Son will never have that life. God's anger stays with him [John 3:16,18,36].

Christ Himself died for you. And that one death paid for your sins. He was not guilty, but He died for those who are guilty. He did this to bring you all to God. His body was killed, but He was made alive in the Spirit [1 Peter 3:18].

Christ died for all so that those who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf [2 Corinthians 5:15].

If you use your mouth to say, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved. We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we use our mouths to say that we believe, and so we are saved. As the Bible says, "Anyone who trusts in Him will never be disappointed" [Romans 10:9-11].

