

Work or God?

by Wane Goff

Work is **not** more important than God. Sometimes we use our work as an excuse to miss worship, to miss Bible study, or even to miss family time at home. When we do this on a *voluntary basis*, then we are putting work and money above our commitment to the Lord, His church, and our families. That, my friends, is a serious matter. It not only robs God of your **support** in the local church and home, it also robs you of your **values**.

I know that work is not more important than God because Jesus said, *“But seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you”* (**Matt. 6:33**). The Greek word translated *“first”* is **proton**, and means “firstly (in time, place, order, or importance)” (*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*). Notice that Jesus is telling us work is not more important than God!

Sometimes we are **forced** to work and miss worship or Bible study, or time with our family, etc. We understand that when you are hired to work for a company, that you are obligated to your boss to work the assigned time. As such, *you do not have a choice* about attending worship or Bible study. This is very similar to the Master-Slave relationship and the instructions given about such in **Ephesians 6:5-9** and **Colossians 3:22-4:1**. Your contractual obligations require you to be at work a certain number of hours, and times, etc. Therefore you have little or no choice in the matter. Soldiers, law enforcement officers, doctors, nurses, teachers, etc. are at the forefront of such. These jobs are essential. Christians may perform these jobs. Therefore, they are not always going to be available for times of worship.

At the same time, Christians should always consider their **job selection** in light of this problem. When choosing a **career** one should consider carefully the questions of (1) How much time will this job keep me from my spiritual obligations? (2) How much time will this job keep me from my family responsibilities? So do your best to choose jobs, when possible, that will give you the maximum flexibility. And that being said, such jobs are few and far between.

In **1 Corinthians 7:21-23**, Paul wrote

“Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.”

It may be a bit of a stretch to refer to “employees” as “slaves,” but in some ways there is a comparison to be made. In fact, I have heard some brethren refer to their jobs as “slave labor,” and “very taxing,” or “time consuming.” But with their job comes certain commitments, obligations and duties. Christians are to perform their jobs as though they were doing them for the Lord — to the best of their ability. This requires time.

Brethren who own their own businesses and can *set their own hours*, or who choose *voluntarily* to work overtime when they should be at worship should consider carefully their choices. The Lord is watching (**Phil. 4:5**). He knows the heart (**Heb. 4:12**). You do not want to be overly zealous for work to the point of putting it above the Lord (again see **Matthew 6:33**). The world doesn’t care about the Lord or His requirements. The Christian does, and that will sometimes create conflict. Do the best you can and put the Lord first in your heart and mind. Having done that, both you and the Lord know what is most important to you.

I know my job is a privileged one. I not only **can** be at Bible studies and worship, *it is my job!* Yet even I must be sure that my devotion is to the Lord first and not to a paycheck. Let us all consider our hearts and lives carefully. And may God bless us with a desire to put Him first in everything we are and everything we do! **360403**