

# **Truth for Today**

*The Bible teaching radio programme*

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## **Why Christianity should make me a better employee/employer**

Good morning. The subject of my talk today is: why Christianity should make me a better employee/employer. I would like to begin with a personal experience that really challenged me as a Christian employer recently and should apply to you whether you are an employee or an employer.

One of our employees was leaving after working with us for two years. He had been a good worker and he had a good character. He always told us the truth about what his plans were and gave us good notice when he would leave. The new job he was going to was a step up and it would help him eventually move abroad which was always his desire. So we decided to take him and some other key members of staff out for a meal to show our appreciation to him for what he had done for us. He had become very well liked by all of the staff so there were many presents given and tears shed on that night.

During his time he spent with us I had many conversations about his beliefs and was able to simply tell him the way of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So I thought I would buy him a Bible and pray that the Lord would use it for his blessing. On the night, I gave a short speech indicating his honesty, good character and thanking him for all he had done. I then gave him the wrapped up parcel and as I was handing it to him, he said "it's a Bible" and I said, "yes" and he happily accepted it. Imagine how I would have felt had it not been a Bible! What would he have thought?

As I went over the events of that evening later in my mind I was really challenged! Questions were flooding into my mind. Over the two years he worked for us had I always displayed Christ in my life? Were there times when I said something I should not? Was my behaviour always an example? Did I always treat people fairly? Bottom line was that I had just given someone a Bible and told him about God over two years but had I been an example of Christ to him?

Please pray for this man that God may speak to him and that he may find the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

What a challenge this was to me and should also be to you if you are an employer no matter what circumstances you find yourselves in: every hour of every day we need to be on guard because we are an example of our Lord. It is very difficult to keep this standard and I trust that the talk this morning may be an encouragement as well as a challenge to you.

Let us first look at the employee. I always like to look at people in the Bible and see the real circumstances that they went through in their lives and learn from the way they behaved. Let's look at a story that I love: the story of Joseph. We will be able to see how Joseph behaved as an employee in the most trying of circumstances. If you have a Bible please turn to Genesis 39:1 to 6: "Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmeelites, who had taken him down there. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favour in his sight, and he served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house, and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance".

Sometimes we think that the whole world is against us, and we cry to God as to why He has allowed us to be in certain circumstances. When we look at Joseph none of us can complain but we can take lessons how Joseph coped with very trying circumstances.

Joseph was a well behaved obedient son to his father Jacob but he was hated by his own brothers; he was attacked and sold to traders who took him to the slave market in Egypt. He was bought by a man called Potiphar, a high ranking official of the Pharaoh to serve in his house. He had every right to think WHY? What have I done to deserve this? But Joseph was a great example of God in every area of his life while he worked for Potiphar. Verse 3 tells us that Potiphar saw that the LORD was with him. WHAT A TESTIMONY! His employer saw he was different and he saw that he could be trusted to look over all his affairs. Everything was going well until Potiphar's wife tried to seduce

Joseph. She falsely accused him and he ended up in jail. Let's go down to 39:20-23 to continue the story. "Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in prison. But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and He gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; and whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him, and whatever he did, the Lord made it to prosper".

Once again you can hear Joseph cry WHY? But Joseph continued to serve every one that ruled over him in the same way. Upright, honest, well mannered, held no grudges, and also waited for God's time for things to change. Sometimes we try to change things ourselves instead of being patient and waiting on the Lord, with disastrous consequences. God had a great plan for Joseph's life, just as He may have for your life. You are no different to Joseph. You have the same God that was with Joseph in every situation he found himself. You can call upon Him in the same way that no doubt Joseph did. Joseph always knew that God was with him. God has His eye on you, God may want to use you in some way or another. It is your responsibility to be ready and of use when he wants to use you! But you must trust and depend upon Him. We should also be someone that our workmates can rely on and trust, one who can help and give guidance to others. Joseph was able to help his prison-mates, the butler and the baker. They had come to trust Joseph and to share with him their dreams. Can you be trusted if someone told you their deepest problems?

So how can we be like Joseph? Do you live a consistent Godly life every day? How can we achieve this consistency? The first thing I would say is that you can't just be a Sunday Christian. There is no way you can lead a consistent life by turning your Christianity off and on. Our desire as a Christian should be to please God; that needs to be at all times not just when it suits us. I believe that we need to have a balanced life: work, time for personal study, prayer and worship, time for your family, time for your local church or gathering, a time when we can just be still to reflect and meditate. Psalm 46:10 says "Be still and know that I am God". We also need a time to relax. All very difficult in the world in which we live, which never stops, and is always demanding more from us. If we don't have a structured life with God always first in our lives, we can easily feel stressed out and irritated; then we find it difficult to make correct decisions and judgements.

If we look in the book of Ephesians from chapter 4 to the end of chapter 6 we see the ideal attitude the believer should have at work. 6:5-9 says: "Bondservants, be obedient to those that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. And, you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening: knowing that your own master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him".

We can see in these verses that in everything we do, we should do our best, as unto the Lord. Obedient to our employers, working hard, never late, never taking advantage, honest and trustworthy. A Christian should be the best employee there is!

Verse 9 speaks about the employer whom we will look at next but before we do, just a quick word to those of you who have Christian employers. 1 Timothy 6:2 says: "And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things".

This is quite a challenge because often there is jealousy and ill-feeling toward the employer, and this could spill over into the local church and cause problems. So we must be careful that our workmates see that there is a common bond between us, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I would like to say a few words specifically to the employers, although the characteristics I have mentioned apply to all. It's a tough world that we live in! There are so many employment laws that it is very easy to make the wrong call, and get into trouble. We need to respect the laws of the land even although at times they seem very unfair. We need to be consistent and fair in our dealings with staff, not showing favour to one rather than the other. We need to set a good example and lead from the front.

Colossians 4:1-2 say: "Masters give your bondservants that which is just and fair, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving".

We must also be careful that we do not take advantage of our position and to be always preaching at our employees. Our behaviour, our words, and our walk, are the greatest sermon we can preach. We must pray for our work and our staff. I used to think it was wrong to pray for simple work problems but through experience I know God is interested in even the smallest issue you have. 1 Peter 5:7 tells us: "Casting all your care upon Him because; He cares for you."

A few verses in the book of Philippians 4 can also be an encouragement for you! Verses 5-7: "Let your gentleness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus".

It is important to remember that in verse 6 it says "with thanksgiving". Let us remember to give Him all our praise and thanksgiving even in the most trying times. He is worthy of our praise.

1 Peter 2:13 says: "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake", and it goes on in later verses to say "servants be submissive to your masters with all fear".

So whether you are an employee or employer everything we do must honour and glorify the Lord. If we really appreciate the cost of our salvation, anything we have to suffer for the Lord's sake should feel quite insignificant. I trust that the Lord will bless this word to you; and that you may be encouraged in your work life to be a shining example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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