

## At Work, You Are In Full-Time Christian Service

We have noted the authority of divine institution one as volitional responsibility of each individual. Then, we studied the authority in divine institution of marriage where the husband is in authority and how the parents are in authority in divine institution of the family. Now, as an aspect of divine institution of nationalism we have the authority in the economic sector. Owners or managers or simply ‘the boss’ is in authority. Most people in capitalistic America understand this area of authority. This introduces a very important part of history. The Mark of the Beast, 666, is all related to economics. This passage lays a foundation of the proper thinking in business.

**Colossians 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.**

Let’s look at the workers under the designation of **Slaves**. The Greek word is *doulos* meaning slave or servant. This is beautiful as to how Paul recognizes that slaves in the Roman Empire would believe in Jesus as their personal Savior. The Bible never tells the hundreds of thousands of slaves in the Roman Empire to rise up in revolt for freedom or to try to escape while under slavery. Paul says if you are a slave, and you have believed in Jesus as your Savior, you remain a slave. Just remember the dual position of every believer: Free in Christ, yet slaves of Christ by choice. Now, while we are here on the subject, the epistles to the church

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never say that slavery is wrong or immoral. Nor does the Word of God tell slave owners to set all their slaves free. As to slave owners – remember you are slaves of Christ and that is the standard by which you treat your slaves.

By interpretation, this passage is addressed to Christian slaves at this time in the Roman Empire, AD 60-62. By application this passage refers to believers in Christ, living throughout the Church Age who work for someone else, employees, laborer, workman or workwoman, whatever name you prefer. You do not have to like your boss, but you have to recognize his/her authority in the work place.

**Colossians 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey  
those who are your masters on earth...**

This is *present active imperative* of the Greek verb *hupakouo*. Here is where your volition comes into action. Many people throughout history refuse to obey their masters or bosses. This word means to submit to the authority of someone else. Muslims, Communists, Socialists do not like this concept, except that everyone is to be in subjection to the hierarchy, those in the position of making decisions for everyone else.

We have two different words for obedience to authority in this passage:

Colossians 3:18 **wives be subject to your husbands** *hupotasso* and then  
Colossians 3:22 **slaves in all things obey those who are your masters**  
*hupakouo*

The word *hupotasso* carries the main idea of ‘*placing in order*’ to place under the authority in an orderly fashion; to be in subjugation—place of submission (primarily a military term of rank and file), while *hupakouo*

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comes from the root word ‘to hear so as to obey; to listen to something, to pay attention in order to obey.

As one word study states: “Sometimes it is difficult to perceive the difference between submission and obedience. There is a difference, and it lies in subtleties that are very apparent to the one who is either obeying or submitting.”

Obey simply means "to follow a command"; "to conform"; or "to comply with an order."

Submit, though, means "to yield, or defer out of respect, superior authority, affection, persuasion, or compulsion."

To put this in a spiritual context, which would God prefer, obedience to commands simply by our complying to those commands, as the religious person does or a legalist? Or, what is God looking for? Does He desire us to submit because we willingly recognize His authority over our lives?

A master or boss or employer does not care why you obey his orders as long as you obey them. But a husband desires his wife to submit as unto the Lord.

**Slaves in all things.** In the framework of your relationship with the master or boss. In the context of interpretation, where Paul is addressing those who are indeed slaves, you obey in regards to everything that the master tells you.

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those who are your masters on earth**

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OK, here we have a relationship between *doulos* and *kurios* slave and lord or master. But, in marriage the relationship is between *wife* and *her husband*. Marriage is not a slave and lord relationship but a wife and husband relationship. The Greek *kurios* originally meant to have power or authority. It was reserved for those of a superior status. Only later in history did it take on a religious connotation of one to be worshipped. Today the word can refer to management or one's boss. The *dative indirect object* indicates the one for whom the action is performed and the one who is blessed by the performance of the action. The *dative* realizes here that the action of obedience is performed for management and the employee is blessed.

**Slaves in all things obey those who are your masters on earth.** Wrong! The King James is correct here: **according to the flesh.** This is very important theologically. People, our status on Earth is of little consequence. It is our status after death, in eternity, that is the real issue. It does not really matter if you spend your life as a 'slave' or hard worker, laborer etc., or as an owner or boss. What matters is, will you be in eternity with Jesus Christ? Will you live in eternity in a mansion prepared by Jesus Christ? Parents, I know you are concerned about your child getting a good job when they grow up. But Oh, please care much more about their living in a mansion in heaven for all eternity. The moment we die, this old flesh is over. What matters is our eternal resurrected bodies. It is so unfortunate that so many people, yes, Christians care more about how they look or where they live or their work status than they do about receiving rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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**Slaves in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service.** That is only when someone can see you working hard—hypocritical service; working hard when the boss is looking; loafing when he is not looking.



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**As those who merely please men.** If we are not to work to please our boss, then whom are we to work to please? The Lord. We all have met this kind of person, at work or in school, their drive, their satisfaction is to please others. This is the apple polisher!

**but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.** OK, here is the principle: every believer must do his job as unto the Lord. In many cases, the primary place of Christian witnessing is at work. Your duty, your responsibility, your work is not only a means of lively hood but it is your witness of Christ. What you should desire to be said of you behind your back is not that you are a freeloader. But when someone says—he/she is a good worker to which someone else responds, Oh, yes...he/she is a

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Christian. Your employment is part of your full time Christian service. It has to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit and for the glory of the Lord. And don't think, well, my job is not all that important—it does not matter if you are a garbage collector. That is your battlefield to represent Jesus Christ. It makes no difference at all how menial the job, whether you are sweeping out a warehouse, pounding a typewriter—oh, wait, today—touching a computer key board, or punching a cash register, this is part of your witness for Christ...do all these things in the filling of the Holy Spirit. I pray you understand that your witness on the job is as important as a preacher or a missionary. You do not gossip at work, you do not malign others at work, do not judge others at work. You do not stick your nose into things that do not concern you. You pay attention as unto the Lord as to how you dress, how you talk, how you act at work. When you are passed over on a job promotion, how you act is your witness of Jesus Christ and how much more important He is to you than your job.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, here is where your entitlement to rewards will be observed by the judge, Jesus Christ. And you can have more rewards at sweeping out the warehouse than a lot of preachers will get in failing at their calling. So, every believer is to do his/her job with the same vigor and enthusiasm as is used in any phase of Christian service. This means he/she does as good a job whether supervised or not.

**Fearing the Lord.** this means *in respect of the Lord; thinking of your service to the Lord.* Your respect of the Lord, and always serving the Lord means you will have no problem in the field of authority. Respect for the Lord causes the believer to do a good job at work regardless of being watched or not. Having maximum respect for the Lord means that

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this believer makes the best possible employee because of his/her motivation is not of man but of the Lord. Respect of the Lord will result in this worker doing the best job at all times; no loafing, no complaining, no stirring up trouble. Your job is part of your Christian service.

Verse 23 words this principle for us.

**Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,**

**Whatever you do, whatever you accomplish.** In the business world.

**Do.** *Present active imperative*, meaning, keep on doing.

**your work heartily**, This is incorrect and misses the emphasis of what the Holy Spirit is saying. Varying translations: *with all your heart; work willingly; with your whole being; work from the soul; from your heart; enthusiastically; wholeheartedly*; The Greek construction is made up of the preposition *ek* = out of + Greek word for soul - *out from the soul*. This means you are not working just for an income; you are working as part of your Christian life. It is a shame that many Christians think that some people are in ‘full-time Christian Service’ while others are not. There is no such isolation. Every believer in Jesus as their Savior is in full-time Christian Service. And everything we do should come from our soul.

Now, note two related phrases: **fearing the Lord or respect for the Lord** and **out from the soul**. So what does this mean? It draws full attention to what is inside you! The way you think! What is in your soul. This is just another reason why we should continually study the Word of

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God. To get Bible doctrine in your soul, so that the Word of God directs your thinking, not your flesh nature. It is not about you, it is about Jesus the Christ, your Savior-friend. It does not matter if you are a slave, even in the truest of senses or a warehouse attendant or the boss. It simply does not matter at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What matters is what is in your soul and who controls your soul, the Holy Spirit or your flesh nature.

**Rather than for men** Ask yourselves: do I do what I do for man or for the Lord? Do I do what I do for me or for the Lord? Only you know the answer to these two questions.

This means you recognize authority on the basis of the fact that the Lord is in authority of your life and of your thinking and therefore you do your job as unto the Lord. Fact: many, many times you are going to have an unfair boss, or a boss who will be unfair many times, who treats you erroneously. You just do your job as unto the Lord, pleasing to the Lord. If it does not please the Lord, it is sin. we saw this principle in

**Colossians 1:10 so that you will walk in a manner (work in a manner) worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, (at work) bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

**Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.**



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Verse 24 starts out with that all-important necessity of the Christian life **knowing**. *Perfect active participle* of the verb *oida*. The *perfect participle* is important here for it stresses the state or the condition of the believer who has been growing in the Word of God...If you have not been growing in the study of Scripture, then of course, this is not addressing you, for you do not know. But if you have, then you know this important fact about the Christian life. The verb is rather complex. There are a number of things that humans, even Christians do not know intuitively. To know these things requires three dimensions: first, one must be a born-again believer in Jesus Christ as Savior. Secondly, be empowered by the Holy Spirit by faith. And thirdly, study pertinent passages in the Word of God.

**Knowing that.** This conjunction is used after verbs of knowing to indicate the content of what you know.

**Knowing that from the Lord.** That is from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**you will receive.** Now we enter into something that is so wonderful and should be of great encouragement to grow in the knowledge of the Word of God and of living in the power of the Holy Spirit by faith.

**knowing that you will receive.** *Future middle indicative* of a compound verb in the Greek. This verb is made up of the prefix *apo* which means from, plus the verb meaning to receive. It means to receive from and is used to convey the idea of receiving fully, to receive in full what one is due. And people, this future tense is certainty—in the future—right after the Rapture—every believer of the Church Age will stand before Jesus Christ at that Judgement Seat of Christ. Note that *middle voice*. This means that you will participate in this event. And the *indicative mood*

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reminds or warns every believer that this is going to happen. No way will you be able to avoid or skip or get out of appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ and for some believers—to receive from the Lord **the reward**. This means to receive an unexpected reward. You cannot even imagine how wonderful receiving this reward is going to be.

**the reward of the inheritance.** Another rich Greek word that should excite every believer. First, just think of the normal concept of receiving an inheritance here on earth. You did not earn nor deserve this but it is now yours. OK, in the New Testament there are several concepts of this inheritance. As one Lexicon states: “The object of inheritance in the New Testament is no longer ‘the land’ but something spiritual.” “It is not the physical heirs (i.e.’Jews’) who receive Abraham’s spiritual inheritance. Rather, it is his children by faith, both Jews and Gentiles. Now here in Colossians 3, this inheritance is spoken of in context of slaves—who have no inheritance here on Earth. But they are assured of inheritance after this life on Earth. But in verse 24 this inheritance is given to those who serve the Lord.

**It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.** The NASV leaves out the explanatory particle that should be translated **for** as in the King James.

**You serve.** This reminds them and all of us that we serve, we are slaves to the Lord Christ. Jesus Christ is Lord and should be your Lord and master and will be as you grow in the Word and live in His Spirit (Gal. 5:25—**live in the Spirit.**)

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**Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord  
you will receive the reward of the inheritance  
For it is the Lord Christ whom you serve**

Not man. Under this encouragement, life has meaning, no matter how humble your job. Your life has a very definite purpose and goal. Every believer is in full time Christian Service. And therefore, there is no such thing as a ‘layman.’ Your work function in life is just as important as any other calling. There are rewards for faithfulness to the Lord in the Holy Spirit. These rewards will come at the Judgement Seat of Christ and last throughout all eternity. I would rather be a slave on a cotton field, giving glory to Christ than a millionaire giving glory to man or to self.

**Colossians 3:25 For he who does wrong will  
receive the consequences of the wrong which  
he has done, and that without partiality.**

The principle here is that time spent in carnality, that is, time spent in the flesh now has consequences. Fleshly works may have rewards from a human viewpoint, now, on Earth, as opposed to receiving rewards in the future at the Judgement Seat of Christ from a divine viewpoint. Most of us ‘waste’ a great deal of time here on earth living in the flesh rather than ‘living in the Holy Spirit’.

**For** or **But** – setting up the contrast between receiving rewards and now receiving rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ.

**But** he any believer, regardless of status in life.

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**But he who does wrong.** This is one word in the Greek, it is the *present participle* of the verb meaning to do wrong, or to do damage, or to act unjustly. It is used to refer to violation of justice. This refers to any believer living, working in the flesh. It cannot be overemphasized how important living in the Spirit is in this life here on Earth. When you are under the influence of the Holy Spirit, you will not do wrong. You will not gossip, malign, stir up trouble, you will not loaf. It is unfortunate but so often legalists are the worst offenders of doing wrong to others at work and in church and in families.

**For he who does wrong will receive.** *Future*—at the Judgment seat of Christ; *middle voice*—you participate and the *indicative mood* is the reality of this fact on earth and its relationship to eternity.

**Colossians 3:25 For he who does wrong will  
receive the consequences of the wrong which  
he has done,**

The principle here is that many Christians think they will just get away with doing wrong at work. No one at church will know. In fact, no one at home will know. In fact, there are primarily two different attitudes here: one is the legalist who doesn't think he/she is in the wrong when they gossip, malign or stir up trouble—they are doing the Lord's work. This is distortion of the truth of the Word of God. Legalism is dangerous in so many ways to every believer. No, you are not doing the Lord's work, you are doing the work of the Devil. Then, there is the believer who knows what he/she is doing is wrong but no one will find out. No one of importance, that is. No one at church or home will find out what a 'jerk' I have been at work. Please apply doctrine that you already know. God is

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Omnipresent—that is He is right there with you on the job. God is omniscient—that is He knows everything you are thinking, as well as saying or doing. You are not getting away with anything.

**and that without partiality.** Oh, boy believer, here we go. You think, well, the person next to me at work is an atheist, I have a relationship with God, I am saved, so I can do anything I want, and God is going to bless me on the job. He is not going to bless this atheist. This thinking is so wrong on so many levels. First of all, that probably is why you are right there where you are—to witness to that atheist. And instead what are you doing? You are convincing this atheist that he is better than you—that Christian. And he has no desire to become a Christian. You just blew it royally! You failed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You failed to glorify Jesus Christ. And you failed to be a witness of Jesus Christ to this non-believer. Congratulations---no one saw you but God and this unbeliever.

God is not partial to you, in this life just because you are a believer in His Son. Remember, throughout the history of Israel God turned them over to heathen nations to discipline them.

Now, verse one of chapter 4 really belongs to chapter three. While 3:22-25 concentrated on the slave, the worker, the employee. Colossians 4:1 addresses the master, the employer, the boss.

**Colossians 4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves  
justice and fairness, knowing that you too  
have a Master in heaven.**

**Masters.** By application this is the managers, bosses.

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**Masters grant.** *Present imperative* of the verb meaning to present, to offer.

**Masters give freely to your slaves.** Again, by application, employees.

**Give freely to your servants justice.** Greek *dikaios*. This rich word means just, or righteous. It means dealing with them in a way that is morally right and fair or just.

**and fairness,** This Greek word comes after the statement that God deals with all **without partiality** that is what this Greek word means—without partiality—fairness to his employees. This includes fairness in pay. It does not matter if one is male or female or of different races...if they do the same work, they get the same pay.

**Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.** OK, here is the same word for knowing that was used of the employee in Colossians 3:24. You know this from the study of the Word of God.

**Knowing that you have a Master in heaven.** This is so important for the husband to remember; for the parents to remember and for all bosses to remember: We are all under the authority of God.

Friends, we are all under the directive authority of God and of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Live with one another accordingly.