**RELATIONSHIP WITH CO-WORKERS**

Sunday School Lesson 11

*Building Right Relationships*

1 Corinthians 3:9

5/21/2023

**Introduction:** With last Sunday being Mother’s Day, we took some time in our lesson to review some thoughts and principles related to motherhood and our relationship with mom. During the lesson, we first noted that we need to understand that the mother/child relationship is meant to be a comforting relationship. The second observation that we made was that there is a great desire and joy of motherhood for women. A mother ought to never feel that her position is unimportant or of little value. Instead, she ought to celebrate the opportunity that has been given to her from the Lord to care for a child. We also observed that there is great pain and heaviness that a mother feels when her child behaves foolishly. This heaviness is more painful even than the heaviness of carrying the child because it is the heaviness of the spirit/heart. It’s also more painful because the mother does not know if and/or when the pain is going to end. With this in mind, children ought to seek to live wisely to bring joy to the hearts of Godly parents. Another observation made was that we must properly regard and forsake not the law of the mother. While the father leads the home and gives instruction under the Heavenly leadership of Christ, the mother has an important role in instituting that instruction on a daily basis. For today’s lesson, we are going to be looking at the relationship that we maintain with those we work with on a daily basis. If a believer has the right relationship with his co-workers, it can often lead to opportunities to witness or at least invite others to church. On the other hand, a wrong relationship can do great damage to the cause of Christ and to that believer’s personal testimony.

1. **THE RIGHT CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIP STARTS WITH A PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF BEING DILIGENT IN OUR LABOR.**

* Proverbs 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men. Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. It is important for every believer to understand how diligence in labor can help point others to Christ. A diligent man, by and large, is going to find appreciation among his co-workers. Of course, there may be those who are resentful of the diligence, but even some sluggards will appreciate the diligence because of how it may make their own work easier. While the believer may understand the need for hard work, putting it into practice can be difficult. It’s not just the difficulty of the effort, but it’s also the worldly pressure to resist diligence and settle for mediocrity. Additionally, the Christian hopefully understands that the job is not the most important objective in his life; consequently, he may have a tendency to be slothful in the work that is done. This is why Christian character is so important. Diligent character will push us to do our best even when our heart is not really in the trivial, daily tasks that we are asked to perform. Jesus Christ is our example of diligence. During His earthly ministry, the Lord was diligent to every single aspect of the work that His Father had given Him.

1. **THE RIGHT CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES FOR YOU TO HAVE SPIRITUAL CONSISTENCY IN THE WORKPLACE.**
   * 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. Philippians 1:27a Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: Many Christians struggle with spiritual consistency in the workplace. It’s important for us to walk honestly toward those who are without. They need to see that we truly believe what we say that we believe. That requires our conduct to be consistent in pointing toward the Lord and His Gospel. We must understand how easy it is to ruin a testimony and point people toward sin instead of toward Christ. We ought to approach each day of work with the proper sobriety that it deserves. We must train ourselves to consider each day of work as an opportunity to point someone to Christ. While you are there to accomplish the work that you are paid to do, you are always a Christian. Your light ought to shine bright everywhere that you go. You must resist the temptations of the flesh that lead you to behave unseemly. You must resist the silly frustrations that cause workers to have a poor spirit.
2. **THE RIGHT CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIP EMBRACES UNITY IN LABOUR BUT DOES NOT NEGLECT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE SAKE OF THAT UNITY.**

* 1 Thessalonians 5:11-13 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. Christians are called to unity with other believers on the grounds that we are co-laborers together for the Lord. The Bible shows us the need for unity in labor. The world would probably just call this the ability to work together on a team. Christians should not be afraid to seek cohesion in the work place and even to consider those who labor alongside you in your daily tasks. While you may have people from all different types of backgrounds in your workplace, you share a common purpose in accomplishing the work that you have been employed to do. You ought to strive to get along with all of your co-workers, as we seek peace with all men. On the other hand, you must understand that the commonality of purpose that you share in the workplace does not ever supersede your call to obey the Lord and follow His Word and His leading.

1. **THE RIGHT CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BALANCE FRIENDLINESS AGAINST A PROPER CAUTION TOWARD ENTERING INTO FRIENDSHIPS.**

* Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Proverbs 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. (1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 10:27-28; James 4:4) When you are around a person for roughly forty hours a week, it can be very easy to get close to that person. Given that the believer is going to have co-workers who are not saved, this creates a really challenging dynamic to navigate. We are to be friendly people. We are called to not make friends with the world, but that’s difficult when we are out in the world for a good portion of our week. When it comes to making friendships in the workplace, a good question to ask is this: would you be friends with that person if you did not work together? Consider the way that they live their life and the influence that friendship would have on you. There have been many Christians who have fallen away from the Lord as a result of a work friendship. We must be careful of using “moral” justification for our friendships. There are no perfect people. What bonds us as believers in friendship is our common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **THE RIGHT CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIP REQUIRES A WISE AND GRACIOUS BELIEVER.**

* Colossians 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. In continuation of the previous thought, we understand that a Christian absolutely needs wisdom in his relationships with his co-workers. You ought to wisely consider every decision made in that relationship. You are going to have to figure out how to take a stand for what you believe while still showing grace toward those who do not share in your beliefs. You’ll have to tackle issues like dealing with a co-worker who has a very foul mouth or who goes so far as to blaspheme the name of God. You’ll have to decipher when a co-worker really wants spiritual advice compared to when they want to argue or cause trouble.

1. **THE RIGHT CO-WORKER RELATIONSHIP IS PERSISTENT IN POINTING TO CHRIST.**

* Luke 14:23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 2 Corinthians 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. We must not only be consistent in the workplace, but we must also be persistent. It can be frustrating working with the same person for a long time and never making any noticeable progress in bringing them to Christ. Some Christians get very weary in the workplace to the point that they give up on sharing the Gospel or give up on even their own testimony. You never know when another opportunity is going to open up to share the Gospel or invite someone to church!