



CHANGING JOBS

Theme: “God leads people to work. Your abilities should grow in your experience of serving God.”

Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:20-21

Starting Questions: Do you battle with knowing when are the indicated times of change? Why do you usually change?

1 Corinthians 7:20-21

“Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them. Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so.”

Reflection Reading

If God leads or guides people to their work, could it ever be legitimate to change jobs? Wouldn’t that be rejecting God’s guidance to the work you already have? Martin Luther, the 16th century Protestant theologian, famously argued against changing jobs. This was based largely on his understanding of this passage:

1 Corinthians 7:20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called.

Luther equated “condition” with occupation, and concluded that it was not legitimate for Christians to change occupations. However, Luther’s contemporary John Calvin did not accept this interpretation — and most modern theologians do not either. For one thing, it doesn’t seem to take sufficient account of the very next verse, which suggests that changing occupations is legitimate, at least in some circumstances:

1 Corinthians 7:21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. If you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.

Miroslav Volf has written that since the factors by which God guides people to work may change over the course of a working life, God may indeed guide people to change their work. Your capabilities should grow with your experience in serving God. He may lead you to bigger tasks that require you to change jobs. “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (Matthew 25:21).

Conversely, if you become a Christian later in life, might God *require* you to change jobs? It might seem that finding new life in Christ means getting a new job or career. However, generally, this is not the case. Since there is no hierarchy of professions, it is generally a mistake to think God wants you to find a “higher calling” upon becoming a Christian. Unless your job is of the illegitimate type discussed earlier, or unless the job or colleagues threaten to keep you stuck in unchristian habits, there may be no need to change jobs. However, whether you change jobs or not, you probably need to do your work differently than before, paying attention now to biblical commands, values, and virtues, as happened with Zacchaeus the tax collector:

Luke 19:5-9 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.”

Reflexión Dinámica

1. How could you explain 1 Corinthians 7: 20-21 after reading the reading reflection?
2. Have you changed since your faith was placed in Christ?
3. How do you consider yourself in your work performance? Why?

Application

1. How your mindset and actions changed after reflecting on this.
2. What can you do to practice this teaching in your work.