

Every Good Endeavor

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Colossians 3.12-25
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I. Connecting With One Another

Have you ever had a job or some endeavor you simply loved to do? Conversely, have you ever had a job or undertaken an endeavor you simply hated doing? What do you think are the greatest motivators for people to work or to engage in some endeavor?

II. Introduction to this Study

We come to the end of our journey that has enabled us to explore what the Bible has to say about work and human endeavor. We have seen that God works for the sheer joy of working and creating. The "four-part message" of the Bible is clear: 1) God's creation was deemed to be "very good," and as the crown of creation stood human beings - created in the image of God, created to delight in work. 2) However, our human ancestors disobeyed God and their sinful rebellion threw them into a state of alienation from God, from other human beings, from themselves - all creation needed restoration and reconciliation to God. 3) But God remained faithful and gracious, and taking on human flesh and blood and coming to us, Jesus - through his death and resurrection - brought God's forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation. God has invited followers of Jesus into this work of reconciliation and co-creation with God. Our work has value. Our endeavors are opportunities to experience sheer joy and bless others. And 4) when Christ returns we will see the reconciliation of all things to God.

We are now living in the third of this four-part gospel. We are still in a world that is marred by sin and alienation while at the same time God's reconciling work is taking place. But, how are we to correctly view our work and find motivation for it?

III. Study the Text

- a. Read through Colossians 3.12-25. Did you notice the first word - "Therefore"? Look at Colossians 3.1-4 to see what it refers to. What three things does Paul cite that have or will happen to the Colossians? What does it mean to be raised with Christ? To have died and have one's life hidden with Christ in God? To appear with Christ in glory? How would you summarize what it means to "set your minds on things above?"
- b. Paul admonishes the Colossians to be focused on Jesus, to have their interests in line with those of Jesus, and to know they belong to God. Now look at 3.12-14. What attributes or characteristics are followers of Jesus to be "clothed" or "dress oneself in?"



- c. Now look at 3.15-17. What three commands or admonitions do you see here? How does one "let the peace of Christ rule" in their hearts? How can you "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly?"
- d. The third command (verse 17) is "whatever you do - in word or deed - do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "In the name of" is an idiom meaning "to say that one belongs to" the Lord Jesus. It means doing all things in ways that demonstrate that one follows, belongs to, and seeks to honor Jesus.

Tim Keller, cites that in our society work is often made an idol - a good thing that is elevated to a place of importance and dependence that it should not be given. Work can become one's sole source of identity and self-worth. It can also become pure drudgery - necessary for providing for oneself and family while "real life" is lived outside of work.

Bible scholar D. A. Carson writes: *"the Colossians have already been raised with Christ. They now share in his resurrection life, so their lives are to be different. Their interests are to be focused on Christ; their minds, aims, ambitions, in fact their whole outlook, are to be centered on that heavenly realm where he rules and where their lives truly belong."*

How does doing "all things in the name of the Lord Jesus" free a person from seeing work as Keller cites? How does it enable you to see work differently?

- e. Colossians 3.18-22 includes specific ways people demonstrate that they belong to Jesus. Wives are to honor and affirm their husbands' leadership. Husbands are to honor their wives by loving them deeply. Children are to honor parents by obeying them. Fathers are to honor their children by not being harsh with them. Servants (the word "slave" refers to an indentured servant) are to serve obediently and reverently. Verses 23 and 24 sum this up: "Whatever you do work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord... it is the Lord Christ you are serving." How is this focus a true motivation for work? How does it compel or encourage you?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. Can you honestly say that you strive to do all things "in the name of the Lord Jesus?"
- b. How can you demonstrate you belong to Jesus in your work/endeavors? In your honesty and integrity? In the quality of your work? In how you treat co-workers, clients, students, customers, and others? In demonstrating the selflessness of Jesus?
- c. What is your motivation for work? Can you see it as serving the Lord Jesus?

V. Pray Spend some time in prayer:

- a. For the ministries of Good Shepherd to be fruitful endeavors that bring about new life in Christ and other blessings for many.
- b. For the outreach of the Open Table as hospitality and the love of Christ are extended to our community.
- c. For others to see Jesus in you as you demonstrate that you belong to him through whatever you do - in word or deed - in the name of Jesus.

