

**Working On Lemonade
In a Lemon Factory!
Jeremiah 29:5-7**

- Many Americans will celebrate Labor Day tomorrow. Some call it the most hypocritical of all holidays, because we celebrate work literally, “by *not* working!”
- Some say if we were serious about work or labor being a blessing to us, we should tell our bosses that we will work tomorrow for free.
- But really, do you really like your job?
How many of you just can't wait to get back?
How many can't wait to get back to the “daily grind?”
How many of you can hardly wait to see your co-workers and your bosses (teachers missing their students so badly)?
- Some surveys say that 65% of Americans are unhappy with their jobs (Many of us go because we have no other choice).
“You load 16 tons and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt.....”

Tennessee Ernie Ford

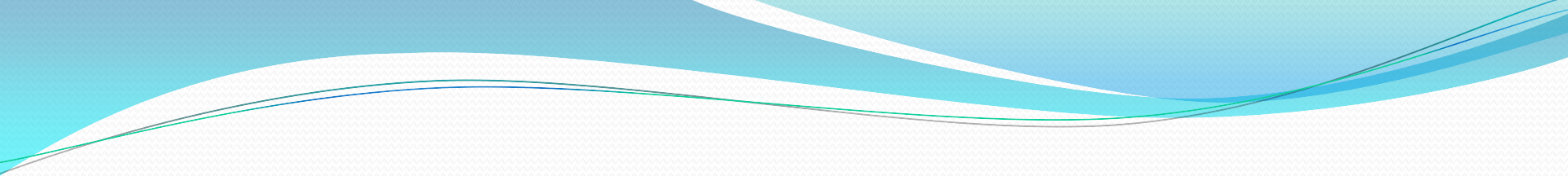
One Of The Awesome Responsibilities We Have Is Serving God At Work!

- One problem is that we tend to separate the secular from the spiritual
- We say that one of the problems in living your life until you die is that, during our prime years, we have to spend so many hours of our lives at a secular job

God gets a few hours, like in the O.T., when the people assembled with the priests and at a Temple or Tabernacle

But in the N.T. the bible teaches that we are all priests (1Peter 1:9) and our body is a temple(2Cor. 6:19)

So the N.T. teaches that God can be a part of everything we do (even work) Romans 12:1-2 (Do you want that?)

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- Our young people (young achievers) have been getting ready for the National Bible Bowl at Tennessee Technical University's Coliseum, Cookeville, Tennessee
 - The Book of Daniel has been one of the Biblical books of emphasis for this year's contest
 - Remember Daniel was a Jew, who as a young boy was carried away captive to the Babylonians
 - He was taken from Jerusalem, his home, where he was surrounded by people who believed in what he believed, and believed in the one God

- Now here is a young man , in a totally pagan(foreign) environment
- As time passed, the Bible tells us that he was appointed as an official of the government. He became a government bureaucrat
- So Daniel served as a government bureaucrat in the Government that captured the Jewish nation
- But as Daniel worked for the federal government of Babylon he was able to serve God.
- King Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, respected his faithfulness to God as Daniel rose higher and higher in office among the leaders of the country (Proverbs 16:7)

- As time passed, King Nebuchadnezzar died, the Babylonian empire disintegrated and was ultimately taken over by King Darius of the Medo-Persian Empire
- But once again Daniel's outstanding qualities were recognized, and he was appointed to be one of the highest ranking officials in all the land
- But you remember the story, that there came a time when Daniel was under pressure to do some things that were against his relationship with God, and Daniel said "enough is enough" and he wouldn't do it, and was thrown into a Lion's Den (you can experience haters at any job)

The Question King Darius Asked Daniel While In The Lion's Den Is Complimentary!

Daniel 6:20

“And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

- Daniel worked for a pagan government, in a pagan office for a pagan king, and yet the one thing that the King knew about Daniel was that he served God continually.
- Do your co-workers know that?
- Are you known to put God first at work?
- Are you a walking temple of God?
- Do co-workers know that you continually try to serve God?

But We Say

“But only reason I’m here is because I didn’t get what I wanted!”

“I have to make a living, so I’m making the best out of a bad situation!”

“I’m a victim of circumstance!”

Do You Know Why Daniel Was In Babylon?

Jeremiah 29:5-7

“Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters—that you may be increased there and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace.”(or if things go well for Babylon they will go well for you)

Daniel is in a pagan place, surrounded by pagan people, but God says that is exactly where He wanted him to be!

(Are you the only woman, man, African American, Christian, in the department? Maybe that’s part of God’s plan.)

Four Suggestions For Witnessing for God At Work (Making lemonade in a lemon factory)

- First, don't brag-Don't go to work bragging about how righteous you are and how much sin you have overcome and how you are the model husband, wife, single Christian
That's a total turn off!
Self-Righteousness has always been repulsive
We aren't really technically righteous anyway (Isaiah 64:6)
Be willing to admit your own faults before God and co-workers (like Paul did his readers in Romans 7:19)

Second-Don't Nag!

- Don't carry a huge Bible under your arm and every time somebody curses, you pull it out and beat them over the head with it

“All drunkards are going to hell,” Galatians 5:19

You may think you are being courageous (standing up for Christ), But every Christian witness involves **TACT!**)

Remember when Paul complimented the polytheistic philosophers in Greece in Acts 17:22,23 before he began his gospel sermon to them

Third- Don't Lag

- As a Christian, if you work, it is very important to your Christian witness that you do a good job.
- It is important that you set a good example working, sometimes coming early, other times staying late

I Have a Saying for Customer Service:

***“Sometimes, Your Real Christianity Begins
When 4:30pm Ends”***

- If you are lazy, insensitive, and slothful on the job, that is a poor testimony for Christ.
- Work as if God were your supervisor (Colossians 3:23, ***“And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”***)

Fourth- Don't Sag

- Be careful not to go back to your old way of life
- Be careful not to listen to your old language , your old friends, your old customs or questionable habits that can disqualify you from service, (1Corinthians 9:27; Hebrews 12:1-2)
- When your eyes are fixed on Jesus you react differently to problems and difficulties
- There are people who work with you that are hurting, looking for answers to problems you both have

So Be God's Person Where You Work!

- Be different yet blend in. Work faithfully along side your co-workers in society
- But like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, don't give in to their ways
- They went so far, and then said, "this is as far as we can go!"
- God will help us through our fiery furnaces and dens of Lions too
- We just need to trust Him, settle down, build houses, get married, have children, go to work, and be a stable part of society
- So what we have said this morning, carry it back to work on Tuesday. Somebody there desperately needs to hear and see your message

The Plan Of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent Of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38