

The Work Ethic

Lay-offs and long-term unemployment are facts of life today.

Even if you do hold a job, is it secure?

Are you the last person an employer would lay-off?

In these uncertain times, can you make yourself more attractive to an employer or improve your chances of holding on to your job?

The answer is absolutely yes!

With increasing competition for work, your job will depend more and more on your attitude towards work.

The Christian Bible has a lot to say about the work ethic.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 [NIV] *“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”*

This strong message from the apostle Paul was directed to the Christians in the Church at Thessalonica and all other churches.

2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 [NIV] *“We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.”*

Paul shows the detrimental results of **not** being employed, which we see very clearly in society today.

What if these people did **not** listen and obey this command?

2 Thessalonians 3:14 [NIV] *“If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.”*

There is a lack of shame in the present welfare-led society, and the whole system fails to encourage people to look for work, even if at this time it is **not** paid work.

Paul was a living example of what every human being should follow, in relationship to work.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-9 [NIV] *“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.”*

In his position as a minister working for the Creator God, Paul could have been living on the offerings of the Christians he was teaching and serving. But Paul, as an example, became what is called today a “*bi-vocational minister*,” working to support himself and his family and **not** taking money for what he was doing in the Church fellowship.

One passage of scripture in the book of Proverbs fully illustrates the work ethic.

Proverbs 6:6-8 [NIV] *“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.”*

The ant works when no-one is watching them.

The ant is a self-starter, that is goes out looking for work. The ant has instinctive, drive, diligence and desire to work.

An ant does a job when the job needs to be done, it does **not** put off the work *“until later”* !

All human beings need to learn these important habits.

[Please download our article ‘*Go To The Ant*’ under the sub-heading ‘*Successful Living*’.]

What employers like –

Surveys show that only 10% of all workers who are fired lose their jobs because they cannot do the tasks required. The rest lose their jobs simply because of poor work habits and personality problems.

Employers like, dependability, responsibility, enthusiasm and interest in the job they have given by their employers to do.

Employers like those who give them a full day’s work and are loyal to the company.

Employers appreciate most an employee who had a *“we can do it”* attitude, showing they cared about their employer.

Employers like a worker who dedicated themselves to doing the best they can and who are constantly learning more about their job.

One manager exclaimed about his workers, *“I have some employees who have ten years experience and then I have others who have repeated their first year’s experience ten times!”*

In this age of rapidly developing technology, workers who best adjust to changes in their jobs, learning new procedures quickly and willingly, will be most secure in their jobs.

2 Peter 3:18 [NIV] *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever! Amen.”*

Learning and growing in knowledge is a principle taught in the Christian Bible.

Another habit employers desire in employees is a willingness to work until the job they are on is completed thus making every effort to get it done on time.

John 4:34 [NIV] *“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”*

This is the example that Jesus Christ gives us to follow.

Philippians 1:6 [NIV] *“being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Referring to the work ethic of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

If you express this attitude of loyal perseverance on the job, you could make yourself almost indispensable.

Every employer said in surveys that if they had to lay-off one of two workers doing the same job, they would keep those who had the better work attitude over those with greater experience.

Employers also considered it important that an employee co-operate with and be liked by other employees.

Employers also appreciated those who brought to them, at the right time and place, solid suggestions for improvements in how work is done and who always followed company rules.

Finally the surveys showed that good grooming, posture and appropriate, clean dress were tell-tale indicators of how seriously their employees took their job.

What employers don't like –

Employers were irritated by an employee who “*dragged their feet,*” putting forth only the minimum effort required when they knew that this person could do a lot better.

Proverbs 10:26 [NIV] “*As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him.*”

Employers also said that they disliked the attitude of an employee who always wanted to do the job their own way **not** that requested by them as their employer.

One employer said he finally fired an arrogant worker who always uttered some rebuttal whenever told to do something, constantly letting his employer know that he thought he knew more, how things should be done.

Employers dislike people who bring their personal problems to work. Such a person's mind will **not** be on their job and if they talked to others about the problem it would hinder their work also.

Employers also expressed dissatisfaction with employees who used up every minute of their sick time, concerned themselves with matters that were none of their business, didn't use commonsense, talked excessively on the job and had alcohol or other drug problems.

The work ethic –

Many people consider work as an undesirable time period between pleasure and leisure.

Recreation and relaxation excite them, but work does not.

Because many people have **not** been taught how to work they have trouble holding on to a job.

They make excuses about why one job “*isn't working out*” or why another job “*doesn't fit them.*”

Proverbs 26:16 [King James] “*The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*”

Lazy people often explain their hard luck with the greatest of skills.

Proverbs 22:13 [NIV] “*The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside!” or, “I will be murdered in the streets!”*”

Solomon records some preposterous excuses for **not** working.

Proverbs 19:24 [NIV] “*The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!*”

Too lazy to even feed himself.

Employers often lament that although many want jobs, few actually want to work.

Did you realise that the most important reason for work is *not* to earn money?

The most important reason for working and developing good working habits is because work is so much a part of our Creator God's nature.

John 5:17 [NIV] *“Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”*

God is still working as a Creator, now a spiritual creation.

John 9:4 [NIV] *“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no-one can work.”*

Jesus Christ says “we” because we as human beings are created in the “*image*” of God.

Genesis 1:26-27 [NIV] *“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

Note the physical creation of human beings is in the “*image*” [Hebrew shadow not the real thing] **not** in the “*likeness*” [Hebrew one for one or character].

Work is a means whereby we can develop the very character of God through an understanding of true work ethic, and applying it to ourselves.

The work ethic, the desire, the love for, the satisfaction gained from producing and creating, needs to be part of our nature, just as it is part of God's nature.

Work will never end

As Christians we have a duty to work, **not only** in this life, but in the future as well.

Isaiah 35:1, 6 [NIV] *“The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,” ... “Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.”*

Someone will have to work to make the deserts fertile again.

Zephaniah 3:6 [NIV] *“I have cut off nations; their strongholds are demolished. I have left their streets deserted, with no-one passing through. Their cities are destroyed; no-one will be left, no-one at all.”*

Cities will have to be re-built and managed.

Government, religion and education will be properly established, this will involve work by those who have in this life learnt and applied true work ethics.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 [NIV] *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.”*

Let us follow Solomon's admonition, learning how to work and how to love work. Then we can use work to build character in the "likeness" of our Creator God that will make our lives richer, fuller and happier.

Isaiah 9:6-7 [NIV] *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."*

The expansion of the Kingdom of God will go on forever.

Daniel 7:27 [NIV] *"Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."*

This expansion will involve every Christian who has learnt how God works and are submissive to His Will.

Work is not just for this physical life but will be a major part of our eternal life.