

Christ Central Work

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[0 : 00] You may be seated, kids, you now may be excused to your King's Kids class, and if you would, please open up your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3.

I'm going to read 3.22 through 4.1. We've come to the end of this section in Colossians that's called kind of the household code or the household rules, and we've seen Paul time and again instructing on these sets of relationships, wives and husbands, children and parents, and now bond slaves and their masters.

Hear God's Word. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Lord, whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men.

Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward, you are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

[1 : 20] Masters, treat your bond servants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. May God bless the reading of his Word.

Name that tune. Name that movie. Snow White. Hi-ho! Hi-ho! It's?

Name that movie. Snow White, 1937 Disney classic. We got a bunch of happy dwarves going to work. And then later on, in the same movie, we have an interesting situation with Snow White.

She's confronted with this cluttered house. Oh, no, what is she going to do? She needs to clean it up. How is she going to clean it up? She's going to whistle while she works.

Whistle while you work. And she enlists these creatures from the forest to help her clean her house.

[2 : 34] Could you imagine Snow White working for you? That would be great. Man, she would make a great employee, wouldn't she? But brothers and sisters, here I am right now to tell you we can do far better than whistle while we work.

Because Jesus is the controlling center of our lives. We worship while we work. Christian, who do you work for? You work for Jesus.

We work for Jesus. Now, if you are a Christian, also known as a saint, a holy one.

If you're a saint, you know what? You're going to have to work like the majority of the 8.1 billion people on the planet. We've got to work.

We've got to work to make a living. God has given us good things. If you want a 30-second theology of work, here it is. God created work. It is good. Sin distorts work.

[3 : 36] Now it can be a toil. But Christ redeems our work so that now we can take joy in working for Him. And then at the final consummation, when we're all in glory together, we get to work some more for the glory of His name.

Brothers and sisters, we don't get a pass when it comes to work. Rather, we are to work a certain way and for a certain who. We are to work for Jesus. So if you're a subordinate worker in the room, or if you're a supervisor in the room at work, we are to work for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ, we can do far better than whistle while you work. We get to worship while you work. This section that we're in right now, Paul has addressed wives and husbands.

With Christ as their controlling centers, wives are to submit to their husbands. Husbands are to lead their wives. And it's to be good. Children are to obey their parents.

Parents, dads, you are to lead your children. Children are to lead their children. And it is good. And here we are talking about bond servants and masters. Does anybody have slaves in the house?

[4 : 51] No. Does anybody feel enslaved? Well, don't answer that one. Don't want you to answer that one. Now, if you're interested in the New Testament, when it talks about slavery, what is meant by slavery, and how that differs from the chattel slavery of Africans in our country, that's a blight on our history.

If you want to know the difference between that. Or you're wondering as you're reading through this, why doesn't Paul just tell these masters to let their slaves free? I want you to grab this article. Does the New Testament support slavery? It is on the Connect desk in the vestibule on your way out. But here's how I'm going to proceed this morning. Given that this particular relationship is having to do with work, I'm going to move forward applying this passage to those who are in a subordinate role of work and those who are in a supervising role at work.

And I think we're going to capture the intent of what God is saying. Brothers and sisters, whether you're a subordinate or a supervisor, you work for the Lord Jesus.

And so here is how we're going to proceed. Brothers and sisters, you need a reminder. We are saints who work. And then I want to help you think, how does a saint who is a subordinate work? [6 : 30] That's two. And then number three is, how does a saint who is a supervisor work? Whether you're a subordinate or a supervisor, if Christ is the controlling center of your life, you are a saint and you work for Jesus, changes the way you work.

We are saints who work. You've probably noticed I've been using the word saint a lot. If you flip back in Colossians 1, verse 2, Paul is writing these Christians in Colossae, this church, and he says in verse 2, to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae.

Saint is just a word that means holy one. And if you look at 312, do you remember when I preached this weeks ago? We are told, put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, beloved saints chosen by God's grace.

Do you know who's going to work tomorrow? Raise your hand. Man, you walk into work. Do you know who's walking into work? A saint of the living God.

A beloved saint. There are such a variety of occupations represented in this room. And every one of us who've been flipped by the grace of God, we enter our workplaces as holy ones, as saints.

[8 : 03] So let me just kind of unpack that for you, just to convince you, remind you of who you are. Remember chapter 1, verse 13, we have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the beloved son.

You're a saint because you've got a new king and a new kingdom. And Jesus has become the controlling center of your life. He's no ordinary king.

In 115, he is the firstborn of creation. The king of creation. And in 118, he is the firstborn from the dead. He's the king of the new creation. Do you know what kind of kingdom we're a part of?

We're part of a new creation kingdom. And you're a new creation in that kingdom, brother, sister.

You're a saint. You got flipped by Jesus. You've been repod by Jesus Christ.

And you've also been given a new ID, a new identification. It's a holy ID. In 2.20, we read this.

[9 : 02] If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world. And then 3.1, we read, if you've been raised with Christ. If you've died with Christ, if you've been raised with Christ, means you've been united with Christ in his death and resurrection.

You're a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. Changes everything. We're talking about your union with Christ. And because you've been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, you're dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

It changes everything. You're a saint who's walking into your workplace tomorrow, brother, sister. We're not done. It changes your aim. 3.1, we're to seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Jesus is reigning on high over all things. Ephesians 1.22 says, all things have been put under his feet. So when you go into your workplace and you're thinking, everything's a mess here, Jesus is reigning over it all.

Even your CEO. All things are under his feet. And we work for him. He is our greatest aim.

[10 : 17] He's the one in whom we're looking to please above all else. And we're on a new time frame. Church, what time is it? It's Christ time. We live in between the first coming and the second coming of Jesus.

And when he comes back, he's going to judge it all, even you. So you know what that means? You walk into work, and you might think I'm on company time, and you are on company time, but you're also on Christ time. And it matters to him.

Your aim is Christ, and you will one day give an account for your work life. We're on Christ time.

We live in light of the eternity that Christ has rescued us for in our daily working. But you also have new work wear.

We have new wardrobe. Before you put on your work outfit tomorrow morning, you've got to put on your Christ wear. You've got to put off the grave clothes of the old self that used to live under the dominion of darkness.

[11 : 28] And you're to put on as chosen, God's chosen, holy, and beloved, things like compassionate hearts, meekness, kindness, humility, patience.

You put that on first, and then you put your work outfit on over that. So you walk into your workplace tomorrow, and you've got Christ wear on underneath your business attire.

It's Christ likeness that we're aiming at, that we're living for. Hey, who's walking into the workplace tomorrow?

A saint! I went to high school outside of Chicago, and I grew up in a suburb called St. Charles, and our mascot, well, they were the fighting saints.

And on our football team, I don't think there were any kind of biblical saints. But do you know what our school song was?

[12 : 44] Oh, when the saints come marching in, oh, when the saints come marching in, tomorrow morning, when you walk into your workplace, you can be singing this song.

Oh, when this saint comes walking in to this workplace, oh, when this saint comes walking in, I'm going to work for King Jesus.

Oh, when this saint comes walking in, do you know who's walking into work tomorrow, brother? A holy one of God.

That's who you are. Don't forget it. Remember who you are. You've got a new kingdom, a new ID, a new aim, a new time frame. You've got a new wardrobe, and that's who's walking in because Jesus is the controlling center of your life.

When you go to work tomorrow, you can worship him while you work. That's who you are.

[14 : 02] We are saints who work. It's the intersection of two kingdoms in the workplace. Now, if you are a saint and you're a subordinate, point two, how do you go about your work as a subordinate for Jesus?

And we see this in chapter 3, verses 22 through 25. Now, remember, Paul is originally addressing bond slaves, and I'm going to apply what Paul instructs here to work subordinates, and you are a work subordinate if you report to someone above you.

If someone has a responsibility and authority over you in terms of your work performance, then you are a subordinate. You might be a supervisor too, but you are a subordinate.

In this passage, in 3:22 through 25, when Paul addresses subordinates, we see a what, a how, and a why.

The what. Verse 22, we read this. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.

[15 : 30] The what is obey. If you are work subordinate, you are to obey your work supervisor. It's the same word used earlier in verse 20 when talking about children, obey your parents.

It's the same word. It's the same exhortation. Obey. Obey in everything your earthly masters, your earthly supervisors.

Obey in everything. It's like God is addressing you, brother, sister, in a subordinate role. He's addressing you and saying, here's how I want you to live for me in your workplace.

I want you to be known for your obedience to your supervisors. I want you to be known for that.

Now, when you read the words in everything, maybe you start getting a little nervous.

Well, there's two qualifications with this. If you're a subordinate, you are to obey your supervisor in everything with two qualifications. First one is this.

[16 : 40] You are to obey them in everything insofar as what they are requiring of you pleases the Lord. So if your supervisor is asking you to lie, you need to say, sorry, boss, I can't do that for the glory of Jesus.

If your supervisor is asking you to look the other way because there's something going on that he doesn't want to be or she doesn't want to be held accountable for, you can't go along with that. If you are being told to treat someone in a way that is grievous in God's sight, you can't do that.

If you're told to kind of make some numbers change, you can't do that. because you are working for Jesus in your workplace.

And so you are to obey your boss in everything insofar as it pleases the Lord. Secondly, you are to obey your supervisor in everything so long as it pertains to work.

So if your supervisor is insisting that you take her marriage advice, you don't have to because she's out of her lane.

[17:56] She doesn't have authority over you for that. She doesn't have responsibility for you in that. If your supervisor is telling you how to invest your money, you can take that with a grain of salt but you don't need to do that.

You don't need to obey them in that. They don't have responsibility for you in that. So insofar as it's pleasing to the Lord and it pertains to work, you are to obey your supervisors and everything and you are to obey them quickly and you are to obey them well and you are to do it with all of your heart which brings me to not just the what of obeying but the how we are to obey.

And we see this in verses 22, all the way down into 24 but what the apostle Paul does here is he sets up a really interesting contrast.

He wants us to obey our supervisors but he goes in to say don't obey them this way, obey them this way. Look at the passage.

On servants obey in everything those who are your earthly masters not by way of eye service as people pleasers how not to obey them.

[19:18] But here's how you obey them but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord and not for men. So how are we to obey our supervisors?

Well in everything as to the Lord. this idea of eye service as people pleasers means you're more concerned with what your earthly supervisor thinks than what your eternal king thinks and that you're willing to do eye service.

It's this extrinsic outside kind of motivation that you're doing something like for your boss. Classic example it's summertime if there are people who work for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation this is nothing against you but let's say you're driving on the highway there's a work crew working and you're at a crawl and you're watching these guys lollygagging you know talking it up leaning on their shovels and then you watch their supervisor shows up and then shovel starts flying.

That is eye service people pleasing. They start working because they see and want to impress a human being but contrast this eye service people pleasers with this internal sincerity of heart fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do work heartily internally as for the Lord. Not for men. This is intrinsic motivation.

[21:07] This is you work hard and you work well for anybody because you serve the Lord in this. The best workers in town should be followers of Jesus.

Sincerity of heart. We do things with excellence. We do things well and we follow through on it. We work hard.

The object of course is Jesus. We're working for Him. Aimed at Him. Now you tell me who would you want working for you?

I service people pleaser? I work or working heartily for the Lord. Come on. That's the how.

And now the why. In verses 24 and 25, 24 you see this word knowing? That's going to show up again in 4.1 but that word knowing is to tell you something.

[22:20] If you're a subordinate who is working in a place, you need to know something. And it's going to inform, motivate you in order to work heartily for the Lord, not for men.

And what is it? Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as a reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. If you are a saint who's working as a subordinate, you must know that your reward is coming from the Lord Jesus.

your bonus is not based upon your work performance. Did you see the word inheritance? Do you know what that's for? That's for someone who is a son or a daughter.

It's not based on performance. It's based on grace. Your reward is the salvation that will come fully realized.

realized. That's knowing that is why we work heartily for the Lord. We're being aimed here.

[23:31] It's Christ the Lord who rewards us at the judgment, of course. It's a promise. Full and final salvation to be realized and enjoyed.

It's the reward of our inheritance. We work hard because God in His grace has poured out His grace upon us and will continue to all the way through.

But we also have something of a warning in verse 25. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done. Know that. There's no partiality.

You've got to know that. And if you are a worker in the room, if you are a saint, a subordinate, and you are doing what is wrong, and you know it, you're wearing grave clothes at work, you're deceiving your supervisors, you're being lazy, you're not trustworthy, if you're doing these things, that needs to stop because the Lord sees it.

But there's another reason why this is here. let's say that you have a supervisor who's wronging you. Isn't it good to know that the Lord Jesus will hand out consequences to your supervisor?

[25 : 06] No partiality. Doesn't mean you need to stay at your place of employment, commitment, but what it does mean is like, okay, I don't need to take this into my own hands necessarily.

I know the Lord is seeing this and He will act. Did you notice all the references to the Lord? Fearing the Lord, work heartily as for the Lord, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance, you are serving the Lord Christ.

The emphasis is loud and clear if you are a subordinate. You work for the Lord Jesus. Do I have an amen? Okay, let's do some assessment.

If you're a subordinate, I want to help you to assess yourself. Brother, sister, what is your aim at work? work? Who are you working for?

You've got to remind yourself of who you are before you walk into your place of employment.

Whether that's a work site, that's an actual building, whether that is some kind of home office, or you're visiting a client, whatever you're doing, you need to remember first and foremost that you're a saint who works and your aim is the Lord Jesus.

[26 : 30] You're going to work for Him. Brother, sister, what's your attitude like at work? Do you have a grave clothes attitude?

Let me point you to some. Verse 8 and 9. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth, lying to one another. Is that what's characterizing you at work? That attitude is to go.

That's grave clothes. We're to be marked by the 312, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Putting on the love, verse 14. It's attitude.

That's what you bring to your place of employment and action. Brother and sister, are you working as to the Lord with sincerity of heart?

Are you working hard? Are you working well? Are you pursuing excellence? Or are you being prodded? if you are known to be a Christian at your workplace, but you show up late, you do shoddy work, and you're continually being prodded to work harder and faster, something needs to change.

[27 : 50] These are just standards for everybody. You work for the Lord, and so what will happen is if you're saying you're a Christian, but you're living like that, it undermines your witness. And the way that you regain your witness is by working heartily unto the Lord.

One final question before we move on to supervisors. Just a self-reflective question. Subordinate, would you want to be your supervisor?

Would you want you working for you? You get it? And if you wouldn't, why not? We work for the Lord, intrinsically motivated from the heart.

Now let's say that you're a saint who is in a supervisory role. We see this in 4.1. Now you may be reporting to someone above you, which makes you a subordinate, but you have at least one person's reporting to you.

You have responsibility for the work performance of somebody else, and therefore you have authority in order to help them work better. Now I just want to remind you of the nature of authority.

[29 : 21] I've been trying to make this case with each of these pairings, with wives and husbands and children and parents, and here with workers and supervisors. Remember, authority is an outworking of responsibility.

If you have responsibility for someone, God gives you authority to act on their behalf. And it's true of the workplace. So supervisors have the distinct responsibility to make sure that his or her subordinates are doing what they've been hired to do.

So as a supervisor, you have authority over a subordinate as far as it relates to their work. So if you're a saint who's supervising at least one subordinate, God requires something of you.

He's saying, okay, here's how I want you to do your work, supervisor. And just like we saw with subordinates, there is a what, there is a how, and there is a why.

You ready? The what? 4.1. Masters, treat your bond servants. He's not saying treat them with candy. That word is more like direct them, manage them.

[30 : 36] All I want to put into place here is dignify them. You treat your subordinates with dignity. dignity. Because they are either full-on image bearers or they're blood-bought image bearers.

Treat them with dignity. And the you're in this is that you don't own them. But you do have responsibility for them at work.

So you want to take this exhortation to our heart. There is a way in which you as a supervisor treat your subordinates. And now let's look at the manner of that, the way of that, how that actually looks like.

We see that. Masters, treat your bond servants, two words, justly and fairly. Justly and fairly. That word justly, here's how you need to think about it. It's biblically speaking, it's doing your subordinates right. You do them right.

[31 : 47] And that starts with being very clear with them what's expected of them. So if you're a supervisor in the room and you're not using some kind of job description, you need to.

To be just. To be clear. To help them know what they're supposed to do. Clear on what's expected. And make sure that thing's updated.

And you want to be consistent with consequences. That's being just. You want to help them understand what's expected of them. And when they fall short, you can reprimand them.

And when they do well, you reward them. But you're consistent. And it's all based upon this objective realities laid out for them in their job description. You are to be honest and helpful in instructing how they are to do their jobs well.

You're to be impartial in all of it. Not showing favorites. You don't want to be accused if you're a Christian supervisor showing favor to a Christian subordinate, especially if they're not performing well.

[32 : 50] one of the other ways that we are just is making sure those who are our subordinates are rightly compensated for their time and labor.

And we never, never give them reason to sin against God. Never. Justly.

We dignify people that way. And then we treat them fairly. It's not just doing one of your subordinates right.

It's doing all of your subordinates right. It's equity. It's fairness across the board. That you're consistent in your treatment of all the subordinates that you're responsible for.

No partiality. No favoritism. No I think what Paul is getting at here is what's shown up in this household code.

[33 : 55] It shows up between wives and husbands. He says to husbands, don't be harsh with your wives. And then he says to fathers, hey, don't discourage your children. I think what's getting at here with just and fair is excluding harsh treatment of your subordinates.

If you're being harsh and unpredictable, do you know what it does? It destabilizes the work environment.

But if you're being just and fair, it stabilizes your work environment. All for Jesus.

Now why? We've seen the what? Treat them with dignity. The how? Justly and fairly. Now the why. Again, it's queued up with the word knowing.

Knowing that you also have a master in heaven. If you're a supervisor in the room, you don't get to do whatever you want with your subordinates because you have a heavenly supervisor that you're accountable to.

[35 : 08] He'll hold you accountable. by the way you treat your subordinates. You work for the Lord, supervisor. You work for him. And if he's the controlling center of your life, it will show up in the way that you treat those you're responsible for in the workplace.

So let's do some self-assessment, supervisor. You go into work tomorrow. what is your aim? Who are you working for?

Who are you supervising for? Not for the eyes of man. Not to impress your subordinates, but for the Lord Jesus.

What kind of attitude are you to bring as a supervisor? Are you to be unjust, unfair, unpredictable, and harsh? That does not line up with the Christ wear that you were to be putting on that morning. No. We are to live out Christ's likeness. That doesn't mean you're a pushover. That means you are just and fair to all of your subordinates.

[36 : 24] What kind of action? It's that just and fairness, consistent and clear. you do all of your subordinates right. Because you're worshiping while you work.

Now, if you are a supervisor and people know you as a Christian and you are being unjust and unfair, you're being harsh, impatient, you might get results, but are you pleasing Jesus? And the answer is no, you're not. That needs to change for the glory of Jesus. So, supervisor, here's the question for you. Would you want to be your subordinate? Would you want to be reporting to you? Whether you are a subordinate or supervisor or both, work life?

If you're a saint, you work for Jesus. Your work life is to magnify Christ, to telescope him so that other people can see how wonderful he is.

[37 : 44] It shows up in the way you work, how you interact with fellow workmates, to work in a manner worthy of the Lord.

I started this sermon talking about snow white, whistling while you work. Brothers and sisters, we can do far better than whistle while you work because Christ is the controlling center of our lives. I mean, he's the king of creation. He is the king of the new creation. He is full reign of every area of our lives. Because he's the controlling center, we worship him while we work.

Remember chapter 3, 17, in whatever you do, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

If you're a wife, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, word or deed. If you're a husband, do everything, word or deed. If you're a child or parent, everything, word or deed. Subordinate, everything, word and deed.

[38 : 55] Supervisor, everything, word and deed. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's your controlling center. Brothers and sisters, saints of the living God, God, when you go in to work tomorrow, you can go in singing, oh, when the saint comes walking in, oh, when this saint comes walking in, I'm doing all my work for my King Jesus.

Oh, when the saint comes walking in, walking out, we work for Jesus, therefore, we worship him while we work, and it is a witness to him while we work.

Let me pray. Lord Jesus, we are so thankful that you call us out.

you call us out of the worldly grime of work, and you call us to do our work from our hearts for you with all that we got.

Lord Jesus, you're worthy. Would you, Father, do a work by your spirit in which we, this week, even tomorrow, we work aimed at Jesus on Christ's time because you have wonderfully changed us.

[40 : 36] Lord Jesus, you are worthy. It's your name we pray. Amen.