

Jesus in My Work

Luke 3:7-18; Colossians 3:23-24

Opening Questions – choose (a) or (b)

- a) What was your first paying job? What connection, if any, did it have to your career choice?
- b) Go around the circle & have your group take turns answering an “Occupations of the Bible Quiz.”¹

Discussion Questions

- 1) Read **Luke 3:1-3, 7-18**. What was the purpose and main point(s) of John’s preaching?
- 2) What was John trying to discourage and encourage by his preaching in vv.7-9?
- 3) What groups/people ask John “What should we do?” (v.10, 12, 14) What would the modern equivalent of these groups/people be?
- 4) What answer(s) does John give to each of these groups/people? What additional advice would you give?
- 5) **Read Colossians 3:23-24**. How has being a Christian changed or impacted: (a) why you work? (b) the kind of work you did/do? and/or (c) how you did/do your work?
- 6) Ethical dilemmas: an exercise – A survey of 2,000 administrative assistants and secretaries revealed an “alarming frequency of ethical misbehaviour in offices today,” says office ethics expert Nan DeMars. What’s a person to do?
Divide into groups of three or four. Each group should *discuss **one** of the following scenarios* about ethics and work.² After 15 minutes of discussion, come back together as a group and be prepared to summarize your scenario and your conclusions.

- a) Sarah is a personal assistant to the vice president of a large corporation. She is a believer but knows that her boss is not. He travels frequently and part of Sarah's job is to prepare his travel expense reports when he returns from business trips. The company's policy is to have receipts for any meals or items over \$50.

In the past, her boss has listed meals and other expenses in excess of \$100 without submitting receipts. When she brought it to his attention, he told her not to worry about it and that the policy didn't apply to people in his position. Sarah let the matter drop.

Recently, Sarah has been concerned about her boss's dishonesty. The expenses have increased—still without receipts. Sarah needs this job to support her two children and doesn't know what to do. After all, the finance department hasn't done anything and continues to reimburse these expenses.

You're a friend of Sarah's and she asks you for advice. What do you tell her?

¹ <https://www.funtrivia.com/trivia-quiz/Religion/Occupations-of-the-Bible-34960.html>; cf. http://quiz.christiansunite.com/Who_and_What/Occupations.shtml

² These case studies are taken from Serving God on the Job, pp. 44-45.

- b) A number of people in your department come in late, leave early, or take long lunches. In the past, you've done the same. "It's the company culture" has been your motto when your conscience acts up.

Lately, you're having a hard time convincing yourself that what you're doing is okay. You realize that you've been paid for hours you didn't work and want to correct the situation either by working overtime without pay or using vacation time to pay for the lost time.

You've mentioned your concern and proposed solutions to another coworker who urged you not to do anything. He said it's fine if you feel bad and want to work a full day, but said you'd be hurting everyone else if you drew attention to the matter by making up for it.

Is it enough to stop cheating the company of its time, or do you need to make amends?

- c) Your company manufactures a variety of products and sells them for a huge profit. You're a member of the sales team, and the sales material you're given inflates the cost of production and claims the products are of a higher quality than they are.

You and your wife just had your first baby, and she is no longer working. Luckily, you're a great salesperson and are paid on commission.

You're meeting with a large customer and have the potential to make a huge commission on this sale. The customer confronts you with the inconsistency between your company's claims and the products' actual worth and quality. *How do you respond?*

Large Group Time

1. Have each group read its scenario aloud and briefly share:
 - a) The options you discussed and the conclusion you came to
 - b) What was the most difficult part of coming to a conclusion or consensus?
2. What did you learn about ethics from this exercise?
3. What can this group do to help you with an issue or dilemma in your work or life?