

Colossians – Week 12 – Under New Management – Bible Study Helps

Title: Under New Management: Working for the Lord in Every Area of Life

Sermon Summary:

This exposition of Colossians 3:22-4:1 presents a transformative vision for Christian work and service. The sermon challenges believers to recognize that salvation places them "under new management"—Jesus Christ becomes the ultimate Master and employer of every Christian's life. Whether in difficult circumstances, serving challenging bosses, or leading others, Christians are called to work "as unto the Lord" rather than merely for human approval. The message emphasizes that God does not call believers to rebel against earthly authorities or escape difficult situations, but rather to transform those situations through faithful, heartfelt service motivated by devotion to Christ. For employees, this means obedient, sincere work regardless of circumstances. For employers and leaders, this means treating those under their care with justice, equality, and dignity—reflecting Christ's own leadership. The sermon powerfully argues that this biblical approach to work has the potential to transform workplaces, families, schools, and ultimately entire societies as Christians live out their faith in everyday contexts.

Key Points:

- Salvation assigns new authority in our lives—Jesus Christ becomes our ultimate Master and Lord
- God does not remove Christians from difficult circumstances but reassigns their ultimate authority to Christ
- Believers are commanded to "obey in all things your masters according to the flesh" within the boundaries of God's Word
- Christian service must not be "eye service" (working only when watched) but wholehearted effort "as to the Lord"
- Motivation matters—Christians work with "singleness of heart, fearing God" rather than merely pleasing people
- God promises eternal rewards for faithful labor and consequences for unfaithfulness, with "no respect of persons"
- Christian employers and leaders must treat those under their care with justice and equality, reflecting Christ's example
- The workplace becomes a mission field where faithful Christian witness can lead others to salvation
- Every aspect of life—home, work, school—is an opportunity to serve Christ and bring Him glory
- A transformed work ethic flows from understanding that "ye serve the Lord Christ" in whatever you do

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Scripture Reference:

- Colossians 3:1-25 and 4:1 (primary passage)
- Ephesians 6:5-9 (parallel passage on servants and masters)
- 1 Corinthians 7 (being content in one's calling)
- Acts 5:29 (obeying God rather than men when commands conflict)
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (bought with a price, not your own)
- 2 Corinthians 5:10 (judgment seat of Christ)
- Galatians 6:7-8 (reaping what you sow)
- Luke 12:48 (to whom much is given, much is required)
- Micah 6:8 (do justly, love mercy, walk humbly)

Stories:

- The illustration of a "large Roman household in A.D. 60" where various servants (cook, tutor, physician, scribe, field hand) all serve different earthly masters by day but gather in the evening to read Scripture and realize they all ultimately serve one Lord, Jesus Christ
- The account of a man condemned to imperial mines in Rome—describing the brutal conditions of "living death" where workers faced choking air, chains, low ceilings, minimal food, and no hope—yet even in such circumstances, God's Word commands obedient service
- The story of a General Electric CEO who held quarterly meetings where managers proposed workplace improvements, approving 80% on the spot, which led to solving a long-standing product defect when employees finally shared their knowledge
- The personal testimony of telling a new boss: "I believe that what the Word of God tells me to do is to work for you as though I'm working for the Lord"
- Reference to Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" with Scrooge and Bob Cratchit as an example of harsh employer-employee relationships that should be transformed by Christian conversion

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Discipleship Questions

How would viewing your current job or daily responsibilities as service directly to Jesus Christ rather than to human authorities change your attitude and work ethic?

The sermon suggests that God does not call Christians to rebel against difficult work situations but to work faithfully within them. How does this challenge modern cultural expectations about standing up for personal rights?

Paul instructed servants and slaves to obey their masters in all things, even in harsh conditions. What does this teach us about God's priorities for transformation—changing systems or changing hearts?

If you truly believed that God sees and will reward every unseen act of faithful work, how would that affect the tasks you find mundane or unappreciated?

The passage warns that believers who do wrong in their work will face consequences from God with no respect of persons. How does this accountability shape your understanding of workplace integrity?

What is the difference between working with eye service as men pleasers versus working with singleness of heart as unto the Lord, and which one honestly describes your current approach?

How might a workplace be transformed if both Christian employees worked as unto the Lord and Christian employers treated workers with justice and equality as the passage commands?

The sermon states that salvation does not remove us from responsibility but reassigns our authority. How does this principle apply to other areas of life beyond the workplace, such as family or community?

If a Christian's testimony at work should point others to Christ, what specific behaviors or attitudes in your work life might be hindering that witness rather than advancing it?

Masters are told to give servants what is just and equal, remembering they have a Master in heaven. How should Christian leaders today balance business objectives with Christ-like care for those under their authority?

Small Group Guide: Under New Management

Colossians 3:22-4:1

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: What's the best or worst job you've ever had, and why? What made the difference in your experience?

Sermon Review (5-10 minutes)

Main Idea: When we become Christians, we come "under new management." Jesus Christ becomes our Master, transforming how we approach work, authority, and service in every area of life.

Key Points:

1. **New Master** - Christians have Jesus Christ as their ultimate authority
 2. **New Motives** - We work "as to the Lord," not just for earthly recognition
 3. **New Example** - Christian leaders must follow Christ's example in how they treat others
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Colossians 3:22-4:1 together.** What stands out to you most from this passage? What challenges you?
2. The sermon emphasized that Paul didn't tell servants to rebel against difficult or unjust situations. Why do you think God's approach was obedience rather than revolution? What was His bigger plan?
3. What does it mean to work "not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (v. 22)? Can you give examples of what this looks like practically?

Personal Reflection

4. **For Employees/Students:** How does viewing your work as "serving the Lord Christ" change your perspective on your current job or studies? What specific attitudes or behaviors might need to change?

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5. **For Leaders/Managers/Parents:** How does verse 4:1 challenge you to treat those under your authority? What does it mean to give them "that which is just and equal"?
6. The sermon mentioned that God is "not a respecter of persons" - He holds everyone accountable regardless of their position. How does this truth affect how you view your work performance and integrity?

Applying the Truth

7. What's the difference between working "as to the Lord" versus working to please people or just get by? Share examples from your own experience.
8. The sermon said, "Your job is not your master. Jesus Christ is your master. Your employer may sign your paycheck, but Jesus Christ is your provider." How does this truth help when facing:
 - An unfair boss or difficult coworkers?
 - Financial stress or feeling undervalued?
 - Mundane or repetitive tasks?
9. Read verse 23: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men." What areas of your work life (or home life, school life) need this "heartily" attitude adjustment?

Going Deeper

10. The sermon pointed out that Paul wrote these instructions to people in far worse working conditions than most of us face (including slaves). How does this historical context challenge our modern complaints about work?
11. How might living out these principles in your workplace create opportunities to share the gospel? Have you seen this happen?
12. For those who are retired or not currently employed: How do these principles apply to your volunteer work, church service, or daily responsibilities?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Salvation doesn't remove us from responsibility—it reassigns our authority to Christ**
- ✓ **Our work ethic and attitude should be different because we're working for the Lord, not just for people**
- ✓ **God sees and rewards faithful labor, even when it goes unnoticed by others**
- ✓ **Christian leaders have a responsibility to treat those under their care with justice and fairness**
- ✓ **There are eternal consequences (rewards or loss) for how we work and lead**

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to implement this week:

For Employees/Students:

- ☐ Start each workday with a prayer: "Lord, I'm working for You today"
- ☐ Identify one area where you've been giving "eye service" and commit to excellence
- ☐ Look for an opportunity to go above and beyond in serving your employer/teacher
- ☐ Pray daily for your boss/supervisor/teacher by name

For Leaders/Managers/Parents:

- ☐ Evaluate: Am I treating those under my care "justly and equally"?
- ☐ Have a conversation with someone you lead to better understand their needs
- ☐ Implement one change that would improve conditions for those you lead
- ☐ Thank and encourage someone under your authority this week

For Everyone:

- ☐ Memorize Colossians 3:23-24
- ☐ Keep a journal this week noting when you worked "as to the Lord" vs. "as to men"
- ☐ Identify one attitude about your work that needs to change and confess it to God

Accountability Questions

(For next week's check-in)

1. Did you complete your chosen challenge? What happened?
2. How did viewing your work as "unto the Lord" change your week?
3. What was the biggest obstacle you faced in applying this teaching?
4. Did you have any opportunities to share why you work differently?

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for transformation in how group members view their work
- Pray for difficult work situations mentioned by group members

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- Pray for Christian leaders to lead with Christ-like character
 - Pray for open doors to share the gospel in workplaces
 - Pray for unsaved employers, coworkers, and supervisors by name
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Additional Resources for Study

Related Scriptures:

- Ephesians 6:5-9 (parallel passage)
- 1 Peter 2:18-25 (servants and suffering)
- Proverbs 22:29 (excellence in work)
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 (doing all to God's glory)

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- If Jesus were to evaluate my work performance this week, what would He say?
 - Am I more concerned about my earthly boss's approval or God's?
 - Does my work life point people to Christ or away from Him?
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"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." - Colossians 3:23-24

5-Day Devotional: Under New Management

Day 1: A New Master for Every Moment

Reading: Colossians 3:22-24

Devotional: When Christ enters your life, everything changes—including Monday morning. You may clock in at the same job, report to the same supervisor, but spiritually you're under new management. The question isn't whether your work matters, but who you're really working for. Paul's radical instruction to servants—even slaves facing harsh conditions—was to work "as to the Lord." This transforms drudgery into worship, obligation into opportunity. Your earthly boss may sign your paycheck, but Jesus Christ is your true provider. Today, whatever task awaits you—whether in an office, classroom, or home—approach it as though Jesus Himself assigned it. Because He did.

Day 2: The Motive That Changes Everything

Reading: Ephesians 6:5-8

Devotional: Why do you do what you do? This question exposes our hearts. "Eye service" means working only when someone's watching, doing the minimum to get by. But Christians operate from a different motivation: singleness of heart, fearing God. This isn't about earning salvation through performance—it's about living out your salvation through faithfulness. When you scrub that floor, balance those accounts, or teach that lesson, you're serving the Lord Christ. He sees the unseen labor, the unnoticed obedience, the thankless tasks. Your reward isn't limited to earthly recognition or compensation. God promises eternal rewards for faithful service. Let this truth fuel your work today with fresh purpose and joy.

Day 3: No Respect of Persons

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Galatians 6:7-8

Devotional: God plays no favorites. Whether you're a CEO or custodian, student or stay-at-home parent, the same standard applies: faithful obedience to Christ. This truth cuts both ways—it means no special privileges for Christians who slack off, but also no overlooked service for those laboring in obscurity. Every deed done in the body, whether good or bad, will come before Christ's judgment seat. This isn't meant to terrify but to motivate. The Lord you serve is perfectly just. He sees the cruel boss who mistreats you and the faithful employee who perseveres. He rewards accordingly. Your circumstances may feel unfair, but your Judge is not. Work with eternity in view.

Day 4: Leading Like Jesus

Reading: Colossians 4:1; Luke 12:48

Devotional: If you have authority over others—as a parent, supervisor, teacher, or ministry leader—God holds you to a higher standard. Christian leadership isn't about wielding power but stewarding souls. Paul's instruction to masters was revolutionary: treat servants justly and equally, remembering you also have a Master in heaven. This transforms how you manage, discipline, and reward those under your care. Do you see employees as expendable resources or as people to care for? Do you lead with fairness or favoritism? Jesus led with servant-hearted authority, caring for the vulnerable and valuing each person. To whom much is given, much is required. Lead today as one who will give account to the ultimate Master.

Day 5: Turning the World Upside Down

Reading: Acts 17:6; Colossians 3:17

Devotional: Imagine the transformation when these principles invaded the Roman Empire. Slaves working with excellence and joy. Masters treating servants with dignity and fairness. The workplace became a mission field, and every Christian a missionary. This wasn't social revolution through rebellion but spiritual transformation through obedience. When the lost saw Christians working differently, loving genuinely, and serving faithfully, they asked why. The answer? Jesus Christ. This same power is available today. Your workplace, school, or home can become a testimony to the gospel. When you work "as to the Lord" in every word and deed, giving thanks to God the Father through Him, you participate in turning your world upside down. Not through force, but through faithfulness. Start today.