

As unto the Lord or as unto Self?

Week 3

The highest reward for a man's toil is
not what he gets for it but what he
becomes by it. —*John Ruskin*

A Biblical View of Work

Someone recently asked me if I saw my job as a calling from God. Here is my response.

Articulating my thoughts on this is tougher than I thought. I started by trying to put things in context.

What do I believe?

I believe the Lord is in charge.
I believe the Lord has provided
all that I have.
I believe all that I have is His.

If Psalm 139:8-9 is true—*“If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me”*. . .then I feel that the Lord has a pretty good grip on me down on the fourth floor of the SunTrust Center.

Well then,

- 1) If God is in charge and
- 2) if we are following Him, then
- 3) where we are at work or what we pursue every day in retirement is where God has placed us to do His work or where He has allowed us to be to do His work.

True, we have choices, and we make choices; but God has a hand in where we are. The Lord can use us, and He will use us to spread the Good News of

Jesus. He could do this himself, but He has chosen us to be about this for Him - He has chosen to use us to build His Kingdom. If He is going to do that, then He is going to use us where we are. I guess that sort of answers the question.

I don't think the Lord is a member of any political party. I don't think He is a SunTrust stockholder or a Fast Union stockholder. I don't think He has taken a side in the Cola wars. He owns it all.

So, while I think He has provided all that I have, I don't think He is overly concerned about where I work. I think He is more concerned with what I do once I get there. I just think He wants me to work wherever He has put my feet, in a way that glorifies Him.

Some of us work in Christian business; many of us are in business of all types and sizes that have a different primary mission. But Colossians 3:17 tells us, *“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* Then Colossians 3:23 adds, *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if working for the Lord, not for men. . .”*

I guess I just try my best to make sure that my actions, reactions, responses, comments to people and general everyday interactions, reflect the fact that I view Jesus as Lord and that there is something bigger going on than what we are about at work. That doesn't mean I don't work hard and expect others to do the same, but it does mean that I approach work in a context that may be a little different. I have to hire people and

fire people, correct behavior and conduct performance reviews that aren't always easy, but I try to do it all with an approach and attitude that, hopefully, is tempered by the Lord. Have I got this down perfectly? Hardly! I'll be trying to improve on this all my life.

What does a Christ-centered person look like at work or in retirement pursuits?

- They are principled, disciplined, and balanced.
- They probably aren't angered easily and they show a concern for others.
- They have a sense of humor and are willing to take the extra time to be an encourager.

Although I'm not a workplace evangelist, I try to be a little different and that difference is Jesus. I hope sometimes people can see more than me. I hope sometimes people can see Him in spite of me.

So, is my work a calling provided by God? I think so. It is part of my life ministry.

Steve Davis
Banker; CLC Grad

Day 1 - Audience of One Scripture Memory

1. What is the context surrounding the verse?

2. *Observation:* what do you see? Mark with your pen on the verse below significant observations as we did in the *How to Study* module.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if working for the Lord, not for men. - Colossians 3:23

Summarize the main truth of the verse.

3. *Interpretation:* what does it mean? Ask a few what-type and why-type questions.

What-type questions

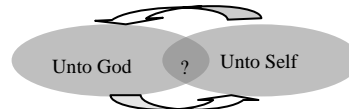
Why-type questions

Think about how you would answer them.

4. *Application:* What would a Christian do to apply this verse?

5. *Actualization:* How would you apply the verse in your own life?

Now memorize it.



An Inner Gyroscope

A gyroscope is an instrument that stabilizes and keeps an object, vehicle, or ship on course. Its unique design resists motion that would make the vehicle or ship change its course. Our

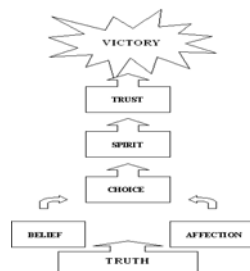
understanding of our calling is like a spiritual inner gyroscope. It keeps us on track, gives us a sense of what we should say yes to and what we should say no to.

The Puritans, who probably did more thinking on this subject than any other group in the history of the church, distinguished between a Christian's *general* calling and his or her *personal* calling. The general calling was the calling all Christians shared, and that was to pray, to build up the body of Christ, to give, to serve one another, to be a witness, and to share the Gospel with others. The personal calling is a calling ordained and given to a particular person in accord with the gifts and talents God has given that person along with the position in society he occupies. Your personal calling includes the roles you have in your family, in your church, and in the community, as well as the job that provides your living.

Whatever work we do, we should be doing it “as unto the Lord and through the power of the Holy Spirit (the exchanged life). We should work with this motive. We are called by God so we now work with the knowledge that He is the *boss*, the *CEO*, the *owner*.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.

1. How does this truth relate to your work?



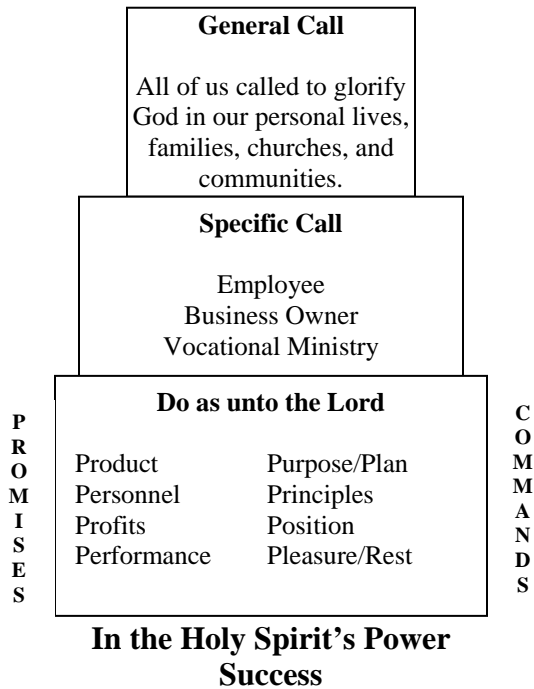
2. Evaluate yourself on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest, as to how God is getting the glory in the following areas related to work:

| | Rating |
|---|--------|
| Following an honest work ethic | |
| Keeping and modeling a positive attitude | |
| Using my gifts, abilities, and talents | |
| Honoring God in my speech* (*such as avoiding profanity, gossip, and off-color or ethnically-oriented jokes) | |
| Valuing contributions of others | |
| Managing the responsibility my company gives me | |

3. In 2 Corinthians 2:17, Paul says he doesn't carry out his calling for profit but as one sent from God. Paul had an audience of One—God! At work, how can you exemplify your confidence that your greatest audience is Jesus?

4. Is there anything about God being the audience and observer of your work performance that is hard to accept or understand? If so, what?

**GOD
YOU
Gifts and Talents**



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Day 2 - Lordship

1. Read Luke 6:46-49. Notice how lordship and foundation are connected. How do the concepts of *lordship*, *foundation*, *audience of One*, and *working as for the Lord* relate to you and your work?

2. Read Colossians 3:23-25. Clearly God is going to reward you with work done unto Him. How does this motivate you as it relates to eternity?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24. You may be thinking you need to prove your commitment by going into so-called full-time ministry. Three times Paul uses a phrase such as "*the situation God called him to*" in these verses. How do Paul's words influence your view of your work?

4. How does the reality of God's call influence your attitude about your work?

What do you need to do to make the shift by His power?

**SUMMARY OF KEY
MOTIVATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

- I am called by God at my present career.
- I will work "as unto the Lord."(Col 3:23)
- Jesus is the Lord of my life and my career. (Luke 6:46)
- God is my audience of one. (Col. 3:24b)
- I am doing my work for the glory of God. (I Corinthians 10:31)
- I will operate ethically with love, justice, and holiness.

Write a paragraph stating how practicing these would change the way you work in your career.

What is keeping you from making these principles a vital part of your work world?

Day 3 - Recalibrating your Moral Compass

You can't learn too soon that the most useful thing about a principle is that it can always be sacrificed to expedience.
—W. Somerset Maugham

(The following chapter came from *Profit At Any Cost*. This book was written by a CLC graduate, Dr. Jerry Fleming. Jerry is the owner and former CEO of a manufacturing company. After turning his company over to another CLC grad to run, Jerry got his doctorate and wrote this book from his experience in the marketplace.)

The four ethical principles—don't deceive, don't steal, don't covet, and treat others as you would want them to treat – you—certainly won't cover every situation you will encounter in your career. They will, however, provide a moral bedrock on which to anchor your values. When the storms of business come, and they will come, you and your

organization will be able to ride them out because your ethical foundation is solid. You will experience greater peace, security, and as research indicates, higher profits. Understanding how these principles apply to business is the first step in recalibrating your moral compass to the true north, the direction that leads to personal and professional dividends.

Deceiving

How can I trust a man not to lie when I would lie in his place?

(One scenario from the book) concerns an automobile dealership adding hidden fees. Adding fees not revealed in the negotiations is one of the most common deceptions. Most of us have experienced this practice in some form or another. Most of us have bought a big-ticket item and found that the final bill was much larger than we anticipated. Certainly, some of the added taxes and fees are legitimate, but some are not.

My point is not that you need to challenge every charge and fee you don't understand or hadn't agreed to (although I would highly recommend this practice). My point is that we shouldn't have to. If we don't deceive each other in our business dealings, then we won't have to question everything about those exchanges.

We couldn't conduct business if we didn't have a reasonable expectation that the people with whom we were doing business were honest and were not out to deceive us. We couldn't sell or buy our products and services without having a battery of attorneys drawing up contracts and making sure that every *i* was dotted and every *t* was crossed. There wouldn't be enough courts in the land to handle all the suits brought as a result of breach of

contract. Have you noticed how the volume of lawsuits has increased in the past thirty years?

Immanuel Kant, the eighteenth-century philosopher, asked, "What would happen if lying were generally accepted? What would happen if it were any everyday practice of the business world that one person would borrow money from another with no intention whatever of repaying the loan?" His answer, of course, was that conducting business would be impossible. I would add that civilized life as we know it could not exist.

The opposite course is to be truthful and honest in all of your dealings. "Let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' be no," and over the long run, this will contribute to your success. It takes a while for people to develop a level of trust, to believe what you say. It doesn't happen overnight. We are by nature skeptical, and for good reason; we've all been burned. However, once you gain a reputation for being honest and fair, it's worth a lot.

I have been doing business with Moody's Tire & Auto Service in Franklin, Tennessee, for at least fifteen years. At first, I questioned everything they did, but over the years, they proved to be trustworthy and reliable. Their prices are fair, but more importantly, I can depend on them to maintain my car and not take advantage of my ignorance of automobiles. Yes, Jim Moody has made a few mistakes during our relationship. But the few times he turned out to be wrong, he made things right, and I never doubted his sincerity or honesty. The bottom line is, I trust him. I won't even consider taking my automobiles to someone else. There

aren't enough advertisement dollars in the world to buy this kind of loyalty. I can't overemphasize this basic truth: people do business with people they trust.

Stealing

"I don't understand," asks the accountant. "If you are selling these copiers way under cost, how are you showing a profit?" "Simple," was the reply, "we make money by fixing them."

Stealing involves more than taking something without permission. Taking supplies from personal use, making personal phone calls on company time, and padding your expense account are all stealing. Also, withholding something that belongs to someone else without that person's permission falls under this heading. I love the story about the lady who sent a check to the IRS for three hundred dollars with a note reading, "I cheated on my income tax and haven't been able to sleep since. This check covers half of what I owe. If I continue having trouble sleeping, I'll send the other half." We can all identify with the woman because of the way the government wastes our money. However, she is stealing from you and me because we have to make up the difference with higher taxes.

Unlike this woman, I don't cheat on my taxes. However, I really don't like sending my money to the IRS, not because I disagree with the philosophy of taxation, but because I believe a significant portion of what I send will be wasted on nonessential and ineffective programs. Some programs are simply ill conceived. But even if they are well intended, by the time most have gone through the House and Senate and have been signed by the president, they have

been so altered by compromise to special interests or have had so many amendments attached, that they no longer accomplish what they were originally designed for. In my opinion, this also is stealing. It's diverting our taxes into programs that benefit special interests.

Raising the price because of a special demand, the unethical behavior demonstrated (earlier in the book in "Supply and Demand,") is not an uncommon practice. My wife, Sonin, and I bought a Miata Limited Edition 1992 when Miatas were hot. Only four thousand of these special cars were made that year. Because the demand was so great and the supply was exhausted, the dealer charged one thousand dollars more than the price another dealer quoted me. The problem, of course, was the first dealer didn't have the car. Yes, I bought the Miata from the second dealer because he was the only game in town, but do you think I'll ever buy another car from him?

I have been involved in business activities for thirty-five years, and during that time, I know I've inadvertently done something similar to what this dealer did. I remember one situation where, although the price gouging wasn't as blatant, the results were the same. Business at my company was down; we needed sales. I had an opportunity to make a large sale if we would lower our price on a particular product. I made the decision to cut the price and get the order.

After the deal was consummated, Ned Jones, our marketing director, came into my office. He sat down, looked at me, smiled, and said, "Jerry, I understand why you lowered the price—we need the

business; however, another customer who has ordered this same product recently is paying a higher price. Is what we're doing ethical?"

Boy, did it hit me. I had been guilty of charging whatever the customer was willing to pay. Ned was gracious, as always, and encouraged me to do something I didn't want to do. I called W.T. Brogdon, my customer and my friend, and told him we were reducing the price and I explained why. At the time, I felt like a fool, and I didn't think W.T. would understand. However, in hindsight, it was a good move, especially for the long haul. He may have been unsure of my motive at the time or thought we were stupid, but ultimately, he believed we were being honest and that we wouldn't take advantage of him in the future.

Coveting

You can't depend on your eyes when
your imagination is out of focus.
—Mark Twain

Coveting includes being selfish and having an unreasonable desire for something that doesn't belong to you. We all want things we don't have, but when this desire becomes unreasonable, or if in order to attain the object of our desire, we must harm someone else, then it is covetous.

(Another example is when the) company management decides to drop the insurance and let the employees fend for themselves. They put profits before their employees. Of course, a company has to make a profit or it will go out of business. However, as I've emphasized, realizing short-term profit at the expense

of employees is not only unethical but can be poor business in the long run. When my company was facing this problem, we chose to continue to insure our employees even though profits would suffer. At the time, the decision was painful, but looking back, we really had no choice. If we wanted our people's loyalty, we had to take care of them during tough times. As it turned out, this decision eventually was profitable for us and for the insurance company that took a chance on us because of our choice of people over profits.

A corporation has to make a profit or it will go out of business. Also the stockholders deserve a return on their investment. (In another example) management expanded the company at the expense of (no pun intended) profits. This is a risky endeavor. If there are no profits, the growth has to be financed through debt, and there may not be resources to repay the debt. The company that inspired this example ultimately went under, and the stockholders lost their investment. This is okay if the investors are sophisticated, are aware of this risk, and approve of the program. However, in this case, it was a publicly held company, and the investors didn't know of the expansion plans until it was too late. Many people suffered because management coveted being an international company.

Do not do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Their taste may not be the same. —George Bernard Shaw

Treat Others As You Would Want Them to Treat You

The Golden Rule. Confucius advocated it, Jewish Rabbi Hillel advocated it, and Jesus advocated it: Treat others as you

want them to treat you. It works in your personal life, and it will work in your business activities.

I suspect most of us have known someone who has floated checks, either in personal or business situations, or we have experienced it ourselves. When I first started my career, I worked for a company that not only floated checks but also mailed out unsigned checks. The vendor would then have to call, return the check, and wait for it to be mailed again. This would give the company an additional week of float. Fortunately, by the time I learned of the ploy, the company had been sold and the problem eliminated.

Remember the story of Lockheed Martin being offered insurance against a rocket launch failure? The company would get paid even if the rocket blew up on the launch pad. After a lot of soul searching, the chairman, Norman Augustine, chose not to take the insurance even though it made all the economic sense in the world, and Lockheed Martin had every legal right to do so. In this case, you and I are the customer. How do you feel about their decision? I don't know about you, but I want Lockheed Martin to share in the financial loss if there is an unsuccessful launch. I don't care how committed their engineers are. If it affects their wallets, then that's another strong incentive to make sure everything goes as planned. I applaud the management for their decision.

Isn't it interesting to compare Mr. Augustine's attitude to that of the Enron executives [of the infamous 2001 financial scandal that caused many shareholders to lose their life savings or retirement nest eggs] who negotiated plea agreements with federal

prosecutors? Only when their assets were threatened and they were facing prosecution did they agree to turn state's evidence and testify to the corruption within the organization. Only when their backs were against the wall and it was in their best interest, were they willing to do the right thing.

Summary

Are there moral absolutes that apply to business? Yes! Most of the ethical dilemmas faced by business people can be addressed by these four principles:

1. Don't deceive. Don't misrepresent, withhold information, or give misleading information.
2. Don't covet. Coveting includes being selfish and having an unreasonable desire for something that doesn't belong to you.
3. Don't steal. Stealing includes theft, breach of contract (including verbal and implied contract), and lack of good faith effort.
4. Treat others as you would want them to treat you. This includes being fair, seeking justice, acting in good faith, and not using others.

My research indicated that adhering to these four principles will give you confidence in your judgment and decision making. Having a moral basis for making decisions will reduce stress and anxiety and promote peace and rest. It's no wonder my research found that managers become more ethical as they age. Older managers simply have had more experience with the consequences of good and bad judgment.

Used by permission from *Profit At Any Cost? Why Business Ethics Make Sense* by Jerry Fleming

Day 4 - Third Principle

Principle Three: Communicate to people by name with respect. Never use or impose demeaning, trivializing, or derogatory names on others.

The third commandment is "Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God." Do not take God's name in a vain or empty fashion. The point of the command is about communication. No relationships of any substance and value can exist without good communication. Pronouncing someone's name initiates interpersonal communication. Names represent persons, who and what they are. Imposing a trivializing or demeaning name on someone or some group is an act of violence against their reality. Not knowing or making an effort to learn people's names is a clear indicator that we do not value communication and relationships with them.

God commands people not to misuse His name—that is, to say His name when they don't intend to start a conversation with Him or, at least, describe Him to others. Profanity, cursing, and falsely swearing oaths in God's name—these are ways of misusing God's name. The proper way to use God's name is to pray, to call upon God, to sing about what He has done, to lament how tough life is and how you wish He would help out.

Good teachers and leaders learn people's names and then use them to initiate relationship-building conversations. Ethical people use the names by which people or groups ask to be called (e.g. "women" not "ladies," "David" not "Dave," "African-Americans" not "Negroes," even "San Francisco" not

“Frisco”). Naming is an act of power. Let people name themselves.

Day 5 – Becoming A Person of Influence

Read Chapter 3.

1. List one or two truths from this chapter and record a Biblical reference if possible.

2. How and where could they be applied in your current work situation?

3. Who do you want to pray about and focus on this week with this truth?



The One Thing

As you look back over the Home Study and the book we read this week, what is the One Thing that was most significant to you from your personal study?

Why was it important to you?

What will you do in the power of the Holy Spirit about this one thing?

Be ready to share in class with your brothers.

How 'm I Doing? How are We Doing?

Are the items below true of you and your brothers? Take time to talk together about challenges and triumphs you have each had in trying to follow the basic guidelines below. Share ways to help keep each other accountable and enthusiastic.

- All come to class with the home study activities completed.
- All come to class with current book read.
- All come with verse memorized.
- All arrive on time.
- All stay the whole time.
- All bring their Bibles.
- All bring the CLC Curriculum.
- Each absent member receives a call from another member to tell him he was missed and to share about the meeting.
- How is the quality of your quiet time?
- Are all doing the lunch matrix?