


# Faith and Work Part 5

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “**Talking Points, Walking Points**” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “*Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time*”, are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection

- **Why** do you think the Bible delves so deeply into mundane issues such as **how** to do your work?
- Read Colossians 3:22—4:1 and try to explain this diagram: \_\_\_\_\_ →

“s” = \_\_\_\_\_      “m” = \_\_\_\_\_      “M” = \_\_\_\_\_



What do you learn from the relationships between them?

In your workplace, which one(s) are you?

What **comfort** do you derive from knowing that “M” is above “m”? What other reactions do you have?

How often is “m” observing you? **How often** are you **aware** that “M” is observing you too?

Whom do you fear more—“m” or “M”? (Be honest!) **Why**?

Which one is harder to please—“m” or “M”? **Why**?

What changes must you make Monday morning, know that your “Master in heaven” is watching?

## Application-Challenge

- Do what you are supposed to do, when you are supposed to do it.
- Put forth your best effort at work every day.
- Always manage with justice and fairness.

# Sermon Summary



Let's talk about some critical perspectives from the Book of Colossians which apply to our work life. You may be a stay at home

mom or dad, a student, or the president of a company. Slavery was an integral part of the Roman economy, and nearly half of the population were slaves. So, in his letter, Paul addressed not only husband, wife and children, but also masters and slaves as well. As important as family relationships were, Paul gave more attention to the master-slave relationship. Paul's principles governing masters and slaves apply equally well to employers and employees (Colossians 3:22–4:1).

The first command is found in v. 22: "...in all things obey those who are your masters on earth." We can contemporize this for today's work place as: "Do what you are supposed to do, when you are supposed to do it." Now all of us have aspects of our job descriptions that we don't like, but when we accepted the job, we accepted the responsibilities that come with it. There is no loophole such as, "...only if you want to" or "if it fulfills you and makes you happy." God just says. "Do it. Obey!" But He says that mere outward compliance will not do. That little phrase, "not with external service" literally "not with eye-service." God is saying, "Don't just step up your game at work when the boss is watching." Someone more important than our boss is watching us; God sees our actions and our attitudes.

So Paul zeros in on a couple of attitudes that should accompany our work. We should carry out our work with sincerity, with "singleness of heart." We should carry out our work with reverential fear ("fearing the Lord"). Many of us have the erroneous idea that fearing God has no place in the Christian life (Proverbs 1:7; 8:13; 10:27; Isaiah 11:2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 2:17). Fear of God motivates us to excellence knowing that each one of us will stand before God and our life's work will be evaluated (v. 24-25). Entrance into heaven is not the issue; reward in heaven is. God's judgment will be based upon man's faithfulness and spirituality. He will treat all workers alike: employee and employer. We might be able to fool our earthly boss, but we cannot fool God.

Paul concludes with a word to employers. They too have a master in heaven. They too will be impartially judged (4:1). They must always manage with justice and fairness. They must pay a fair wage for the work being done, raises and promotions must be free from prejudice, employees must be treated with respect and dignity (cf: James 5:4). How we carry out our work is important to God. We should all work as though Jesus is our boss, knowing that to Him we will give our final accounting.

## Talking To God About This Week's Message


*"Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."*

## Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? How would you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

Pastor Doug drew key principles regarding faith and work from Colossians 3:22-25. Let's examine this passage together!

**Monday**—Read Colossians 3:22

- To whom is this verse addressed? Does that describe you?
- According to *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: "More than half the people seen on the streets of the great cities of the Roman world were slaves. And this was the status of the majority of 'professional' people such as teachers and doctors as well as that of craftsmen." Does that describe you?
- V.22 says, "Slaves, obey your \_\_\_\_\_ masters in everything..." **What other kind** of master could there be? (See 4:1) Paul clarified: "slaves, obey their **earthly** masters". Without that clarification, how might Christian slaves twist this command? If "s" = "slave" and "m" = "earthly master" and "M" = "the Master in heaven (4:1)", explain this diagram .
- To what extent are slaves to obey their earthly masters: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters in \_\_\_\_\_". Some earthly masters were ruthless! Based upon the diagram to the right, explain how Paul could command that. How does that diagram also explain how a slave could obey a ruthless, godless earthly master "in everything"?
- Paul continued: "...not only when their \_\_\_\_\_ is on you and to win their \_\_\_\_\_, but with \_\_\_\_\_ of heart...". Apparently obeying "*in everything*" means not only **doing the task**, but also **the attitude with which one does it!** How does this diagram explain how a slave could obey a ruthless, godless earthly master **with sincerity of heart?**
- How does v. 22 end? "...with sincerity of heart and \_\_\_\_\_." Do you do that?

**Tuesday**—Read Colossians 3:23

- To whom is v. 23 addressed? Remember, "**Context is King!**"
- V. 22 seemed sufficiently expansive, commanding slaves to **obey** their earthly masters **in everything**. But even slaves have **time off** (for example, to wash and mend their clothes and cook and eat their food). So look What does v. 23 command? "\_\_\_\_\_ you do, work at it with \_\_\_\_\_." Doesn't that seem like too much to ask of an exhausted slave?! And yet, "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" (Psalm 19:7a)—so we choose to believe that this is the way of blessing. How is v. 23 merely an application of the "Great Commandment" and the "Second Commandment" (Matthew 22:37-39)?
- V. 23b tells us to do everything "\_\_\_\_\_ working for the \_\_\_\_\_, not for men". Would you wash and mend Jesus' clothes? Would you cook for him? If so, would you mind doing it after a long day at work? With what attitude would you do it? How could keeping yesterday's diagram in mind help you serve others joyfully, sincerely, whole-heartedly?

**Wednesday**—Read Colossians 3:24

- With what word does v. 24 begin? "...\_\_\_\_\_ you know..." "Since" means "because". So, what is the relationship of v. 24 to v. 22-23? Tell about a time when understanding the "why" helped you obey a difficult command.
- So, v. 24 **tells us why** we are to **obey** our masters in **everything** and to do **everything** with **all our hearts**: "\_\_\_\_\_ since you know that you \_\_\_\_\_ an \_\_\_\_\_ from the Lord as a \_\_\_\_\_." Slaves are unpaid...or are they? What do godly, obedient slaves get? **When** do slaves **receive** the "reward of an inheritance from the Lord"? **How long** does that reward/inheritance **last**? That seems like a fair enough deal, doesn't it?
- Who do slaves **obey** (v. 22a)? Who do slaves **serve** (v. 24c)? What's the difference? What's the connection?

**Thursday**—Read Colossians 3:25

- Review v. 24. Do you find it to be  "encouraging" or  "sobering"? Why? Now read v. 25. Do you find it to be  "encouraging" or  "sobering"? Why?
- V. 24 begins: "\_\_\_\_\_ who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong..." Who is "anyone"?
- Review Colossians 3:22-24 and prove that Paul is talking about **Christian** slaves.
- What does v. 24 promise **Christian** slaves? What does v. 25 promise **Christian** slaves?

**Friday**—Read Colossians 3:1, 4, and 11

- Paul wrote: "Since, then, **you** have been raised with Christ... When Christ, who is **your** life, appears, then **you** also will appear with him in glory... **there is no** Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, **slave or free**, but **Christ is all, and is in all.**" (Colossians 3:1, 4, 11)
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary* adds: "**The apostles did not demand the immediate overthrow of slavery; they were not social reformers, but heralds of Christ's salvation. However, they did not condone slavery, and indeed, the very principles they announced (such as that of the complete spiritual equality of slave and master) ultimately destroyed the institution of slavery.**"
- Show how passages such as Colossians 3:11 led the authors of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* to that conclusion.
- How successful** were Christian principles (such as Colossians 3:11) at **ultimately** abolishing slavery in Christian lands? How long did it take? Recalling that "**more than half the people seen on the streets of the great cities of the Roman world were slaves,**" how do you think Caesar would have responded to a "direct demand for the immediate overthrow of slavery"?
- Show from the Bible how this "slowly, from the inside out" approach to change is consistent with how God does almost everything. Give examples from your own life.

**Saturday**—Read Colossians 1:9-14

- How would Christian slaves find encouragement...
  - ...in v. 9?
  - ...in v. 10?
  - ...in v. 11?
  - ...in v. 12?
  - ...in v. 13-14?
- What does this passage say about their work?
- What does it say about Christ's work on our behalf?
- Is Colossians 1:13-14 true of you?
  - If so, are you growing in "spiritual wisdom and understanding" (v. 9c)?
  - Are you "living a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way" (v. 10a)?
  - Are you "growing in the knowledge of God" (v. 10c)?
  - Are you "being strengthened...so that you may have great endurance, patience, joy, and gratitude" (v. 11-12)?