

Week 4 New Creation, New Work

Introduction

Over the past 3 weeks, we have looked at the purpose of work, how work was distorted by the fall, and how our work still matters to God now. In light of these biblical truths about work, today we look at *how we should work*.

- Read Colossians 3:12-4:1

As those who have been resurrected with Christ and given a new identity, we are to put away, for good, those things associated with our old nature. At the same time, we are to put on the ways of Christ, and live those out in every area of our lives – not just at church and around other Christians. This Christ-centred way of relating to others will impact every type of relationship that we have, pressing particularly on relationships at home, where we are completely ourselves. It will also impact our relationships at work and the way in which we work.

New Creations in Christ Work in New Ways for Christ:

The conditions under which people were working when this passage was written were far worse than ours in South Africa have ever been, which forces us to drop our excuses about why we are failing to live the Christian life in the way Paul commends to us in this passage.

1. New Creations Work With a New Audience

Instead of working for our bosses, we are to work for Jesus. This increases our purpose regardless of the type of job we find ourselves in, but it also calls many of us to greater responsibility at the office. We may be able to get away with all sorts of things at work because we are able to manipulate our bosses, or we are able to cut corners or waste time and resources because we are not caught, but God sees our hearts at work. Some of us need to start working with more integrity and with our hearts invested in our jobs, giving it our all, whether the boss is around or not. As believers, we should work sincerely, fearfully and heartily.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think you would work differently if you knew that your boss was watching you all day?
- ❖ Q: Do you think it would make a difference to the way that you worked if you consciously thought that God was watching the way you worked?
- ❖ Personal Reflection Q: In what particular way is God calling you to change the way you work?

2. New Creations Work With a New View of Humanity

These letters to slaves and masters would have come as a complete shock to the people receiving them. Society believed in social status and rank, and it would have been incredibly difficult to accept that, in Christ, all people are to be valued and considered as equals. This would have had huge implications for relationships at work, and it calls us to the same standards in our workplace.

I. Implications for employers

- Be Humble
- Be Just and Fair
- Be Redemptive
- Be Respectable

II. Implications for employees

- Be Respectful
- Be Productive
- Be Helpful
- Be At Peace

Think through some of the work roles that ensure that your offices continue to function correctly. E.g. C.E.O, manager, security guard, grounds-man, cleaning staff, receptionist etc.

- ❖ Q: Who is treated differently because of their rank/social/economic status/education, be that a higher or lower level job? Make a list of those people and then think about the way that you treat them.
- ❖ Q: How does God want us to treat the cleaning or security staff at our workplaces and what changes do you need to make in response?
- ❖ Q: In what one way mentioned above, as either an employee or employer, are you doing well as a Christian?
 - (For employers: Being humble, just & fair, redemptive, respectable.)
 - (For employees: Being respectful, productive, helpful and at peace.)
- ❖ Q: In what one way mentioned above, as either an employee or employer, is God calling you to repent and change?
 - (For employers: Being humble, just & fair, redemptive, respectable.)
 - (For employees: Being respectful, productive, helpful and at peace.)

3. New Creations Work With a New Priorities of Rest

The world views productivity as a cycle of constant work and no rest. This is not the way God designed us. He commands us to rest in order to remember that he is the one who controls and rules the world, and that that responsibility is not on our shoulders. Our decision to work hard when we work, and to rest well when we are off, is a declaration to the world that it is God we trust and worship.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think the world equates productivity with working 24/7 and why is this wrong?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think God instituted rest as part of our design for flourishing?
- ❖ Q: What are we actually revealing about our hearts towards God when we choose to believe that we cannot afford to stop and rest, or that we do not need to?

4. New Creations Work With a New Sense of Wisdom

Our work needs to be governed by Christ's ethics, not those of the world.

- Self-sacrifice for the betterment of others replaces using others for the enrichment of oneself.
- The voice of the Holy Spirit overrides the voice of the board of directors.
- The testimony of the gospel trumps the temporary rewards of success.
- The people that God has put in your life aren't worth trading for the promotion that is offered in their place.

- Personal Reflection Q: What is your ethical standard at work? Who governs your ethics?
- Q: What do you think it would cost you if you really put the betterment of others above yourself in the workplace?
- Q: In which of the following areas do you need to submit to the Holy Spirit's voice at work:
 - in the way you treat people;
 - in the way you handle company finances;
 - in the way you live out your Christian witness;
 - in the way you handle competition with others;
 - in the way you use your time at work?

5. New Creations Have New Ambitions

❖ Read Philippians 2:3-11

God is not against ambition. Scripture tells us clearly not to have *selfish* ambition. God calls us to have heaven-focused ambition, and to use and leverage our gifts and talents well. This means that we can and should be driven, ambitious and brilliant in what we achieve, but in a kingdom-minded way.

- ❖ Q: What is the difference between Godly ambition and selfish ambition?
- ❖ Q: What would it look like for you to channel your ambition in the way God would want?
- ❖ Q: In our wealthy, educated and driven environment, how can we, as believers, help one another to keep our drive to succeed focused on the gospel?
- ❖ Q: What sort of questions should we be asking one another to check where our hearts are, regarding ambition and success at work?