

Christian Discipleship Guide



“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

12. Employers and Employees

The Bible has a great deal to say about how we are to conduct ourselves on our jobs. People spend about one-fourth of their adult lives on the job, so it is essential to learn how the Lord Jesus Christ would have us look at this area of our responsibilities. If we intend to be effective servants of God, we must do so with all our life and not three-fourths of it. We need to have the kind of attitude toward our jobs and our employers (employees) that God would want us to have.

All saved people are called to “Full-Time Christian Service.” The Bible says that our vocation is to serve Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:1). God’s Word is very clear that every saved person is an integral part of the body of Christ and that each member’s contribution is important. God expects every Christian to be involved in the Lord’s work (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:11-16). Our service for God is to be at all times, not just when we go to church (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 4:2).

The primary purpose of our jobs is to support our ministries. Of course, our first ministry is to our family (1 Timothy 3:5; 1 Timothy 5:8). Our second ministry is to our church family (Galatians 6:10). And, our third ministry is to reach the lost for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our resources should be yielded to God’s service. Those resources are to be used to glorify God through the above three ministries.

Our attitude toward our job should be to view our job as a ministry of opportunity, not just a job. For most Christians, our fellow workers are the greatest exposure we have to unsaved people (2 Corinthians 5:10). Our lives may be the only true witness of the Lord Jesus Christ they will ever see. We are a light representing Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:14-16), and our lives should reflect the Bible (2 Corinthians 3:2). We will have a much greater influence on those with whom we spend the most time. Although total strangers are surely an opportunity for a witness, those who can see a consistent testimony of a Christian’s life are much easier to win over to the Lord.

Our attitudes toward our business leaders and the Company for which we work should include obedient service, good will, respect, giving our best, helping the company succeed, being diligent not lazy, and minding our own business. In other words, we should serve as if the Lord Jesus Christ were our employer (Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-24). We should respect the authority of the leader’s position. Obviously, no employer or leader will be correct in every point, and we can certainly and respectfully disagree with them. However, we are to submit to their leadership and use our submission as an opportunity to show them a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:9-10). We should respect the company’s property because it does not belong to us (Leviticus 19:11). We should respect the company’s time by doing eight hours of honest work for eight hours of pay (2 Corinthians 8:21; Colossians 3:22). We are to do the very best we can to help the company succeed and make our employer look good (Romans 12:11; 1 Corinthians 10:24; Proverbs 10:4; Proverbs 18:9; Proverbs 21:25; Proverbs 22:29). Joseph is the greatest example of this in the Bible (Genesis 39-50). And lastly, we should mind our own business and not let someone else’s laziness affect us (1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13).

For those who are employers or leaders, the Bible also shows how they are to relate to those under their leadership. They are to treat their people justly and equally. When they set standards for their subordinates, they are to adhere to those same standards themselves (Colossians 4:1; Ephesians 6:9). That is, they are to “walk the talk.” They should consider the needs of those around them and not be consumed by their own self-interests (Philippians 2:2-3). Even in a leadership position, they should always maintain the attitude of a servant (Mark 10:42-45). And,

they need to be sure not over-extend themselves, that is, they need to consider the following points whenever a promotion or transfer opportunity presents itself:

1. They need to be sure they can handle what their current responsibilities. A great Bible principle is, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much...” (Luke 16:10).
2. They must realize that the more responsibility they have, the more potential there is for problems to arise (James 3:1; Ecclesiastes 8:9).
3. They should realize that the more responsibilities they have, the more time and energy is demanded. They need to be sure the new responsibilities will not hinder their service for God (2 Timothy 2:4).

There may come a time when our job priorities and/or responsibilities might conflict with spiritual matters. Regarding priorities, some conflict between church activities and our work schedule might occur. We cannot quit our job and take some time off work because of a few minor conflicts. We need to remember that our job is a ministry opportunity. However, we must not use our job as an excuse to neglect our responsibilities to our church. We need to maintain a balance in this area. But, when our job responsibilities are contrary to Bible principles, then we must draw the line, such as refusing to lie or steal for our employer, refusing to violate other clear commandments of God, guarding against temptations, and not allowing ourselves to be influenced by sinful activities around us.

There may also come a time when we might experience “persecution” on the job. Most persecution in our culture is a result of the Christian’s own ignorance or lack of personal commitment to the Lord. If someone is being “persecuted,” it is for one of two reasons: their behavior is improper, or their testimony is an offense to someone (1 Peter 3:16-17). Remember that we can expect a certain amount of adversity from the world if we are truly serving Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:12). If we do experience adversity, we need to learn how to commit that adversity to the Lord (1 Peter 2:18-23).

If adversity should become too intense or if a new job opportunity should present itself, there are several factors we should consider when looking for employment.

1. We should take the matter to God in prayer (James 1:5; Philippians 4:6-7).
2. We need to ask ourselves if the new job will destroy what God is trying to build in our life. This is a complex issue and we should not be afraid to seek wise counsel in this area from another brother in Christ that we respect.
3. If we would be required to move to another city, we need to know if there is a church there that can continue to provide for our spiritual needs. This is an extremely critical point.
4. In looking for a change of job, we need to discern if we are running away from something that we should be facing and trying to correct.

In summary, we need to be the type of employee or employer that God would have us to be.

Questions:

1. The primary purpose of our job is to support our ministries. List the three ministries we need to support.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

2. What are some of the attitudes we should have toward our company and/or leader?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

3. When looking for a new job, what are some factors to take into consideration?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

Additional Scripture Verses:

2 Timothy 2:4; Mark 10:44-45; Colossians 3:23.