

A Christian Work Ethic

Introduction:

1. The present economic situation demands we humble ourselves before God's rules for wise working.
2. We have, and we likely will much more, face layoffs and other employment and financial difficulties.
3. We will trust the Lord, but we cannot tempt the Lord by violating the job wisdom He has given us.
4. Though mainly addressed to work at jobs, some points apply just as well to students, housewives, etc.
5. The Bible is full of wisdom about a godly work ethic in both testaments by both example and precept.
6. God loves His children, and He wants them to be successful, though we reject the prosperity gospel.
7. Bible Christians reject a monastic or convent approach to life that rejects career wisdom as worldly.
8. Professional success is as easy as picking a piece of fruit ... by climbing the ladder of God's rules.
9. Older men wish they could start over to do better, but now they can pray and exhort the younger to it.
10. Ministers are ordered to preach this subject (I Tim 5:13-14; 6:1-2; II Tim 4:2; Titus 2:1,9-10,15; 3:8).
11. Ministers are able to preach this subject (II Tim 3:16-17; Acts 20:20,27; Ps 119:128; Pr 2:29; 27:18).
12. We must adorn the gospel of Christ and shut the mouths of enemies (I Thes 4:11-12; I Pet 2:12; 3:16).
13. The financial duties this study will list are not suggestions – they are God's commandments.
14. The present generation is mostly foolish, intemperate, impatient, lazy, spoiled, and wasteful.
15. There is a high probability of a depression, and it is our duty to foresee the evil and hide.
16. God our Father desires our happiness, success, prosperity, and pleasure – through hard work.
17. This is for your sanctification – pleasing God with a holy life (I Thess 3:12-13; 4:1-2,11-12).
18. This is full-time Christian service in God's sight, rather than missionary work (Col 3:22-25).
19. The church is not a general insurance fund – sloth or folly forfeit charity from wise men.

Christians work purposefully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians understand they have various God-given goals to meet.*
- B. Christians go to work with purpose – they know God ordained their job for certain holy ends.
- C. Work is not a curse – work may be cursed with difficulty, but it is not a curse (Genesis 2:15).
- D. Christians work to show virtue to others (I Thes 4:11-12; I Tim 6:1; Tit 2:9-10; I Pe 2:11-12).
- E. Christians work to be able to live independent of charity (I Thess 4:11-12; II Thess 3:7-12).
- F. Christians work to be able to store up extra for the day of evil (Pr 6:6-8; 30:25; 21:20; 12:27).
- G. Christians work to support parents and other relatives of prior generations (I Timothy 5:4,8).
- H. Christians work to enhance the lives of children and grandchildren (Pr 13:22; II Cor 12:14).
- I. Christians work to have money to help others in need (Ps 112:5,9; Eph 4:28; Acts 4:34-35).
- J. Christians work to have money for God's kingdom (Gal 6:6; Philemon 1:4-7; II John 1:3-8).

Christians work sufficiently.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians do whatever it takes to fulfil their financial obligations.*
- B. Not providing for your family denies Christianity and is worse than pagans (I Timothy 5:8).
- C. What goals? Family, witness, enough, and extra for others (I Tim 5:8; I Thes 4:12; Ep 4:28).
- D. There are other financial goals as well, such as the kingdom of God, but these will suffice.
- E. A Christian will work *two or more jobs*, if one does not provide sufficient income for goals.
- F. Pioneers and immigrants in this country did whatever it took to make their way prosperous.
- G. Previous generations did not stop at one job or at 40 hours of work a week. They worked!
- H. A Christian is not convinced that a 40-hour workweek is as much as a person should work.
- I. A Christian does not think that overtime work is punishment or sinful. They welcome it.
- J. A Christian does not leave unproductive hours in his life, when he is behind financially.

Christians work passionately.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians work with great commitment, enthusiasm, and zeal.*
- B. Whatever a Christian does, he is to do it heartily, as unto Christ, and not unto men (Col 3:23).
 - 1. This text is popular, but it is not about singing in the choir; it is about working on the job!
 - 2. The context shows it to be working on the job as to Christ for his reward (Col 3:22-25).
- C. Paul stated a general rule that it is good to always be zealous in a good thing (Gal 4:18).
- D. Whatever your calling, which is your largest duty of life, do it with your might (Eccl 9:10).
- E. A Christian looks forward to work, prepares early for work, gets there early, and is on fire!
- F. A Christian does not pace himself; he throws himself into work with eagerness and industry.

Christians work conventionally.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians conform appearance to fit in and have a great image.*
- B. You reflect the company and person you work for, and you want to present them both well.
- C. An independent spirit that wants to be different or an ignorant spirit that is different will fail.
- D. You may want to be your own man, but fighting convention will be your ruin in many ways.
- E. Paul made himself *all things to all men* that he might by *all means* save some (I Cor 9:22).
 - 1. It is not a sin to conform your personal preferences or matters of liberty to make progress.
 - 2. It is not compromise to conform, for you are only changing things morally indifferent.
 - 3. It is not effeminate to conform, for only fools and idiots must have such things their way.
- F. Consider examples where godly men adapted to their circumstances in order to get ahead.
 - 1. Naaman loved Jehovah, so God allowed him to work in a pagan temple (II Kgs 5:15-19).
 - 2. Daniel served Jehovah, but God gave him the appearance sought in Babylon (Dan 1:15).
 - 3. Joseph served Jehovah, but he helped Pharaoh, Egypt, and their religion (Gen 47:20-23).
 - 4. Ruth rejected any personal opinions to adapt to her mother-in-law's ideas (Ruth 3:1-5).
 - 5. Esther rejected any personal opinions to adapt to Ahasuerus's chamberlain (Esther 2:15).
 - 6. For Joseph and Daniel to prosper in foreign, pagan governments – they learned to adapt.
- G. A Christian will not witness on the job, for he is stealing two wages, both his and the listener.
 - 1. The Bible does not teach Christians to verbally witness on the job in any text in any book.
 - 2. However, this does not mean a Christian cannot answer for his faith when asked about it.
- H. A Christian will not be very overweight, for it indicates slothfulness and lack of discipline.
 - 1. It will be hard for overweight Christians to be hired, for interviewers fear obese workers.
 - 2. Fat employees do not present a very good image for a company internally or externally.
 - 3. You can believe one thing for sure – Esther was not obese when she visited Ahasuerus!
- I. A Christian will learn the unspoken dress code and adapt accordingly to fit his company well.
 - 1. It has been wisely said, "You should set your clothing by the position level you desire."
 - 2. For a business position, a clean white dress shirt that fits trumps any other color, always.
- J. A Christian adapts hair style and length, facial hair, and other aspects of personal appearance.
- K. A Christian becomes very conscience of personal hygiene, regardless of habits or training.
- L. A Christian will even consider his transportation ... are big, loud diesel trucks appreciated.

Christians work sacrificially.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians know great workers may face difficulty, loss, or pain.*
- B. Paul gave a great example by voluntarily enduring hardship at Thessalonica (II Thes 3:7-13).
- C. Joseph gave a great example by working faithfully in prison for a false trial (Gen 39:20-23).
- D. Though others may use all their sick days, Christians rarely call in sick, unless near death!

- E. Though others balk or complain, Christians cheerfully take overtime, even if altering plans.
- F. Though others may murmur and whine, Christians endure whatever working conditions exist.
- G. Though others argue, rebel, or slander, Christians submit to froward masters (I Pet 2:18-23).

Christians work conscientiously.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians have owner's mentality about their work and company.*
- B. Christians have a conscience toward God that affects job attitude and conduct (I Pet 2:19).
- C. If you serve a fig tree or master well, you will get the fruit or a piece of the action (Pr 27:18).
- D. How do you compare to faithful or foolish messengers (Proverbs 10:26; 13:17; 25:13; 26:6)?
- E. Jesus measured a good servant by watchfulness when a master was gone (Matt 24:48-51)!
- F. Selfish and wicked employees think they have done something worthwhile by punching in to start the time clock keeping track of their hours for wages. But they have done nothing yet!
 - 1. Punching a time clock is stealing from an employer – until you do something productive!
 - 2. Getting paid for time, irrespective of productivity, is a foolish practice of this generation.
 - 3. An owner only gets paid, if there is a little bit of sales revenue left over after all expenses.
- G. God plainly condemns purloining (small thefts) and commends all good fidelity (Tit 2:9-10).
 - 1. Small thefts include pencils, paper, paper clips, folders, copies on the company copy machines, surfing the Internet while on the clock, personal calls while on the clock, etc.
 - 2. Have you conducted yourself so honestly that your company would trust you with a key?
 - 3. Have you been so faithful that your bosses and company easily trust you in any matter?
- H. Christians work as to the Lord, but they do it for the benefit of their manager or company.
 - 1. They do not work as menpleasers, but with one heart to Christ (Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25).
 - 2. Yet, Jacob served Laban conscientiously for his benefit and profit (Genesis 31:36-42).
 - 3. Yet, Joseph served Potiphar, the prison keeper, and Pharaoh with devoted care and work.
 - 4. Yet, Daniel served Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius with devoted care and labor.
 - 5. Do you have the reputation for always making decisions for your master's benefit?
 - 6. Do you have the reputation for never taking advantage of or abusing a privilege?
- I. A simple measure of a worker is his timeliness – Christians are punctual and time conscious.

Christians work modestly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians work any job in any industry or do anything needed.*
- B. We are the children of the high King of heaven – so a career on earth is not worth the worry.
- C. Even if we are bond slaves on earth, we still know we are the Lord's freemen (I Cor 7:22).
- D. A Christian will cheerfully do anything asked of him by an employer, no matter how menial.
 - 1. The Bible teaches to please masters in all things and not to answer back (Titus 2:9-10).
 - 2. A Christian never says, "That is not on my job description," or, "Let the night shift do it."
- E. Vain men talk of jobs driving sports cars and wearing a Rolex, but farming works (Pr 28:19).
 - 1. There is profit in all labor – no matter the position, company, or industry (Prov 14:23).
 - 2. The apostle Paul, a Roman taught by Gamaliel, cheerfully sewed tents (Acts 18:3; 22:3).
 - 3. Network marketing is often a scam, for the product is less important than the "business."
 - 4. Nagging your family and friends to buy over-priced soap is not a "business opportunity."
 - 5. "Sales meetings" are little more than the 2% who make money making fun of the 98%.
- F. When you face difficult employment circumstances, any job will do just fine to meet goals.
 - 1. If you need a job to meet God's financial goals for you, then any job is a great blessing.
 - 2. The present generation has not seen hard times, so they are too picky about such things.
 - 3. Who cares if the job does not match your degree, your abilities, or your career plans?

4. Cream rises to the top ... and this rule is true of any job, at any company, in any industry.
- G. When you face difficult financial circumstances, there is no place for pride or pretensions.
 1. Who cares what you are driving, if it gets you back and forth with minimal cost per mile?
 2. Who cares if you must downsize houses, if it cuts your monthly expenses in proportion?
 3. Who cares if you must move back home, if it makes economic sense and saves money?
- H. If you do any job real well by applying God's wisdom, it may turn out to be very rewarding.
 1. Joseph worked hard at being a slave and prison assistant, and he got a decent promotion!
 2. Ruth gleaned fields in a foreign nation to feed a mother-in-law, and all worked out well!
 3. David kept sheep well, played his harp well, and was a good captain – he became king!

Christians work diligently.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians work by great energy and focus to be very productive.*
- B. Diligence over time will bring financial and professional success, other things being equal.
- C. Slothfulness, a lazy attitude that avoids effort and exertion and takes a slow approach to work, that chooses idleness over industry and sluggishness over speed, is clearly condemned.
 1. An animal named sloth may help children grasp slothfulness, for it moves very slowly.
 2. With the sloth as a negative example, use the ant for a positive one (Prov 6:6-8; 30:25).
 3. Solomon used sluggard for a person avoiding effort (Pr 6:6,9; 10:26; 13:4; 20:4; 26:16).
 4. Paul warned saints at Rome to be fervent rather than slothful in business (Romans 12:11).
- D. A Christian works with great desire and energy to apply himself forcefully to finish projects.
- E. The foolish despise this advice, because they are ignorant and lazy (Prov 26:16; Eccl 10:15).
- F. God does not suggest hard work – He commands it (Eccl 9:10; Eph 4:28; II Thess 3:7-9).
- G. God does not suggest hard work – He ridicules sluggards (Proverbs 19:24; 26:15; Eccl 4:5).
- H. Diligent labor has the promise of many blessings and rewards in scripture and experience.
 1. The diligent shall gain in authority, but the slothful to greater servitude (Prov 12:24).
 2. A man diligent in business, like Jeroboam, ends up before kings (Pr 22:29; I Kgs 11:28).
 3. Owners love diligent workers, and they will reward them – think fig tree (Prov 27:18).
 4. Thoughts of diligence are far superior financially to creative ideas of riches (Prov 21:5).
 5. Boring work done diligently will work better than talk of riches (Pr 12:11; 14:23; 28:19).
 6. God's word promises diligence will lead to financial fatness, or success (Pr 10:4; 13:4).
- I. Slothfulness leads to more laziness; you must break this sinful cycle (Proverbs 19:15).
 1. Open your eyes and get up. Do not learn to love or get used to sleep (Proverbs 20:13).
 2. Energy comes from activity, not sleep. The body needs sleep, but less than most think.
 3. The early bird gets the worm, and he will feel more like getting up ... after you get up!
 4. Do not pace yourself ... walk to your job casually ... or stretch a task ... finish it, now!
- J. If you give up because a job is difficult, it shows you have little strength (Proverbs 24:10).
- K. Why is it that the hardest workers are the happiest, and the laziest workers the unhappiest!

Christians work boldly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are not intimidated by circumstances to procrastinate.*
- B. Solomon mocked the excuses men make about the difficulty of doing a job (Pr 22:13; 26:13).
- C. If a man uses excuses to be less than fully diligent, he deserves to starve to death (Prov 20:4).
- D. There will always be obstacles in pursuits in this world, but the tough get going (Prov 24:10).
- E. If the righteous are bold as a lion, what hinders a child of God from being bold (Prov 28:1)?
- F. The greatest courage in the world is not self-confidence, but confidence in God (Heb 11).
- G. No wonder David ran to meet Goliath, Esther approached Ahasuerus, and so many more.

- H. Do not be fearful or intimidated to make cold calls, submit applications, and send follow-up.
- I. Do not be fearful to go back to school, make a career change, or take a promotion, etc., etc.
- J. Do not pretend modesty, when facing an interview or review, for you must market yourself.
- K. Do not be fearful to change jobs, even if you are a creature of habit and usually hate change.
- L. Do not be afraid of a class where the content and/or teacher have been said to be difficult.

Christians work patiently.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians scoff at free lunches and choose persistence over time.*
- B. Only in the gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ is there a free lunch (Isaiah 55:1-2)!
- C. Christians scoff at a lottery and thoughts like it – they grasp “the house” steals from fools!
 - 1. The reason a jackpot is allowed is to use the prosperity of fools to deceive men (Pr 1:32).
 - 2. Lotteries are forms of taxation for the simple and those not earning taxable income.
 - 3. Simple math proves Las Vegas is very generous compared to lotteries and video poker.
 - 4. Do you grasp that a payout of 95% of 95% of 95% will take all your money in minutes?
- D. They are in it for the long run; they know hard work one day at a time works. Go to the ant!
 - 1. Rome was not built in one day. An anthill is not built in one day. Watch them (Pr 6:6-8).
 - 2. Haste for riches by vanity says laziness and no faith; give labor, time, and God a chance!
 - 3. Do not get frustrated you were passed over for a promotion ... it will come by patience.
- E. Haste to be rich has many painful consequences – choose rather to be patient (Pr 28:19-22).
 - 1. Farming illustrates professional patience and success ... from planting to planting (19).
 - 2. Listening to a vain talker with a “business opportunity” will bring you poverty (19).
 - 3. Haste leads to compromising faithfulness and integrity, which never brings reward (20).
 - 4. Once a man compromises faithfulness and integrity, he can be bought for anything (21).
 - 5. Haste to be rich corrupts a man’s character and discernment, bringing poverty (22).
- F. In all labor there is profit, though it may take a while; but talk is cheap and vain (Pr 14:23).
- G. Wealth acquired by patient labor will increase, but business opportunities destroy (Pr 13:11).
- H. Greed of gain is an evil approach that brings much evil and trouble (Proverbs 1:19; 15:27).
 - 1. While bulls and bears may make money in the markets, pigs end up eating garbage.
 - 2. Greed destroys the ability to work and invest wisely, so be content (I Timothy 6:5-10).
 - 3. As young birds suffer by parents wandering, so do families of the impatient (Pr 27:8).
- I. It is better to have your sight fixed on labor than dream of new opportunities (Eccl 6:9).
- J. Many will tell you about “business opportunities,” but why is their business seducing you?
 - 1. Wise Christians seldom get suckered, because they are prudent (Prov 14:8,15; 22:3).
 - 2. They laugh at get-rich-quick schemes of all sorts and point out the numerous fallacies.
 - 3. They know that the person telling them about the opportunity does not have a real job.
 - 4. They know that no one loves them as much as God, who warns them against such talkers.

Christians work frugally.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians preserve some of their income by limiting expenses.*
- B. It is not the high cost of living that destroys men, but rather the cost of high living that does.
- C. Though you may not like its judgment, God declares that strong men retain riches (Pr 11:16).
 - 1. Since riches are not forever, only strong men can keep and protect them (Proverbs 27:24).
 - 2. Strong men earn riches by working a job hard or running a business well (Pr 10:4; 13:4).
 - 3. Strong men resist the propensity to consume; they save some of income (Prov 21:17,20).
 - 4. Strong men adjust in a changing world to protect or increase income (Proverbs 27:23-27).
 - 5. It takes a strong man to deny himself the wasteful habits and credit living of most today.

- 6. It takes a strong man to resist the foolish investments and financial scams that exist today.
- 7. It takes a strong man to properly insure his assets and income and protect them from loss.
- D. A simple, effective budget is easy: pay God his portion; save your portion; live on the rest.
- E. Easy credit and undisciplined spending are the ruin of governments, businesses, and men.
- F. Over-expanding and over-building and over-hiring are common errors in a bloated economy.
- G. Why not downsize? Why not drive a cheaper car? Why not wear used clothing? Be frugal.
- H. Christians do not waste money on lottery tickets – certificates of guaranteed confiscation.

Christians work respectfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians fear, honor, and obey their masters well in all things.*
- B. Since there is little respect for authority today, especially on the job, you can stand out easily.
- C. The reason your boss is your boss is because the God of heaven chose him to be your boss.
- D. The Lord wants your boss on the horse and you walking beside the horse (Ec 10:5-7). Get it?
- E. Employees have responsibilities, not rights, as so many whine about today (Pr 19:10; 30:22).
- F. A Christian despises labor unions and their organized rebellion, sedition, and theft (Pr 19:10).
- G. A Christian will not participate in any uprising on a job by joining together with other rebels.
- H. Our nation now despises dominion and speaks evil of rulers (II Peter 2:10-12; Jude 1:8-10).
- I. A Christian knows that God demands fear and honor to bosses (Mal 1:6; Eph 6:5; I Pet 2:18).
- J. A Christian obeys his boss, pleases him well in all things, and does not talk back (Titus 2:9).
 - 1. Man! You want your children and wife to obey in all things, show this trait on the job.
 - 2. Man! You want your children and wife to do things well to please you, so do it yourself.
 - 3. Man! You do not want your children or wife to talk back to you, so never do it yourself.
- K. A Christian does not curse his owners, boss, or supervisor, even in his heart (Eccl 10:20).
- L. A Christian does not speak against owner, boss, or supervisor, even in a bedroom (Ec 10:20).
- M. A Christian does not accuse other employees without good evidence and purpose (Pr 30:10).

Christians work fearfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians work fearing God, for all wrongdoing will be judged.*
- B. Our beloved brother Paul did not suggest good work habits – he threatened them (Col 3:25).
 - 1. You can count on the fact that God sees any wrongdoing, and that He judges severely.
 - 2. It does not matter your position, title, or pay, because God does not care for any of them.
 - 3. This is such a simple point, but it profoundly affects every man's career and finances.
 - 4. Slothfulness at a job is important enough to justify church exclusion (II Thess 3:6-15).
 - 5. Consider what happened to Gehazi for disobeying his master Elisha (II Kings 5:15-27).
 - 6. Consider what happened to Joab for disobeying his master (II Sam 3:39; I Kings 2:5-6).
- C. Christians work with the realization that good, loving brothers cannot subsidize sloth or folly.
 - 1. The Bible limits charity to needs – food, clothing, shelter, medicine, etc. (Isaiah 58:7; Luke 10:34-35; Acts 2:45; 4:35).
 - 2. The Bible limits charity to acts of God, not sloth or folly (Prov 20:4; Luke 10:30; II Thess 3:10; I Tim 5:8-10).
 - 3. The church of Jesus Christ is not a general insurance fund, just because you lost your job.
 - 4. Why did you lose your job? Sloth? Folly? No preparation as the evil day approached?
 - 5. Why have you not found another job? Sloth? No transferable skill? No further training?
 - 6. For more about charity, see ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/what-about-tsunami-relief.pdf>.

Christians work faithfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians do everything a boss desires of the ideal employee.*
- B. It is hard to find good help, especially in this generation, so you will immediately stand out.
- C. It is hard to find good help, especially in this generation, so make it easy for your manager.
- D. A faithful or unfaithful employee makes a great difference to bosses (Pr 25:13; 26:6; 13:17).
- E. Paul spoke very plainly of the contrast between all good fidelity and purloining (Tit 2:9-10).
- F. Joseph gave a great example of faithfulness thrice (Genesis 39:6,22-23; 41:38-44; 45:16-20).
- G. Moses was faithful as leader of Israel and got a great name (Num 12:7; Heb 3:5; 11:24-28).
- H. David gave a wonderful example of faithfulness even under King Saul (I Samuel 18:5,14,30).
- I. Daniel gave a wonderful example of faithfulness in Persia (Daniel 6:1-5). Do you match this?

Christians work prudently.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians always watch and evaluate to avoid business trouble.*
- B. A prime sign of prudence is a man's watchfulness to see trouble and avoid it (Pr 22:3; 27:12).
- C. Position or prosperity is very temporal without thought and wise adjustment (Prov 27:23-24).
- D. Since many employment or financial decisions are outside scripture, seek counsel (Pr 15:22).
- E. Each worker must evaluate the economy, his industry, his company, his department, etc.
- F. From observations and counsel, he conservatively prepares against hurtful, negative changes.
- G. These defensive actions may range from extra classes or certifications to a total job change.
- H. A Christian will not take on unnecessary risk or employment gambles (Prov 6:1-5; 22:26-27).
- I. They know their income came hard, so they are very skeptical of investments (Prov 14:8,15).
- J. Bernard Madoff and other scam artists can only succeed through foolish and trusting dupes.
- K. Instead of listening to the hype at a multi-level marketing rah-rah session, they demand facts.
- L. They know there is no free lunch, so they are very skeptical of anything appearing as such.

Christians work responsibly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians know that a job is a privilege and others depend on it.*
- B. All jobs are necessary, or the owner would get rid of the job. Every job should be done well.
- C. Jobs are not for fun, to fill up time, or for praise or promotions, but to provide serious needs.
- D. A child generally and properly provokes good young men to greater sobriety and diligence.
- E. But a wise young man thinks of parents, relatives, the poor, the church, the kingdom, etc.
- F. It is a denial of Christianity and worse than a pagan heretic to not support family (I Tim 5:8).
- G. Hard work at a profession is important enough to justify church exclusion (II Thess 3:6-15).

Christians work obediently.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians do not oppose or resent full subjection to their bosses.*
- B. They know what God said, so they choose full subjection to them (Ep 6:5; Col 3:22; Tit 2:9).
- C. The commandment of God is to obey them with fear and trembling (Eph 6:5 cp I Pet 3:1-2).
- D. They do not modify obedience based on the character or conduct of the boss (I Pet 2:18-20).
- E. Christians respond immediately and positively and respectfully to any task asked of them.

Christians work cheerfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are joyful workers rather than merely willing workers.*
- B. Attitude about work is nearly important as the work, and both God and men value it highly.
- C. Willingness to do a job is one thing – “Okay”; cheerfulness is another – “Sure! I’ll do it!”
- D. Every man knows the difference that attitude makes in child obedience, lovemaking, etc., etc.

- E. Since Christians work heartily as to the Lord, then they should be working with great cheer.
- F. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, so we should understand He also loves cheerful workers.

Christians work submissively.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians cheerfully submit to bad bosses by confidence in God.*
- B. This rule is important, clearly taught in the Bible, and every Christian will need it at times.
- C. Though this rule is contrary to the flesh and the world, it is nonetheless God's righteousness.
- D. Being that we live in a sinful world with graceless sinners, we should expect froward bosses.
- E. Being we are Christians, we must remember that the real payday is yet to come (Col 3:24).
- F. But God through Peter gave us the answer to such situations, if we will obey (I Pet 2:18-22).
 - 1. We are to work in such a way to shut the mouths of enemies and glorify God (2:11-12).
 - 2. Christians submit, or subject themselves, to their bosses with all fear or honor (2:18).
 - 3. This applies as well to difficult and wicked bosses, as to good and gentle bosses (2:18).
 - 4. Commendable conduct for Christians is to suffer grief wrongfully as to the Lord (2:19).
 - 5. The most glorious way to work and please God is to patiently suffer wrongdoing (2:20).
 - 6. Because as Christians we should remember and follow the example of our Lord (2:21).
 - 7. He had done nothing wrong, but He meekly submitted to false charges and death (2:22).
- G. Jacob served Laban well, though deceived with Leah and wages changed (Gen 29:25; 31:7).
- H. Joseph served his master Potiphar well, his prison keeper well, and even pagan Pharaoh well.
 - 1. It would have been a natural response for Joseph to resent his Egyptian master Potiphar.
 - 2. It would have been a natural response for Joseph to run away or plot stealing from him.
 - 3. It would have been a natural response to take his wife for his pleasure and for revenge.
- I. David served King Saul well, though he tried to kill him more than once (I Sam 18:10-11)!
- J. Daniel was effectively kidnapped, had his homeland ravaged, his religion mocked, his testicles cut off, and assigned to work for the man who did it all, but he served him faithfully.

Christians work quickly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are time conscious and work speedily to be productive.*
- B. The world pays most jobs by the time worked, but Christians know that productivity is key.
- C. They reject the concept, because they know that their master needs production, not hours.
- D. Though on the master's time clock, they work to maximize the productivity of their time.
- E. They never relax, thinking to themselves that they are still getting paid by the time clock.
- F. They do not pace themselves through jobs to extend them a little and take it easy awhile.

Christians work humbly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians humbly avoid pretensions and willingly seek counsel.*
- B. Humility or pride affect a person in opposite directions (Prov 11:2; 16:18-19; 18:12; 29:23)!
- C. Christians conduct themselves modestly in the presence of superiors (Pr 25:6-7; Lu 14:8-10).
- D. Consider how David responded to Saul's offer of his daughter for marriage (I Sam 18:18,23).
- E. Moses, Solomon, Jeremiah, and Paul feared (Ex 4:1,10,13; I Kings 3:7; Jer 1:6; I Cor 9:17).

Christians work safely.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians willingly seek counsel from wise men before acting.*
- B. You came into this world ignorant and dirtying yourself – you know nothing about success.
- C. There are others older, wise, and experienced, who can easily give you good direction.
- F. Christians will wisely hear correction and instruction (Prov 9:8-9; 19:20; 22:17; 26:12,16).

G. Christians are willing to seek, hear, and adjust according to good counselors (Prov 15:22).

Christians work loyally.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians will defend their boss and owners as far as possible.*
- B. Christians will inform supervisors or other management of wrongdoing when appropriate.
 - 1. Slander is a sin for telling a lie about someone in order to defame them or hurt them.
 - 2. Backbiting, talebearing, tattling, and whispering are telling truth for defaming intentions.
 - 3. Telling those in authority of wrongdoing is no different than calling the police on a thief.
 - 4. You serve your master well by informing those in authority of problems they are missing.
 - 5. Joseph did so to his father, and the house of Chloe did so to Paul (Gen 37:2; I Cor 1:11).
 - 6. But you do not do it for every little offence, and you weigh all the circumstances wisely.
- C. Christians will not endorse or participate in labor union activities, though they may join one.
 - 1. Employees organizing together to intimidate or overthrow an employer is clear sedition.
 - 2. It is a Christian liberty to join one, but rebellion or sabotage against management is sin.
 - 3. More has been and could be said against the evil of unions – servants fighting masters.
 - 4. Remember Naaman bowing in the house of Rimmon, Joseph marrying Asenath, and many other such examples of mercy in the line of duty to pagans that we must work with.
 - 5. A wise man could tell his nonunion management that he is on their side against the union.
- D. Christians understand the authority structure all the way up the ladder to the shareholders.
 - 1. The real owners of a public company are the shareholders, who desire profits from you.
 - 2. Even the board of directors serves at the discretion and pleasure of the shareholders.
- E. Remember Joseph and his loyalty to his master, to the prison keeper, and to Pharaoh.
- F. Remember David and his loyalty to King Saul in spite of various offences and opportunities.
- G. Remember Mordecai and his loyalty in preserving the life of his king, the enemy of Israel.
- H. Remember Daniel and his loyalty to various kings of two pagan empires, enemies to Israel.

Christians work accurately.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are scrupulous about doing a job right the first time.*
- B. Christians do their job right, with great care for accuracy and detail, to be fully reliable.
- C. Christians do not try a “better” method without approval, for it was already tried and failed.
- D. Please bosses well in all things and obey instructions without answering again (Tit 2:9-10).
- E. Joseph quickly adapted accuracy and a job well done to Potiphar, prison, and Pharaoh.

Christians work fairly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians value righteousness and mercy above profits or riches.*
- B. Christians love mercy more than judgment and more than sacrifice (James 2:13; Matt 12:7).
- C. Though cornering a market, they will not charge what the market will bear (Proverbs 11:26).
- D. Though seeing flaws in an item, they will not criticize it and then boast to others (Pro 20:14).
- E. Though a friendly and giving neighbor offers help, they will pay regardless (Jer 22:13-14).
- F. They remember God-ordained Sabbatical and jubilee years cancelled both debts and bonds.
- G. Consider David’s merciful rule for treating those not as strong as others (I Sam 30:10,18-25).
- H. When not sure of circumstances of a matter, they assume the best (I Cor 13:4-7; I Tim 6:4).
- I. When in doubt, mercy trumps math, sacrifice, or judgment (Pr 11:24; Matt 12:7; Jas 2:13).

Christians work honestly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are meticulous about integrity of business transactions.*
- B. They know that God is watching every transaction, and they cannot lose being very generous.
- C. They know they must provide things honest in the sight of all men (Rom 12:17; II Cor 8:21).
- D. They know that quietly supporting themselves by their own trade is honesty (I Thess 4:12).
- E. They are even careful when buying something, for it might be lying and stealing (Pro 20:14).
- F. Do you want longevity? Then love truth, for that man shall be established forever (Pr 12:19).
- G. The Bible is very plain and severe about weights and measures (Lev 19:35-36; Deut 25:13-16; Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10,23; Ezek 45:10; Hosea 12:7; Amos 8:5-6; Micah 6:10-11).
- H. God demands all good fidelity without pilfering from servants to masters (Titus 2:9-10).
 - 1. **Fidelity.** The quality of being faithful. Honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness, veracity.
 - 2. **Purloin.** To make away with, misappropriate, or take dishonestly; to steal, pilfer, filch.
 - 3. **Pilfer.** To plunder, steal; to steal in small quantities, to filch, peculate.
 - 4. **Filch.** To steal, especially things of small value; to pilfer. To take away surreptitiously.
 - 5. **Peculate.** To embezzle or pilfer (money).

Christians work generously.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are generous and liberal in opportunities for charity.*
- B. Regardless of economic clouds on the horizon, they work and give faithfully (Eccl 11:1-6).
- C. They defy modern math and quantitative analysis to believe God's promises (Prov 11:24-26).
- D. Christians know that mercy is better than math, sacrifice, or judgment (Matt 12:7; Jas 2:13).
- E. They know the best returns are giving to God and the truly needy (Pr 3:9-10; 19:17; 28:27).
- F. God has special blessings for remembering widows and fatherless (Isaiah 1:16-20; Jas 1:27).
- G. Be liberal and loose with payments and measures, and you will be blessed (Is 32:5-8; etc.).

Christians work prayerfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians seek God's will and blessing on any business venture.*
- B. They know the difference of God's blessing or His curse is very great (Gen 26:12; Deut 28).
- C. Therefore, they beg God for mercy and to prosper the work of their hands (Psalm 90:17).
- D. Therefore, they beg God for mercy and to prosper families and businesses (Ps 144:11-15).
- E. The right approach to a job pursuit or business plan is submitting to God's will (Jas 4:13-15).
- F. They know that their Lord and Saviour taught them to pray for their daily bread (Matt 6:11).

Christians work contentedly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are content within God's financial and job limitations.*
- B. True success is godliness and contentment with what God has already given (I Timothy 6:6).
- C. Contentment is learned through Christ's strength and right values (Phil 4:11-13; Heb 13:5-6).
- D. John told repenting soldiers to avoid oppression and be content with their wages (Luke 3:14).
- E. Paul told Corinth that their servants or slaves were not to mind their position (I Cor 7:21-24).
- F. How far does contentment go? If you are being interviewed or reviewed, sell yourself well!
- G. How far does contentment go? If you can quit and get a better job, go for it (I Cor 7:21).
- H. Greed destroys men and their families by corrupting at various levels (Prov 1:19; 15:27).
- I. Solomon, who enjoyed more luxury and pleasure than any, set priorities (Pr 15:13-17; etc.).

Christians work skeptically.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are prudent, as in pessimism, skepticism, and proving.*
- B. They do not believe everything they hear – they want certain evidence and proof (Pr 14:15).
- C. They know testimonials are worthless, for every bad idea and doctrine has great testimonials.
- D. They know labor pays, but talking ideas does not, so they avoid glitzy deception (Pr 14:23).
- E. As commanded by the apostles, they prove all things and hold fast the good (I Thess 5:21).
- F. The Internet sends out scams every day, and you should learn to judge them in seconds.
- G. Testimonials are worthless.

Christians work wisely.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians use intelligence and wisdom to leverage their efforts.*
- B. They appreciate and grasp the proverb about an ox leveraging a farming business (Pr 14:4).
- C. They discern anything that is vain and reject it, for they know only labor works (Prov 13:11).
- D. They are foresightful – looking and thinking – to adjust (Pr 27:23-27; Eccl 8:5; I Chr 12:32).

Christians work skillfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians get a transferable skill for earning power and security.*
- B. A *skill* is ability, knowledge, experience, or certification to do something most others cannot.
- C. A skill is *transferable* when it is in demand in most places, such that men will pay well for it.
- D. Paul ... a seminary graduate ... an apostle ... was a tentmaker by trade (Acts 18:3; 20:34).
- E. Factory wages or other situations with artificially high wages can deceive men to destruction, because they do not have a skill beyond that factory's machines, and it is not transferable.
- F. Transferable skills range from short ones like CNA or CDL to longer ones like CPA or MD.

Christians work quietly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians learn a profession and do not meddle with others.*
- B. If you have time to meddle in others' businesses by any means, you need an additional job.
- C. Paul ordered the Thessalonians to learn a trade, be quiet, and to eat their own production.

Christians work spiritually.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians know that obeying God provides the greatest leverage.*
- B. It is God's reward for good or evil in their jobs that they must emphasize (Eph 6:8; Col 3:25).
- C. So they delight in God and obey Him, trusting His blessing (Job 22:21; Psalm 37:4; 84:11).
- D. They read of great efforts amounting to nothing, and of great reversals (Hag 1:5-11; 2:15-19).
- E. They put the kingdom of God first, knowing He will add everything else to them (Matt 6:33).
- F. They know church attendance is more important than job demands, other than exceptionally.
- G. Though they are servants by their job description, they are the Lord's freemen (I Cor 7:22).
- H. They work conscientiously to not be menpleasers, but God pleasers (Eph 6:7; Col 3:22-23).
- I. Christians know that God's blessing makes all the difference in the world (Psalm 144:11-15).
- J. Chick-Fil-A company is a great example of putting God first and prospering while doing it.

Christians work providentially.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians know the sovereignty of God controls their outcomes.*
- B. They use their heart in choosing a general way, but they trust God for the details (Prov 16:9).
- C. They remember it was Ruth's hap to pick the field of Boaz – her future husband (Ruth 2:3).

- D. They know they must submit their business plans to the Lord for His blessing (Jas 4:13-15).
- E. Though they put in the necessary and reasonable effort, God must do the rest (Ps 127:1-2).
- F. Since they do not even know if they will live tomorrow, they ask for daily bread (Matt 6:11).
- G. Though Wall Street and Las Vegas exalt probabilities, God works above them (I Sam 14:6).

Christians work conservatively.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians avoid risk, contingent liabilities, and related dangers.*
- B. By choice, they are careful, cautious, pessimistic, and skeptical (Prov 14:8,15; 22:3; 27:12).
- C. They know there is no free lunch, so they reject and scoff any talk approaching such a thing.
- D. They would rather be safe than sorry. They would rather miss an opportunity to be protected.
- E. Following Solomon, they hate suretiship (Prov 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13).
- F. They insure their assets where possible, knowing that faith uses God's means by wisdom.

Christians work thankfully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians know a job is not a right, so they are grateful for it.*
- B. A job is not a right, but a privilege ... with pay ... given by those with capital to make jobs.
- C. Ruth did not even assume or presume for the base and menial job of gleaning (Ruth 2:2,7).
- D. When did you last thank your boss, or his boss, for the great privilege of working for him?

Christians work peacefully.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians get along with all men, high or low, in any situation.*
- B. Christians know to function in the world to God's glory without offence (I Cor 10:31-33).
- C. They are to keep the peace, as much as lieth in them, which is great by Christ (Rom 12:18).
- D. They can condescend to men of low estate, and they can honor the strong (Rom 12:16; 13:7).
- E. They do not participate in office politics; they will defend management; they only back kiss.
- F. They do not participate in backbiting or talebearing, and they resist those that do (Pr 25:23).

Christians work kindly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are good and gentle masters in light of their Master.*
- B. Paul was clear to remind masters of their Master in heaven judging them (Eph 6:8; Col 4:1).
- C. Solomon saw the future potential of bringing up servants with delicate treatment (Pr 29:21).
- D. They are glorious workers, for they defer anger and pass over transgressions (Prov 19:11).

Christians work guardedly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians are vigilant to avoid any offence or temptation to sin.*
- B. Solomon warned thoroughly about the temptation of luxurious benefits (Proverbs 23:1-8).
- C. Christians provide things honest before all men and avoid even the appearance of evil.
- D. They manage relationships to hate compromise by respect of persons (Pr 18:5; 24:23; 28:21).

Christians work ethically.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians follow the Bible's ethical principles for gray areas.*
- B. Employment is a large part of a Christian's life, so there are often dilemmas and questions.
- C. Christians often face employment situations requiring wise prudence to determine godliness.

- D. If scripture does not address a situation directly, then we must rely on scriptural principles.
 - 1. If we do not have Bible principles to guide us, then there is no limit to pharisaical zeal.
 - 2. Scripture wisely commends righteous judgment over appears on the surface (John 7:24).
 - 3. Principles are for wise men to apply rightly; black and white rules are for Pharisee fools.
- E. The principle of *materiality* makes judgment based on relative significance (Deut 23:24-25).
- F. The principle of *intent* emphasizes the spirit over the letter (Exodus 20:16; 23:12; Mk 2:27).
- G. The principle of *specificity* emphasizes specific laws over general laws (Ex 21:12; Mat 12:5).
- H. The principle of *acceptance* determines existing law by its general acceptance (Matt 22:21).
- I. The principle of *suffering* for a given action does not reduce our responsibility (Mat 5:38-42).
- J. The principle of *offence* to others should be minimized as reasonably possible (I Cor 10:32).
- K. The principle of *temptation* should use means to avoid assuming or tempting God (Mat 4:17).
- L. The principle of *prudence* emphasizes wise discretion more than reckless courage (Pro 22:3).
- M. The principle of *mercy* emphasizes mercy over sacrifice and judgment (Matt 12:7; Jas 2:13).
- N. Joseph ruled Egypt, and he subsidized the pagan priests in his job (Gen 41:39-45; 47:18-26).
- O. Obadiah governed Ahab's house, even during Jezebel's atheistic reign of evil (I Kgs 18:3-6).
- P. Naaman, who feared the LORD, was allowed to bow in his job to an idol (II Kings 5:15-19).
- Q. Esther did not assassinate Ahasuerus, but rather did her best to win his heart (Esth 2:15-17).

Christians work exceptionally.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians aim for excellence, not just average or above average.*
- B. If you *please* a master *well* in *all* things, you will be exceptional, for most do not (Tit 2:9-10).
- C. If you work with one heart to God, and heartily to Christ, you will be excellent (Col 3:22-23).
- D. You should work in such a way, as to the Lord, that your boss's heart is refreshed (Pr 25:13).
- E. If a work ethic glorifies God, adorns the gospel, and defends the truth, you must be excellent.

Christians work evangelistically.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians work so as to glorify God and magnify Christianity.*
- B. Let the unbelievers and pagans of the world show their character by slothfulness (Titus 1:12).
- C. The Bible clearly emphasizes a good work ethic for promoting the gospel (I Cor 10:31-33; I Thess 4:11-12; I Tim 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:1,9-10; I Pet 2:11-12,18-20).
- D. God's faithful saints are living epistles by good works (Matt 5:16; II Cor 3:3; I Peter 2:12).
- E. Rather than cheating your boss by talking "about the Lord" with employees, get to work!

Christians work expectantly.

- A. What does this rule mean? *Christians see by faith the great paydays coming in the future.*
- B. While submitting to a master in the flesh, they remember a Master in the spirit (Col 3:22).
- C. While happily taking a paycheck in the flesh, they remember their inheritance (Col 3:24).
- D. By comparing scripture, Paul promised God's reward or God's judgment (Ep 6:8; Col 3:25).
- E. The righteous know that their godliness will be rewarded here and hereafter (Prov 11:7,18).
- F. They remember the earnest expectation of the creature will soon be realized (Romans 8:19).
- G. Rather than self-confidence or confidence in men, there is confidence in God (Ruth 2:12).

Conclusion:

- A. If a Christian had the Bible's work ethic, he would rise toward the top in whatever endeavor he chose.
- B. If a Christian had the Bible's work ethic, his good works on a job would cause others to glorify God.
- C. If a Christian had the Bible's work ethic, he would have enough for himself, others, and his children.
- D. If a Christian had the Bible's work ethic, others would ask him concerning the hope that is in him.

For Further Study:

- 1. The sermon outline, "Bible Economics," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/bible-economics.pdf>.
- 2. The sermon outline, "Godly Priorities," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/priorities2.pdf>.
- 3. The sermon outline, "Christian Liberty," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/christian-liberty.pdf>.
- 4. The sermon, "Sound Doctrine," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/things-becoming-sound-doctrine.pdf>.
- 5. The sermon, "Tsunami Relief?" ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/what-about-tsunami-relief.pdf>.
- 6. Many Proverb commentaries ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/proverbs.php?chapter=1>.
- 7. The sermon series outline, "The Bible and Employment," ... not available in electronic format at this time.
- 8. The sermon series outline, "The Ordinance of Authority," ... not available in electronic format at this time.
- 9. The sermon series outline, "Ecclesiastes," ... not available in electronic format at this time.
- 10. The sermon series outline, "The Law of God," section on ethics ... not available in e-format at this time.
- 11. The sermon outline, "Colossians 3:22-25," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/col-3-22.pdf>.