

WORK . . . THE SPICE OF LIFE

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Jamestown Colony

On April 26, 1607, three small ships arrived in Virginia and established Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America. Due to swampy conditions and widespread disease, more than 60 died of the 104 original settlers. Workers were desperately needed. Some of the colonists were English gentlemen who refused to work. Others were just plain lazy. Captain John Smith enforced the Biblical principle: "He that will not work shall not eat!" (2 Thess. 3:10) "After that, the situation improved and the settlers worked with more industry, albeit with some punishments as needed."



Captain John Smith

The Work Ethic

St. Paul encouraged the Thessalonian Christians: "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody." (1 Thess. 4:11-12) He urged the idle to earn the bread they eat. (2 Thess. 3:12) In a 1905 speech, Eugene V. Debs said: "Workers are the saviors of society, the redeemers of the race." Historians have ascribed the fall of the Roman Empire to the loss of work ethics among the wealthy as well as the populace. A quick route to poverty is lethargy. Proverbs 6:6-11 chastises those lazy and non-productive with this advice: "Go to the ant, you sluggard, consider its ways and be wise!"

Idleness Is Dangerous

Benjamin Franklin wrote: "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." Idle people can easily jeopardize their stability by tumbling into poverty and resultant temptations to sin. Proverbs 30:7-9 includes the prayer: "Give me neither poverty nor riches". Riches can make one proud and self-sufficient to the exclusion of God. Poverty presents temptations to steal. St. Paul admonishes thieves: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may

have something to share with those in need." (Eph.4:28) Many, unable to work and earn a living, end up poor and needy. Those able to work should provide for them.

Work - the Spice of Life

Work can be pleasurable if you accept the task at hand with the determination to do your best. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing right. However, mistakes and failures are bound to occur. When they do, pick up the pieces and psyche yourself to overcome the obstacles. Mental and physical "workouts" can be enjoyable or distasteful depending on one's state of mind. If you like what you're doing and are good at it, work becomes play and the satisfaction of accomplishment will spice up your life with happiness. I remember my father dancing on cabbage with bare feet in a huge barrel while my mother happily sliced away the cabbage heads. They were enjoying themselves. When the sauerkraut was finally done, how satisfying it was to spice up some Slovak "halushky s klobasou" (dumplings with kolbasa) with crispy kraut!

Working for the Lord

Years ago, one of my parishioners was given a fabulous retirement party and gold watch from his employers. For years he cleaned offices for a steel company. I remember him once telling me, "Pastor, when I go to work, I go to work for Jesus. I clean offices for Him." Jesus honored him. The satisfaction of doing a good job for Jesus will spice up your life with the joy of accomplishment.

Advice for Workers & Employers

Ephesians 6:5-9

> **Workers:** "... obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ ... serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men ..."

> **Employers:** "... masters, treat your slaves in the same way ... do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him."

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