

Session 8: Living Out Grace in Home, Work, and Society (continued)

Series: The Christian Life: Living Under Grace | Dr. Randy White

- In session 7, we considered Christian living as “ordinary” (doing all things for the glory of God) and Christian living in the home.
- In this session, we will consider Christian living in the workplace, in civil society, and as a daily pattern.

I. Christian Living in Work and Vocation

- Work is a moral arena
 - Colossians 3:22-24: Servants are told to work heartily as unto the Lord.
 - Ephesians 4:28: The one who stiles is to labor, working with his hands, so that he may have to give to others.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: Believers are instructed to live quietly, work with their own hands, and walk honestly toward those outside.
- A Christian work ethic: In addition to standard ethics (truth remains truth at work), a Christian work ethic includes:
 - The view that excellence of product is a moral obligation.
 - * This does not imply nor require perfection, but it does require price/product balance.
 - The recognition that a Christian does not deserve any merit beyond what they produce for the workplace.
 - * Work is not charity
 - * Work is not ministry
 - * Work is not family
 - The view that risk of capital deserves more reward than the opportunity cost of time-investment.
 - * A Christian employee likely does not risk the capital and the liability exposure of the owners. The Christian employee, therefore, recognizes that owners *may* receive an exponentially higher reward.
 - * A Christian employee does have an opportunity cost of time-investment, and thus should be compensated both for the product produced in balance with the time invested.
- The view that ambition is necessary and can and should be balanced with other realities.
 - * Ambition is not sinful, but rather encouraged in a Biblical worldview.
 - * Ambition can lead to that which is sinful, such as envy, greed, and maltreatment of others.
 - * Contentment is not the opposite of ambition, but is the balance of ambition with other values.
 - Contentment and laziness are not the same. Laziness is when a person is content outside of the balance with ambition.
- The view that the workplace is a great place to silently display Christian foundations, integrity, and Biblical worldview, but likely not the place to “preach” those values.
 - * A believer’s work habits can adorn or undermine his doctrine (Titus 2:9-10).
 - The workplace is not mainly a stage for religious performance.
 - It is a place to be honest, dependable, fair, patient, and ready to speak truth when appropriate.
 - * A poor worker with loud religious talk may harm the very message he claims to defend.

II. Christian Living in Civil Society

- The believer is not detached from ordinary public life
 - Christians live among neighbors, laws, institutions, rulers, communities, and conflicts.
 - Right division keeps the Body of Christ from confusing itself with Israel's national covenant program.
 - But right division does not make the believer indifferent to honesty, order, justice, or neighborly duty.
- Government and civil order
 - Romans 13:1-7
 - * Civil authority is part of God's ordering of human society.
 - 1 Timothy 2:1-4
 - * Prayer should be made for rulers and those in authority.
 - * The desired result is a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and honesty.
 - Titus 3:1-2
 - * Believers are told to be subject to authorities, ready to every good work, and gentle toward all men.
- The limit of obedience
 - Civil authority is real, but it is not absolute.
 - * The believer understands that civil authority has boundaries and a jurisdiction. Family, business, worship, education, health, and economic well-being are not all meant to be under civil authority.
 - * Romans 13:1-7 does not require obedience to every civil demand. The Christian obeys government when government is in its *rightful* place.
- Acts 5:29
 - * When human command contradicts God's command, "We ought to obey God rather than men."
- Christian resistance should be carefully carried out, with respect.
 - * It should be marked by:
 - Clear biblical conviction.
 - Willingness to suffer consequences.
 - Respectful speech.
 - A clean conscience.
 - * It should avoid:
 - Theatrics
 - Hyperbole
 - Martyr complex
- Politics and the Believer:
 - Political interest is not wrong, but politics easily becomes a rival source of identity, fear, anger, and hope.
 - When politics becomes the major source of anxiety, identity, or begins to consume your thought life, it is likely time to back away from it.
 - * Politics has a minor role in Biblical Christian living.
 - * Politics has been handed an unreasonably large role in modern society. The way to change this: *the populace ignores the politicians.*
 - The world is not going to come to an end based on the next election (so breath a little!)