

END-TIMES ISSUES



#89 Commandment #4 – Work ethic.

AND BEYOND!

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

COMPLAINTS

Have you ever stood in a customer service line, waiting to complain about a defective product?

IT DOESN'T MATCH THE PICTURE ON THE BOX!

THERE ARE MISSING PARTS!

THE PIECES DON'T FIT TOGETHER PROPERLY!

IT BROKE AS SOON AS I TURNED IT ON!

- It's quite possible that it may have been due to a violation of WORK principles that are a part of the Fourth Commandment concept.

THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

represents the category of commands that are related to work and rest throughout the week!

Represents the commands related to WORK.

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **Six days you shall labor and do all your work**, but **the seventh day** is a Sabbath to the LORD your God, on which **you must not do any work** ...

Exodus 20:8-10a (BSB)

... and to REST.

BOTH categories find their basis in God's own activity, (See Genesis 1:31b-2:3.)

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, but on the seventh day He rested.

Exodus 20:11a (BSB)

LAST TIME:

- We saw how the concept of "work" progresses down through the ages, according to Scripture:
 - ✓ The intention of God's original command to work.
 - ✓ The effects of sin and salvation on the nature of work, and on our response to it.
 - ✓ God's final goal in all of this.

CREATION → SIN AND JUDGMENT → JESUS' FIRST COMING → JESUS' RETURN → CREATION RESTORED

TODAY:

- Applying this information to life.
 - ✓ This is just an overview. The Bible contains *hundreds* of commands, instructions and examples (good and bad) related to work.

- Some problems are caused by random chance and the general effects of sin in the world. These things tend to be difficult to control.
 - Random chance events often effect us. (These can be good or bad.)
 - Random events can result in a series of events.
 - The general effect of sin: Things tend to wear out, and they often don't work quite the way they should. *This affects all of creation!*

The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but **time and chance happen to them all.**

Ecclesiastes 9:11b (NIV)

LIGHTNING HIT THE TREE... THEN THE TREE FELL ON TOP OF THE CAR!

I HAD TO WALK TO WORK...

... the heavens will **vanish** like smoke, the earth will **wear out** like a garment and its inhabitants **die** like flies.

Isaiah 51:6b (NIV)

- Other problems are caused by human choice and the specific actions of people. These things can be controlled – either by *internal* motivation or *external* compulsion.
 - People *choose* to reduce the quality of what they are doing.
 - (It might also include willful deception.)
 - They may *choose* to do things they aren't qualified to do (i.e., they lack the ability).

IF WE REDESIGN THIS REFRIGERATOR TO LAST **HALF** AS LONG, WE'LL BE ABLE TO SELL TWICE AS MANY!

WE'LL SAY THAT THE OLDER MODELS WERE "OVER-ENGINEERED"!

WE'LL PUT LESS FOOD IN THE BOX, BUT KEEP THE SAME BOX SIZE!

THAT WAY, PEOPLE WON'T NOTICE IT!

I'VE NEVER DONE ELECTRICAL WORK... BUT IT SHOULDN'T BE THAT DIFFICULT!

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES! BASED ON

↳ They may *choose* to ignore details or have an "I don't care" attitude.

WHETHER OR NOT I TIGHTEN THE BOLTS ON THIS TRANSMISSION...

... I STILL GET PAID THE SAME AMOUNT!

WHO READS THE INSTRUCTIONS? I NEVER DO!

ONE PERSON'S *CARELESS* ACTIONS MAY DESTROY ANOTHER'S *CAREFUL* ACTIONS.

I JUST MOPPED THE FLOOR... AND YOU WALKED ACROSS IT WITH MUDDY SHOES!

PEOPLE MAY IGNORE THE CONSTRAINTS OF CREATION (LAWS OF NATURE) AND ATTEMPT TO DO THINGS THAT *CANNOT* BE DONE.

THE BOAT IS OVER-LOADED! IT MIGHT SINK!

WE'LL TAKE OUR CHANCES!

THESE BUILDING MATERIALS AREN'T STRONG ENOUGH FOR THE BRIDGE!

THEY COST LESS, SO USE THEM ANYWAY!

EXAMPLES! BASED ON REAL-LIFE

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Who does it?

- **Anyone who is a sinner is capable of doing it.** That means ALL of us.
 - ↳ Management
 - ↳ Workers
 - ↳ Suppliers
 - ↳ Customers
 - ↳ Volunteers
 - ↳ Non-workers
- **In most cases, not only is it preventable... but doing it is also a violation of Scriptural teachings!**
 - ↳ **Our actions will be one of the following:**
 - ★ An expression of love for God and neighbor.
 - ★ A satisfying of self and our sinful nature/flesh (or *anything* that isn't love for God/neighbor).
- **What can we do about it?**
 - ↳ We might be in a position where we can attempt to restrain and direct the actions of others. But our #1 obligation is to deal with *our own* actions – because *what we do will affect others*.

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♦ Work is a MORAL issue. ♦

"Work," in its **broadest sense**, includes *all* legitimate human endeavors that focus on people and things. This includes *necessary* activities, as well as those that are *voluntary*; whether or not they result in a reward (pay). **Never does it mean that we can exclude God from the activity**, since God is the one who originally commanded us to work, and we are ultimately to do it *for him*.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may **rule** ..." [God] said to them, "... fill the earth and **subdue** it. **Rule** over [everything]"

Genesis 1:26a, 28a (NIV)

- **God was basically telling them: "Learn about creation and use it (in beneficial ways)!"** As we progress through Scripture, we see this broad concept of "work" developing into all areas of life.

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- **The intention of God's command:** We are to have *productive* lives. We are *not* to be merely *consuming* whatever we can get our hands on! Our lives are to be characterized by a *giving* attitude, not a *taking* one!

Our people must learn to devote themselves to **doing what is good**, in order to **provide for urgent needs** and **not live unproductive lives**.

Titus 3:14 (NIV)

- **There will be situations in which one has to *receive***, rather than *give*.
 - ✓ Typical examples: small children, the elderly, the sick or seriously handicapped, a temporary loss of income, tragedy, etc.
 - ✓ *But this is not to be the normal way people should expect to live.* (Otherwise, the above command would be unnecessary!)
- **Here is our ultimate obligation**, when focusing on "work" in its broadest sense:

And as for you, brothers and sisters, **never tire of doing what is good**.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 (NIV)

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Now we're going to focus here is on "work" in its narrower sense: doing something, ① whether out of necessity/force or voluntarily; and ② often for pay or other types of compensation. We tend to use words such as "job" or "occupation" to describe these things.

- **Scripture has a lot to say** about people doing work – why and how they should do it. For instance...
- ✓ The importance of work to provide for one's own needs (rather than demanding free hand-outs from others).

You should mind your own business and **work** with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and **so that you will not be dependent on anybody**.

1 Thessalonians 4:11b-12 (NIV)

Surely you recall, brothers, our labor and toil. We **worked** night and day **so that we would not be a burden to anyone** ...

1 Thessalonians 2:9a (BSB)

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- ✓ Working with the goal of helping *others* who are unable to do so.

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must **work, doing good** with his own hands, **that he may have something to share with the one in need**.

Ephesians 4:28 (BSB)

- ✓ Working with the goal of honoring God – as we should in *all* that we do.

And **whatever you do**, in word or deed, do it all **in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father** through Him.

Colossians 3:17 (BSB)

So whether you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do it all **for the glory of God**.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

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- **Scripture teaches us many principles**, through commands, instructions and examples, which are applicable to all types of work situations.
- ✓ What Scripture says about *one* type of work, can teach us principles that apply to *other* types of work. For instance, "how-to-work" instructions given to *slaves* teach principles that apply to *non-slaves*.

Defining slavery in the Bible, in terms of modern-day situations (or caricatures) is to distort Scripture.

At the time the Bible was written, there were a wide variety of potential work arrangements. We might divide them into two categories: "slaves" and "hired workers." However, within these categories, there were a wide range of situations.

- ✓ When Scripture was obeyed, Jewish *slaves* were often treated like *family members*. It was often a *temporary* situation and was sometimes a *voluntarily chosen* relationship.
- ✓ Sometimes *hired workers* had worse work situations than did slaves – and also less long-term security.

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- **It's not wrong to enjoy the results of our work** (when possible) – not just the pay, but also the sense of accomplishment, awareness of how it benefits others, and more.

Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, **to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.**

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (NIV)

- ✓ If this is not possible, then there is still the *eternal* aspect to consider – and the final Day of Judgment, when all will be made right. Whatever your situation, *keep doing what is good!* (God gives you the ability to do it – Ephesians 2:10, etc.)

God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by **persistence in doing good** seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give **eternal life**. ... There will be ... **glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good**: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. **For God does not show favoritism.**

Romans 2:6-7, 9a, 10-11 (NIV)

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- **Don't have the attitude that many people have!** God has called you to be *different!*

WHY SHOULD I DO A GOOD JOB, WHEN NOBODY ELSE DOES?

THEY WILL EXPERIENCE THE WRATH OF GOD!

WHY SHOULD *YOU* CHOOSE TO EXPERIENCE THE WRATH OF GOD, JUST BECAUSE **EVERYONE ELSE** HAS CHOSEN TO DO SO?

God "will repay each person according to what they have done." ... for those who are **self-seeking** and who **reject the truth and follow evil**, there will be **wrath and anger**. There will be **trouble and distress** for **every human being who does evil**... **For God does not show favoritism.**

Romans 2:6, 8-9a, 11 (NIV)

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- **If you are punished for doing good**, just make sure that it is *good* that you are being punished for, and not *evil* (such as laziness, carelessness, rebellious attitude, etc.).

But if you **suffer for doing good** and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.

1 Peter 2:20b-21; 3:15a (NIV)

REMEMBER WHO YOUR MASTER ("LORD") IS!

For it is **better**, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good **than for doing evil**.

1 Peter 2:17 (NIV)

- **Realize that both workers and managers are sinners.** You shouldn't be surprised when sinners sin! And to whatever degree *you* don't follow God's instructions... *you place yourself in the same category as they*.

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★ **Your work has value!** ★

- In doing work – assuming it's not something forbidden in Scripture – you are honoring God and benefitting people!
- Though sin in the world has caused work to lose much of its enjoyment and satisfaction, doing it to honor God is *still* rewarding – eternally, and (often) in this present life.



God doesn't divide life into two "compartments" – *secular* and *sacred*! He considers it *all* to be *sacred*.

- ✓ These two terms used to mean two different spheres of life – *both of which were ruled by God*.
- ✓ It's the wicked – atheists – who have redefined these concepts. They have removed God from the *secular*... and stripped the *sacred* from having any real meaning for life.

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What about the lazy?

- **We are not referring to those who are genuinely unable to work** – young children, the aged, handicapped, sick, etc.

- ✓ There are *many* commands, instructions and examples in Scripture about God's people taking care of *each other*.

If anyone with earthly possessions sees his brother* in need, but withholds his compassion from him, how can the love of God abide in him?

1 John 3:17 (BSB)

* REFERS TO A FELLOW-BELIEVER

- ✓ Taking care of our Christian *family* comes *first*. But doing good for the *unsaved* is a part of following Jesus. ("Doing good" is not the same as giving free "handouts" to everyone who wants one.)

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to **everyone**, and **especially to the family of faith**.

Galatians 6:10 (BSB)

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- **Throughout Scripture, the lazy are condemned by God.**
 - ✓ They will always make excuses, no matter how preposterous the excuse may be.
 - ✓ They are like leeches, constantly *wanting* and not *contributing* good to society.
 - ✓ The only way to make them work is by brute force!
 - ✓ The fruit of their choices is often poverty and hunger. Yet they will blame *others* for the results of *their own* actions.
- **How should we respond to such people?**
 - ✓ Lazy people are living in sin. We need to encourage them to *repent* of their sin, rather than *encouraging* and *rewarding* their sin, by giving them free handouts.

For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule:
"The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

2 Thessalonians 3:10 (NIV)

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- **The book of Proverbs** has much to say about lazy people – often called "sluggards." *Even insects are smarter than they are!*

Go to **the ant**, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Proverbs 6:6-8 (NIV)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LAZY ...

... AND FOR THE REST OF US

We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to **settle down** and **work to earn their own living**. As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, **never get tired of doing good**.

2 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (NLT)

People who are *not* lazy will be willing to do *something*. If they cannot find a job for *pay*, they can volunteer to do something helpful for *free*. "Love for neighbor" does *not* require payment!

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HOW can I do my job the right way?

- **Learn from Scripture:** Scripture is full of basic principles about work, attitude, values, etc. As you read Scripture, think about ways you can apply what you find. (You might already be applying it...or you might need to improve.)
 - ✓ Learning what the Bible says is the *first* (and most important) step. Applying it comes next.
- **Learn from other people** – observing and contrasting those who do the job well with those who don't.
- **Persecution is possible.** Some people (which could include managers or fellow-employees) might not appreciate you doing what is right. Because of this, you could get *persecuted* for what you do – *but this is no different than in any other area of life*.
 - ✓ Remember the Day of Judgment. *Those who oppose you are not the one you will answer to – and their own judgment will not be pleasant. It will do you *no good* to join them in their sin!*

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What if I have to oppose or refuse to do something?

- **In some matters:** It may be difficult to know how to respond – especially when many factors are involved. Whatever you do... Love for God comes *first*.
 - ✓ Commit your situation to God. And commit the end-results to God – even if things don't turn out the way you had hoped.
- **If the matter involves going against an authority's instructions**, there may be consequences – and you may have to accept it. [If they violate your *legal* rights, you will have to decide whether to pursue that issue, or to just let things be.]
- **Regardless of your response (whether you comply or refuse to comply), there may be times when you *later* wish you had done things differently.** Sometimes, you might be able to change the situation... sometimes not. Either way, you need to commit the whole situation to God, who has promised to use even *bad* situations to accomplish *good* in your life (though sometimes that good won't be seen until eternity arrives).

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OUR MISSION:

Some people are offended when we suggest that they give God *one* day of the week...

Yet our actual obligation is to live for God *seven* days a week.

- Under normal conditions, *six* of those days will be characterized by activities that focus on love for *neighbor* (as well as for God).
- Since these activities can be described by the word "work" (in its broadest sense), do it in a way that honors God!

Whatever you do, **work** at it with your whole being, **for the Lord** and not for men, because you know that **you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as your reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.**

Colossians 3:23-24 (BSB)

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Credits

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