

MONDAY MANNA

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GIVING YOUR BEST FOR YOUR WORST JOB

By Robert J. Tamasy

What is the worst job you ever had? I understand that “worst” can mean different things to different people, but all of us can probably think of one particular job – or two – that we absolutely hated. For me, it was commissioned sales jobs that I attempted briefly. Very briefly, like for about two or three days each. The first one was selling vacuum cleaners to people by appointment; the other was going door-to-door selling encyclopedias.

You can tell both of these were many years ago, because I think door-to-door selling is virtually obsolete for security reasons, as well as the accessibility of being able to buy things via the Internet. And does anyone buy encyclopedias anymore? With Google and other online search engines, information we need is literally at our fingertips. Why clutter our homes with multiple volumes of costly, heavy reference books?

The point is, I detested both jobs, primarily because I am not a salesperson. Being basically introverted, for me the idea of having to earn a living by trying to sell to strangers things they likely do not want or need had zero appeal. Outgoing, sales-oriented individuals, however, especially those who thrive on the opportunity to earn a substantial income if they can sell enough products, might have loved the jobs I hated.

But what about having to do work without any beauty or excitement? I heard about a man whose full-time job was cleaning portable outdoor toilets. I guarantee, no one grows up or goes to college with the goal of attaining that job. But this man stated although he would not describe his work as “enjoyable,” he found joy in it because he started each day with the heartfelt desire to bring honour to God by how he approached his assignments.

When I heard this story, I thought about followers of Jesus Christ in the ancient city of Colossae. Many of them had jobs that were mundane at best. For some, this meant cleaning horse stables. Can you imagine spending all day, every day, shovelling manure and replacing soiled hay and straw? And yet, when the apostle Paul wrote a letter of exhortation to these believers, he said:

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.... Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:17,22-24).

This is humbling to consider, especially if we have jobs that we do like, but grumble about them anyway. How can we do what Paul urged every Christ follower to do? The passage above gives some hints:

We should strive to reflect Christ’s character. “In the name of the Lord Jesus” means to perform our work in ways that reflect godly character and qualities – as if Jesus Himself were doing the job. Years ago, the saying, “What would Jesus do?” was often repeated, and as we approach our work, that is a good question to ask.

Our hearts need to be right. It is one thing to put on good appearances when we know someone is watching what we are doing. But how do we conduct ourselves when we think no one is looking? Even when our human bosses are not present, we can trust the omniscient God is there, wanting us to bring honour to Him.

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We will be rewarded. We have no assurances that people will notice the excellence of our work, but we have God's promise that He does notice and will reward our diligence and faithfulness.

© 2019. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Tufting Legacies*; co-authored with David A. Stoddard, *The Heart of Mentoring*, and edited numerous other books, including *Advancing Through Adversity* by Mike Landry. Bob's biweekly blog is: www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

What is the worst job you ever had? Why did it seem so bad for you?

How can it be that some people find certain kinds of work enjoyable and rewarding, while others detest them and would choose to do almost anything but what their current jobs demand?

What do you think of people who appear to be working wholeheartedly and with zeal when they know they are being watched, but lower their productivity or do virtually no work at all when they feel they are not being seen and evaluated?

How would you explain what it means to "work as for the Lord rather than for men"? Does this mean we should not care what our earthly supervisors and "masters" think? Do you think that working for the Lord means we can lower our standards – or does that mean setting a standard even higher than what our job descriptions require? Explain your answer.

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 12:24, 18:9; 22:29

1 Corinthians 15:58

Galatians 6:9-10

Ephesians 6:5-9