

Employees

Beautifying the Bride, p.3

By Jeff Noblit

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Bible Text: Titus 2:9-10
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Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Grab your Bibles and let's go back to Titus this morning as we continue through this, what's called a pastoral epistle. Again, Paul writing to his understudy Titus, who he's left on the wild and woolly Isle of Crete to tour the island, go to all the local churches that have been established there, and in effect, according to our text, straighten things out. Uh, the literal wording in the New American Standard is to set things in order, that's the instruction, get things in order or to straighten things out. Now this morning we come to Titus 2 verses 9 and 10 in this very practical element of uh Scripture. So we look at verses 9 and 10, Titus chapter 2.

9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

I've simply entitled this "Employees." Employees. Now in our Philemon Fellowship, I would surmise to say that the overwhelming majority of instruction and exhortation in the Philemon Fellowship is for managers or supervisors, business owners, how to build a Christian business and how to treat your employees with Christian respect and dignity, love and kindness. That's very important. But the Bible has a lot to say about the other side of the coin, and that is, what about a Christian employee? And we glean that from texts like this as to what a Christian employee's viewpoint, attitude, behavior is to be in the workplace.

Now, I'm going to, again, as I did some weeks ago, give you something of an extended introduction on the topic of slavery itself. I think as I grew up and probably into my middle years, I basically didn't even think that slavery existed other than in the United States. Nothing can excuse it. Nothing can wipe away the guilt and the evil, the oppression and the wrong of our country practicing slavery, but I don't know that if you've figured this out, but the leftists and the liberals lie a lot. They distort and spin. I'm not saying conservatives can't do it, but it seems to be that uh the leftists have made a something of an advanced art form of rewriting history and deceiving us. So I want to I want to first of all look at the historical perspective, some some perspectives on slavery and just for a moment about the historical perspective.

Let me say this first though, now we know in our text that Paul has already written to Titus about uh setting things in order about how the older men are to act, setting things in order about how the older women are to act, setting things in order about the way young women are to conduct themselves, setting things in order about how the younger men are to conduct themselves, and then a a personal address to Titus himself, how a young pastor is to conduct himself, and now we come to this other prominent area of ancient civilization or the Roman Empire, and that is slaves. The word slaves in our text, "Urge bond slaves," *doulos*. So we understand this is not another group based on gender or age or special calling like a pastor. This is a a a category based on one's social position.

Now, historians and anthropologists tell us that it is likely up to 50% of the world's population of this day, the Roman Empire, were slaves of one form or another or one level or another. So it's no wonder that the New Testament addresses this because a lot of these slaves were being converted and added to the churches. So probably a good percentage of most every local church was made up of those who would be slaves, that is to other people. Now, this is an odd phenomenon to us in today's world. However, as I speak in this world today, there are millions of slaves, particularly in Islamic countries on the African continent and in Asia. Matter of fact, there are about 7 million slaves, it's estimated, on the African continent today. You may remember me telling you the last time I was in India, I was addressing some young pastors, and they were telling me something of their testimony, and one of those pastors had just been released from his slavery to an Islamic family. I had never met anyone that had been enslaved. It was just I I was astounded for a while that that's actually being practiced, and it is quite a lot in the world today. And the fact of the matter is, until the middle of the 19th century, practically every nation in the world practiced slavery, none more so than the Islamic nations of Northern Africa. They were the world's greatest participants in the capturing, buying, and selling of slaves. In fact, it is likely there were more white skinned slaves owned by Northern Africans, the Islamists in particular, than there were black skinned slaves owned by Americans or Western Europeans. Did you know that? That the northern regions of Africa regularly raided Christian countries and would want to capture slaves that were only Christians and this was in the era right before the Civil War.

Now, in our country, as awful as slavery was, it wasn't just categorized exclusively to one ethnic group or one skin color group. Matter of fact, there were more than a few black skinned people before the Civil War who owned slaves themselves. I believe it was a Harvard history professor that said it's possible there were more blacks who owned slaves in South Carolina before the Civil War than there were whites. I'm not excusing anybody, I'm just saying it's not as simplistic as they tell you it was. It's not as just this color against that color as some on the left and as our rewriters of history would like to say that they are. In fact, some black slave owners fought for the Confederacy because they didn't want to give up their slaves. When the British Empire made slavery illegal in all of their colonies, some black slave traders in Africa moved to other colonies so they could continue in the slave trade. American Indians owned black slaves before the Civil War. In fact, it was their black slaves that built the Indian nation in the West. American Indians,

for a fact, was the last group in America to give up their slaves and many of them fought for the Confederacy because they didn't want to have to give them up.

So what am I saying? Sin, hate, evil oppression comes in all skin colors and in all ethnic groupings. There are no inherently virtuous minority groups in the world, contrary to modern leftist propaganda. If there is any moral high ground concerning slavery, it goes to the Christian influenced countries of Great Britain and the United States of America that led the world in abolishing slavery. America abolished slavery just 89 years after her founding. No other country has done that.

Now, my point, slavery was a prominent part of human civilization almost from the dawn of time until the middle or so of the 19th century and particularly, no one's hands are completely clean. You could sing the little song this way, "Red and yellow, black and white, all are guilty in his sight, yet Jesus loves the little children of the world." So while we as white skinned Americans must humble ourselves to confess it was wrong, it was evil, it was oppression, it should have never happened, nevertheless, all peoples of the world actively practiced slavery. Matter of fact, in antiquity, every time you conquered a country, you took their people as your slaves. Go back through history, that's the way it always worked.

Now, we come to our text in the slavery of the Roman Empire, and slavery in this day, I guess like in most days, was highly complex and variable. There were those who were the of the lowest caste and were terribly mistreated and terribly abused, many of them just put to death if the slave owner did not like them. And then there were others in the Roman Empire who had quite great prominence, authority, and a a a financial advancement. For example, there were slaves who were bankers. There were slaves who were lawyers. There were slaves who were physicians. There were slaves who oversaw vast amounts of property and wealth. So that's something of a historical perspective on slavery as we blitz through the uh annals of history and find that um slavery was the common practice worldwide for centuries and centuries and centuries and centuries among all peoples. I know of no exceptions. Matter of fact, it's probably true. I don't care what your skin color is, if you could follow your heritage back far enough, you would likely find that your people were both at one time enslaved and at another time slave owners. If you want to just go all the way back. I told you before, my my uncle was kind of the family historian. He has records of of Noblit brothers who left uh France and they were beaten and abused and persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church before they left. We all can find that in our posterity if you look far enough back.

Now, the spiritual perspective, let's go a little further here. That's a historic perspective, but now we're children of God and God has given us, and listen to me, God has given us a wisdom and a strength to view this differently than the world would view it. Christians do not view the world through the lens of so-called progressive leftists, so-called uh the religion of this woke movement and the religion of of of so-called progressivism. It's really digressivism. We don't look through that lens at all. We look through the lens of Scripture and the New Testament, for example, condemns the practice of slave trading. 1 Timothy 1:10, "and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and

perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching." The word kidnapper there can be translated a man-stealer. It was the idea of those who would capture men for the purpose of putting men into slave or the slave trade. The Bible says that in the New Testament that Christians who owned slaves were to be kind and to treat those slaves as brothers. As Paul wrote to Philemon about his runaway slave Onesimus, Philemon 1:16 and 17, "But look at Philemon no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me and how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me." So Paul immediately says, "Philemon, this old concept of slavery is over. He may be under you as a slave, but you promote him up there to a high standard, just like you view me."

Now, while Scripture does not call for the abolition of slavery, but neither did it call for the overthrow of Caesar in Rome, and Caesar and Rome were very, very wicked and ungodly, but we're even to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, the Bible says, and submit to our governing authority, the Bible says. So Christianity is not first and foremost about societal revolution. Did you hear me? You see, you can faithfully trust Christ and build his church in any social construct. These people who want to use Christianity as a revolution to change the external things are wrong-headed. Christianity is not first about societal revolution, Christianity is about heart revolution. That's why Paul writes to Philemon and says, "Now get your heart right about your slave brother Onesimus. He's not to be looked at as a slave any longer. He's your brother in Christ." I'm gonna say that again. Christianity is not first about societal revolution, Christianity is first about heart revolution. Now, however, Christian principles that set forth the dignity and equality of all men led the charge that did abolish slavery in the world.

Now, some foundational truths. Three foundational truths as we talk about this a little bit further and develop a little. This is all the introductions, it's kind of a long introduction. I understand that. Three foundational truths that we need to be mindful of, spiritual truths that we stand on. Number one, in Christ, we are free regardless. That's regardless of your social standing. If you lived in the ancient world and you were born and raised under slavery and enslaved to a master, you are still free in Christ. That's an important spiritual truth. 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verses 20 through 22. "Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that." In other words, and we see this several times in the New Testament, people get converted and in their immaturity they would think, "Now immediately that means I get to change my social situation." Paul said, "No, that's not the first thing. That may happen and if it does, if you get free, get free. But your first thing is to understand the position you're in is God's assignment for now. Honor God where he puts you. And where he puts you is your condition when you were converted." But balance, balance, balance. 1 Corinthians 7:21, "If you're able to become free, rather do that." Verse 22, I'm sorry, 1 Corinthians 7:22, "For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave."

All right, that leads us to the second foundational spiritual truth for Christians: in this life all are slaves. In this life all people are slaves. Paul, James, Peter, Jude, all refer to

themselves as slaves of Jesus Christ. You are a fool if you think you're free. You're not free. You're enslaved to someone, every single person. Romans 6:17 through 19. "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms," in human figures, he's saying, "because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification." So slaves to sin, slaves to lawlessness. And Galatians 5:1 says, we're slaves to the law, which means we're uh uh more than anything else, slaves to Satan prior to our conversion.

Now, if Christians in this day, for example, believe that now Christianity is about social revolution, and we hear some leftists say that today, that why didn't the Bible and why didn't the early church try to forbid this? Because here's what would happen. If Christianity, as small and insignificant as it was, started a social revolution, a slave uprising, Rome would have quickly crushed them and exterminated them and there would be no Christian witness left in the earth because God's not first and foremost about societal revolution. He's about heart revolution, which can and has resulted in societal revolution. So we gladly conclude as the bondslaves of Jesus Christ, if our Lord in his all-wise purposes deems my lot in this life to be a slave of another man, I will gladly serve my God in that assigned role. Yet as the Bible teaches, if I'm able to get out from under it, I should do that. Nothing, nothing, nothing man can do to you can keep you from honoring Jesus Christ. You can serve Christ in the most difficult and dire of consequences.

Well, a third foundational truth here, not only are we free in Christ regardless, not only in this life are all men slaves to someone, thirdly as Christians we remember that our Lord has a record of radically reversing our condition if we honor him first. Here's what I mean. "Lord, this is where I am. So I view this position, this place that I'm in as Your assignment and I want You to be glorified and I'm going to keep a good attitude and a good heart about it all," and if that's first in your heart, God has a record. I'm not promising absolutely, but God has a record of reversing your situation and freeing you from that oppression. But first, you've got to come and say, "Lord, praise Your name. This is my assignment. And Lord, You free me from this as you see fit."

1 Corinthians 7:17 and 18 speaks to this, this principle, "Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one," now notice that wording. God, if if whatever place you have when you became a Christian, that's where the Lord has assigned you. "As God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches." In other words, Paul is saying this is for all Christians. "Was any man called when he was already circumcised? Well, he is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Well, he is not to be circumcised." So he uses the rite of of of Jewish circumcision as an example, but also he goes on to talk about marriage. If you were saved single, don't think you got to be married to be more spiritual or please Christ. If you were saved and you are married, there were some people teaching that you got to be divorced and be single so you can give Jesus all your energy. He said, "No, no, no, no. If you were saved married,

stay married. If you were saved single, stay single. If you if you were saved as a slave, don't make that the first thing to come out from slavery. Serve Christ there." He may bring you out. That's your first and foremost heart's desire. To honor the Lord in the condition, Paul's wording here, that he assigned to you.

Uh 1 Corinthians 7:20 and 21. Continuing with this, "Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called." He doesn't mean in perpetuity, he means your heart attitude at the first. "Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that." Let me ask you a question. You're in some obviously unjust, unfair, oppressive situation. So you become angry. You become resentful. You become pouty. You become bitter. Who wins in that? Who's blessed in that? God is dishonored by your attitude and you're destroying your own psychological and health and physical health. See, God's smart. Years and years ago, I heard about a Southern plantation owner. He's riding out through his his slave huts and one of his older men, slaves, was a a godly man. I mean, one of the richest things I've ever seen is some of the rich theology and doctrine of the of the early slave churches. Godly people. And that old slave was in this shack and holes in the wall and holes in the ceiling and he was just singing joyously to the Lord. And the slave owner called his name and said, 'How can you do that in the in the dismal uh difficult situation here? And how can you sing these praises? And he said, "Because I I don't have a house, but I've got a home." God can sustain you wherever he assigns you for that time.

We have two powerful illustrations in the Old Testament, Daniel and Joseph, men who were enslaved, men who were enslaved by evil empires, evil kings, ungodly kings, but yet devoted themselves to honor their masters without violating Scripture. And what happened? God reversed their condition for they became the mightiest, most revered men in the nation. God has a record of reversing your circumstance if you'll first accept your assignment and purpose to honor him regardless of the situation. He has a record of doing that.

Now, so we come to our text today and once again we see the timeless application of the word of God to our world today, all right? Four things, I'll not be very long here, but four things from our text about employees in today's world because that's the parallel for us in our setting today. Number one, our posture as employees, our posture as employees. So let's remind ourselves again, Paul's writing to Titus, "Titus, go around to these churches and let's get some things set back in place, i. e. let's get some things straightened out." He says, "Our older men have gotten out of whack, our younger men have gotten out of whack, our young ladies have gotten out of whack, our young men have gotten out of whack." Is that good preaching, out of whack? Y'all know what whack means. Out of line. And now he says, even our slaves have gotten out of line uh as we saw when Paul wrote to Timothy about the Ephesian church, a lot of the ladies thought when they were emancipated through Christ, they couldn't believe that they were on an equal plane with the men of the church in salvation. Of course they are. Ladies are as able and and and have eternal souls just like men do, but they went a step further and said, "Aha, then that means we're no longer under the authority of our husbands and we're free to da-da-da-da." And Paul had to write to Timothy in that case and say, "Help the ladies get this back

in line. God has not changed the order of the home and marriage. He has liberated and empowered women to function within the ordained standard of God for marriage." And now we see the same thing, young men, older men, and now for slaves how they conduct themselves.

Number one, our posture as employees. He says in verse 9, we're to be servants or to be subject to their own masters. The word subject here is the exact same word that was used for wives earlier. It means to line up under, to obey, to submit to their authority. He amplifies that. He said, be subject to their masters in everything. Now, once again, we can only make sense of this if we acknowledge and listen to me, church, that our wise, good, sovereign, loving Lord gave us this assignment. Each employee must look back past the employer and say, "God has put me here for Himself." You can't function any other way, child of God. It's not going to work. I'm not against labor unions. I believe there's a place for them, but a lot of things labor unions do can violate Scripture. You're not allowed to do that. When the labor union violates Scripture, then you can't go with the labor union. When they're within Scripture, then praise the Lord for the help. You've got to see that I'm submitting to my employer because it's the assignment of my all-wise, sovereign, loving Lord.

Same principle as husbands loving their wives. "Wait a minute. My wife disrespects me. She does not honor me. I provide this, this, this, and this. So why do I have to love her when...?" Well, it doesn't matter. That's your assignment. "Well, wait a minute. My husband, why should I submit to my husband? He he doesn't consider me. He doesn't he doesn't listen to me. He's rude to me, etc." Well, that doesn't matter. That's your assignment. Children obey your parents. That's your assignment by an all-wise, sovereign loving Lord.

Colossians 3:22 and 23, "Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord." Your employer should sometimes wonder, "Why are you so obedient to me? Why are you so honoring of me because I know I get in a bad mood and I know I don't treat you right all the time." Then that might give you the chance someday to say, "Sir, I don't do it for you. I do it for my Lord. He assigned me to do this for you for His name's sake. You know, I can't be an employee like everyone else because I belong to Jesus and Jesus' reputation is on the line in the way I function as an employee."

Verse 23, Colossians 3, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men." I've been telling young men this for years and years and years as they go out in the workaday world. I don't care what your boss does. Well, of course I do. There's a balance. There's a limit to an employer's authority over you. I get that. I'm talking about the garden variety, everyday stuff. You honor that employer. You work for that employer like working unto the Lord. I've never seen that man not prosper when he has that attitude. God will just come down and work on that boss's heart, work on that employer's heart and cause you to find favor. Now, wait wait just a minute. He may give you a rude boss, at times an unkind boss, at times an unfair boss, because God says, "You gaining character is more important than you gaining profit. You growing in character and virtue

is My first task, and then I can work on your boss's heart about the way he's treating you." God wants you to be like Jesus.

Number two, not only our posture being subject, coming up under, lining up under, but our pattern as we live out our workaday world for our employer, what's our pattern as employees? Well, verse 9 he continues, "to be well-pleasing and not argumentative." Well-pleasing has the idea of of your attitude. Don't be sullen and don't be downcast toward your employer. Don't be pouty. Don't be difficult to work with. Why? This assignment is from your Lord, not your human boss. Is your Lord sovereign or is he not? And my mind went to to Esther, a pagan king Ahasuerus has chosen Esther a Jew to be his queen. And Esther and Mordecai and the Jews find out that Haman, a high official in Ahasuerus' court, has decided to exterminate the Jews. Genocide. Kill them all. And Esther don't know what to do about it and Mordecai says, "Well, wait a minute. Has God not brought you to this place as the queen of this king for such a time as this? You see, you are assigned this, Esther." Here's the way it reads out in Scripture, Esther 4:14, "For if you," Esther, "remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place." That's interesting. In other words, "God's going to fulfill His purpose for Israel. Now, Esther, you gonna get in on it or not? God will bring salvation from somebody else if you don't do it, and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"

Your place in the workaday world has been assigned by God for such a time as this. There's something he wants to do in you and through you for his own name's sake that only you can get done if you'll keep your pattern pure and right, well-pleasing, not argumentative. The idea of not argumentative means not answering again, or not back talking, not talking back. In other words, you're not in any way showing an attitude or disposition, listen to me now, that is against your employer's purposes for his business. One of the most valuable things you can do, and you've got to mean this if you do it. I did it with my pastor years ago and you've got to mean if you do it. Find the time, pray for God to open the right door to communicate to your employer humbly, "Look, I I'm a Christian, but I'm not a perfect one. I fail sometimes and my attitude can get wrong sometimes and I ask forgiveness for that. But I want you to know in my heart of hearts as a Christian, I want to fulfill your purposes for your business. And I trust if I do that, God will take care of me. So I want you to know, I'm dedicated as God gives me strength to help you fulfill your purposes." That's being not argumentative. That's not undercutting and fighting back.

And this gets stronger as we go through here. Well, let's go to number three, our principle as employees. Really, I've walked all over this already, but he says in verse 10, "not pilfering." Not pilfering means to set yourself apart. In other words, you don't go in there, listen to me, you don't go to work with your primary motivation, "What's in it for me?" You do not. You go into that work environment with your primary motivation, "How can I advance my employer's purposes?" Pilfering is that person that always is looking for a little side angle, a little scheme where he can get something that you really hadn't earned or doesn't deserve as he's working for another man.

You remember the story? I've said it to you several times, but it's impacting so I'm gonna say it again. The story of the little pat of butter. The owner of a company had been watching one of his supervisors and this man was really talented. He was really sharp. He was really helping the company so the company owner thought, "I'm going to have lunch with him and I'm going to offer him to be the senior vice president of my company. I think he's earned that." They had a big buffet line in their company cafeteria and they were going through the line and back in those days, old people like me remember this, your butter came on a little square pad. Y'all remember those? Three cents. What I remember, three cents and you'd get you a couple of them or however many you wanted. But that young supervisor had learned something from his dad, that he could reach on his tray and take his little finger and scoot his napkin over that pad of butter and not have to pay for it, the cashier wouldn't see it. So as he's going through the line, just in habit, three cents, just a habit, he took his little finger and shoved that napkin over that little pad of butter. They go through the line and sure enough, he didn't pay for it. Well, they sat there and got through eating. Company owner said, "I want to tell you something. You're impressive. You're gifted. You've done a good job. I was going to make you my senior vice president with a substantial raise but I saw you cover that pad of butter with your napkin. You'll steal three cents from me, you'll you'll steal \$3,000 from me, you'll steal 3 million from me. You're fired." All for a little pad of butter.

You don't go in first, "What's in it for me?" You go in first, "Lord, this is my assignment, for Your name's sake how can I advance this man's business and this man's profitability?" You see, in essence, if you steal from your employer because first and foremost you're about you, he may never miss it but God will miss it, because God doesn't miss anything. The attitude of taking what is not yours because you can get by with it, is anti-God, it's anti-Christ, and it's immoral. So our principle should be, not what's in it for me, what is in it for the glory of God and the good of my employer.

He also has the phrase here in verse 10, "be subject to their own masters," well, that's verse 9, verse 10, "not pilfering, but showing all good faith." All showing all good faith is the idea of confident that God's will includes honoring our employer with genuine motives, giving proof that we are trustworthy in every matter entrusted to us. Make sure your employer knows, "This guy I can trust. I can give him responsibility and he'll get it done. He will carry it out. He'll do what's good. That is what is right and good." Now, there's a balance in everything. If your employer asks you to lie or cheat, violate tax laws or whatever, then you can't do that but you don't shake your fist in their face, you honorably and respectfully appeal and say, "As a Christian, I just can't do that, but can we do it this way and see if it doesn't work out just as good for the company?" We have a man in our church that used to be vice president of a pretty big company nearby, and he came to me on more than one occasion when the owner of the company asked him to do something that was clearly wrong, unethical. And he did just what I just said. He would say, "Sir, I'll do anything to advance your cause and your purpose, but I cannot do that." And the and the owner got mad, angry. But after he calmed down, he came back around and appreciated his employer's conviction. There may be those times with an an honorable attitude, we say, "We we just cannot do that." Acts 5:29, the apostles told the authorities of their day, "We must obey God rather than men."

Number four, our passion as employees. Once again, we've hit on this, but let's emphasize a little bit more, our passion as employees. Look at verse 10, the last phrase. Here it comes to this this crescendo of climactic truth. Let me read it all again. "Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith," and all of it builds to this one main end passion, "so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." "Wait a minute, now he he's hard to me and he's harsh to me. He's kind to others and I work overtime. He doesn't appreciate it. He doesn't pay me half the time. Wait a minute." But does your behavior and your motive adorn the doctrine of God our Savior? If it does, then it's worth it. Seems like Jesus dealt with some pretty unfair things on our behalf. Seems like our Savior went to some things that he didn't really have any responsibility for, but he took them for our sake.

Our passion is that we would be an adornment to this gospel and this Christ we hold and treasure in our hearts. So this is our driving motivation so that we adorn, *kosmeto* is the word adorn here. We get our English word cosmetic from it. It's also the idea to decorate, to trim, like trimming a tree, or to garnish, to beautify. In the ancient Greek world, it it was a word used of designing jewelry to make jewelry more beautiful. So this is how a true Christian conducts himself in the workplace so that the Christ he he holds to, the Christ he professes, the gospel he preaches and shares is properly beautified, adorned by his righteous Christian employee behavior. It's an adornment.

Now, where have we seen this idea of how we adorn ourselves before? Glad you asked that question. 1 Peter 3:3 through 5, talking to ladies. "Your adornment must not be merely external like braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be who you are in your behavior and attitude," he says, verse 4, "let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God." This beautifies, this shows the wisdom and power of God. Anybody can be harsh and and rude and resistant to that one in authority, but to have a quiet and gentle spirit is strength. It's strength. and adorns the gospel you hold and the Christ you you claim to be your Lord and Savior. It adorns him. It shows his beauty when you do this. Verse 5, "For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to," there's the word, "adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands."

So this crescendo about it being all about the reputation of God and the glorification of God is continual in our text, matter of fact. Look look up at verse 5. Up at verse 5, the last part, he's talking about um wives being sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Publicly, you'll show honor and beauty about the things of God, not a dishonor to the things of God. Then again, in verse 8, talking to um young men, sound in speech, which is beyond reproach that the opponent will be put to shame having nothing bad to say about us. Again, God's public reputation is a powerful motive that our God be glorified So God's doctrine, God's word, lived out by God's strength is beautifying to the things of God. It shows forth God's beauty. Uh, God God's truth is adorned when we conduct ourselves

biblically in the public square, in this case in the workplace environment. Even more than that, when you conduct yourself with these principles, you show God's wisdom, God's power, and God's beauty. It should be that your work associates and your boss say, "I don't know how they do that." And they must conclude the God they claim to profess to love and serve must be real in their lives and it's a beautiful thing. It's a powerful thing because these other employees can't do that and what wisdom they must have because now I want to pay them more and advance them in my company. I want to advance them and pay them better because that's the kind of attitude I want in my company.

That's why I've told you young men, if you'll be meek, if you'll keep your power under control and work heartily as unto the Lord and honor your employer, you're going to pass everybody else because nobody's teaching this anymore. It's all about me and I'm oppressed and my rights, etc. etc. etc. when the Bible is just right the upside down of that. I should say right side up from that. And watch God advance you. I'm one, I'm not 100, I'm 1000% certain had I not honored Dr. Bob Pittman as his associate pastor and I failed at times, I had to get some things right sometimes but if I had not honored him I would have never been your senior pastor.

Now, I want to give you two prayers to end with, all right? Two prayers to end with, and we're done. Well, you could word this a lot of ways, but here's an employee's prayer, all right? Maybe you can get this later. The lady's in the office if you want it. You don't have to pray these exact words, but I hope you would pray these principles. "Lord, I view my place in life as assigned by You, my God, My chief desire is for You to prove Your greatness through me. Therefore, I purpose as You give me strength to honor and submit to my authority, i.e. my employer. I trust You to work all things out for my good and, Lord, to advance me and being good to me as it pleases You." That's an employee's prayer based on these truths. One more time. "Lord, I view my place in life as ordained or assigned by You, my God. My chief desire is for You to prove Your greatness through me. Therefore, I purpose as You give me strength to honor and submit to my authority, my employer. I trust You to work all things out for my good and Lord, advance me and being good to me as it pleases You."

Now, that's the employee's prayer but Satan's got his prayer. Satan's got his counterfeit prayer that tries to seduce you in your fleshly, carnal, unspiritual lust and thinking. It's a seductive prayer. It's a lie. Here's Satan's prayer. Very simple. "My authority does not deserve my submission. Therefore, God does not require it. My authority does not deserve my submission. Therefore, God does not require it." Oh, really? Explain that to Daniel as he honored Belshazzar. Explain that to Joseph as he honored Potiphar and ultimately Pharaoh. Explain that to Sarah as she honored Abraham. Explain that to Jesus as he knelt and dripped blots drops of blood out of the stress and burden of in every holy and just calculation was an unfair equation that he should go to the cross for you and me. But he submitted to his Father's authority and look what happened. He's now crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. But it took full submission to honor his Father's assignment before the exultation.

Now if anybody's not convicted this morning, raise your hand and I'll try a little bit harder. Is this not good for me? Is this not good for you? Brothers and sisters, we don't function by this world's wisdom and you're not going to be perfect, but you can be on the pattern and the path, amen? You can be striving toward it for the glory of God. 1 Peter 2:18 through 20, and I'll close. "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle." Well, wait a minute. Satan's prayer said, if you don't deserve my submission, God doesn't require my submission. Oh, no, not only to those who are good in general, but also to those who are unreasonable. Here's the point, if you sit around as an employee and every time something's just not right, you you bail out, then you'll never then you'll never work for anybody. "For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." And I would add something else in the balance of biblical truth, when you bear up under unjust treatment because you believe this was God's assignment, you want to honor your employer, it... How shall I say this? I'll use an anthropomorphic expression, but I don't literally mean it this way, it stirs God to act on your behalf because really nothing actually stirs God. But in our limited understanding, if you'll honor for God's sake, God will act on your behalf. Daniel, Joseph, Sarah, the Lord Jesus Christ.