

# *CHRISTIANS AT WORK*



# CHRISTIANS AT WORK

- ❑ Not only is the fact that we work part of our testimony, but so is our work ethic (i.e. the way we conduct ourselves in business):

1) As Christians we must only engage in honest work.

So it's not enough to realise that you need to work for a living - you need to make an honest living. You cannot claim to be a Christian and engage in criminal activity e.g. drug dealing, theft, prostitution etc to make a living:

- ❖ Eph 4:28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands ...
- ❖ Prov 13:11 Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow.

# CHRISTIANS AT WORK

2) As Christians we should not be looking for easy ways to get rich without working (like gambling or the lottery):

- Prov 12:11 He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.
- Prov 28:19 He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.
- 1 Tim 6:6-9 But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

# CHRISTIANS AT WORK

3) Christians are not corrupt and do not accept bribes:

- Deut 16:19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.
- 1 Sam 8:3 But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.
- Job 36:18 Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside.



# CHRISTIAN WORKERS ETHIC



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

1) As Christians we must be diligent and not slack in our work:

➤ Prov 18:9 One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.

❑ We should work hard:

➤ Prov 14:23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

➤ 1 Cor 4:12 We work hard with our own hands.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

- Eccl 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.
- Eccl 9:10 (International Standard Version) Whatever the activity in which you engage, do it with all your ability, because there is no work, no planning, no learning, and no wisdom in the next world where you're going.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

2) As Christians we must seek to excel in our work:

- Prov 22:29 Observe people who are good at their work - skilled workers are always in demand and admired; they don't take a back seat to anyone. (The Message)



- Prov 22:29 Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

- ❑ Paul instructs Timothy to excel in his work as a pastor (although the principle can be applied to all work):
  - 2 Tim 2:15,24 (NIV) Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth... And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.
  - 2 Tim 2:15 (NLT) Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth... A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people.

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

3) We should work well even when we are unsupervised:

- Col 3:22 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.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

4) Christians should not be grumblers. We should not complain about our salary and working conditions:

- Phil 2:14-15 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation."

Then you will  
shine among  
them like  
stars in  
the sky

*Not fair*

*Poor me*

Blah Blah Blah!

*Why me*

*Boohoo*

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

➤ Luke 3:14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely - be content with your pay."

- ❑ As most strikes revolve around wage increase disputes - it follows that Christians should not be involved in strike action, even if they feel they are being wronged. We present our case to God not man.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

5) Christians should not run down their employers or management.

➤ Ex 22:28 Do not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.

□ Although this verse applies to governing authorities the principle is the same for employers, teachers, parents etc and anyone in a position of authority over us. Indeed in Acts 23:5, Paul applies it to the religious leader (i.e. the High Priest Ananias) who had just ordered Paul to be unjustly struck.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

6) Christian workers do not talk back to the overseers.

- Titus 2:9 (ESV) Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative...



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

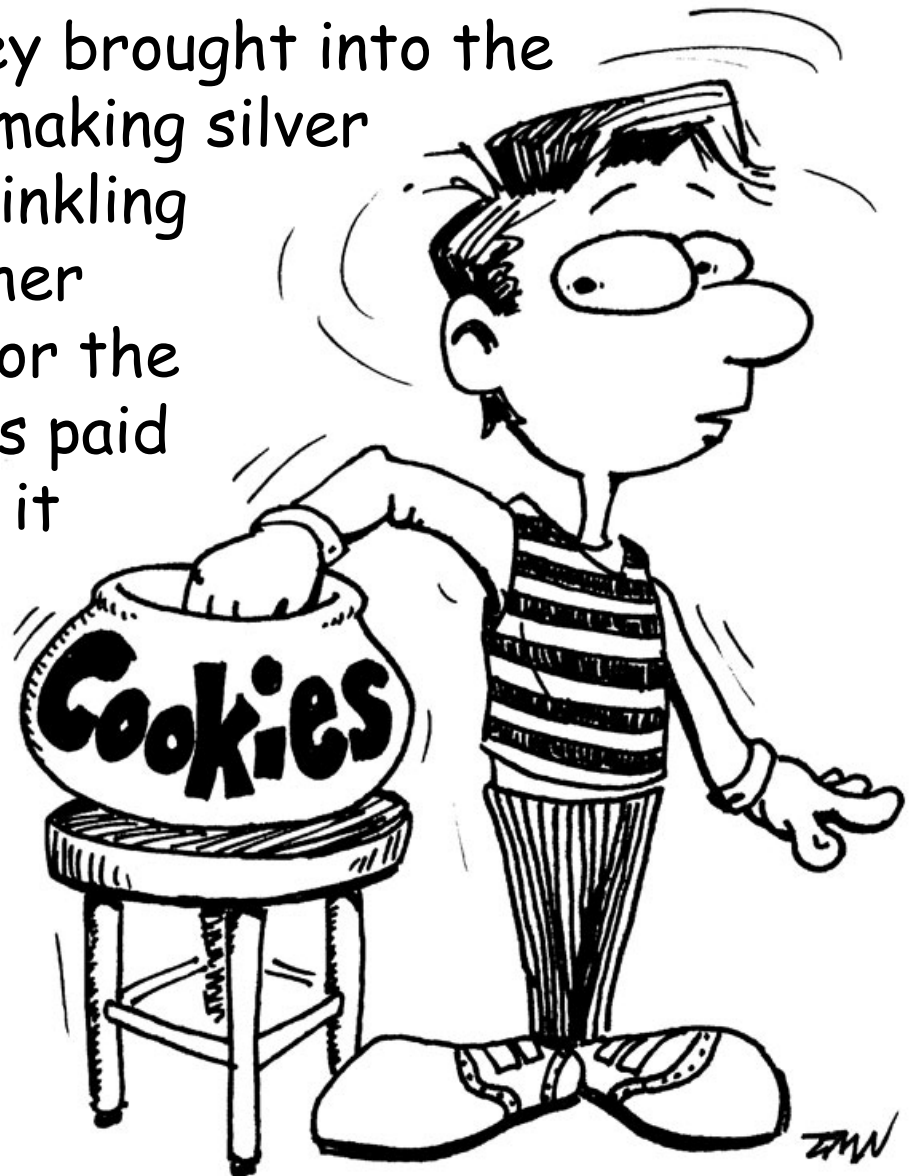
7) Christian workers do not steal from their employers. Instead, they show that they can be fully trusted adding honesty to the ethic of work.

- Titus 2:10 (ESV) ... not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.
- Titus 2:10 (NIV) ... and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

- 2 Kings 12:13-15 The money brought into the temple was not spent for making silver basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, trumpets or any other articles of gold or silver for the temple of the LORD; it was paid to the workmen, who used it to repair the temple. They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

8) As Christians we do our work as unto the Lord:

- Eph 6:5-8 Servants, respectfully obey your earthly masters but always with an eye to obeying the real master, Christ. Don't just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ's servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you're really serving God. Good work will get you good pay from the Master, regardless of whether you are slave or free. (The Message)
- Col 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

- Col 3:22-25 Servants, do what you're told by your earthly masters. And don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ. The sullen servant who does shoddy work will be held responsible. Being a follower of Jesus doesn't cover up bad work. (The Message)



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

❑ Working as unto the Lord means:

➤ We don't take sick leave when we're not sick.

➤ We should be punctual i.e. we don't always arrive late and leave early. We don't ask someone else to clock out for us.

➤ We don't engage in any activity that could constitute a "conflict of interest" to our place of employment.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES

9) Notwithstanding all this, we don't put our work before the Lord:

➤ Ps 127:1-2 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat - for he grants sleep to those he loves.

❑ We don't stop attending church because of work.

➤ Ex 20:9-10 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.

# *CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS ETHIC*

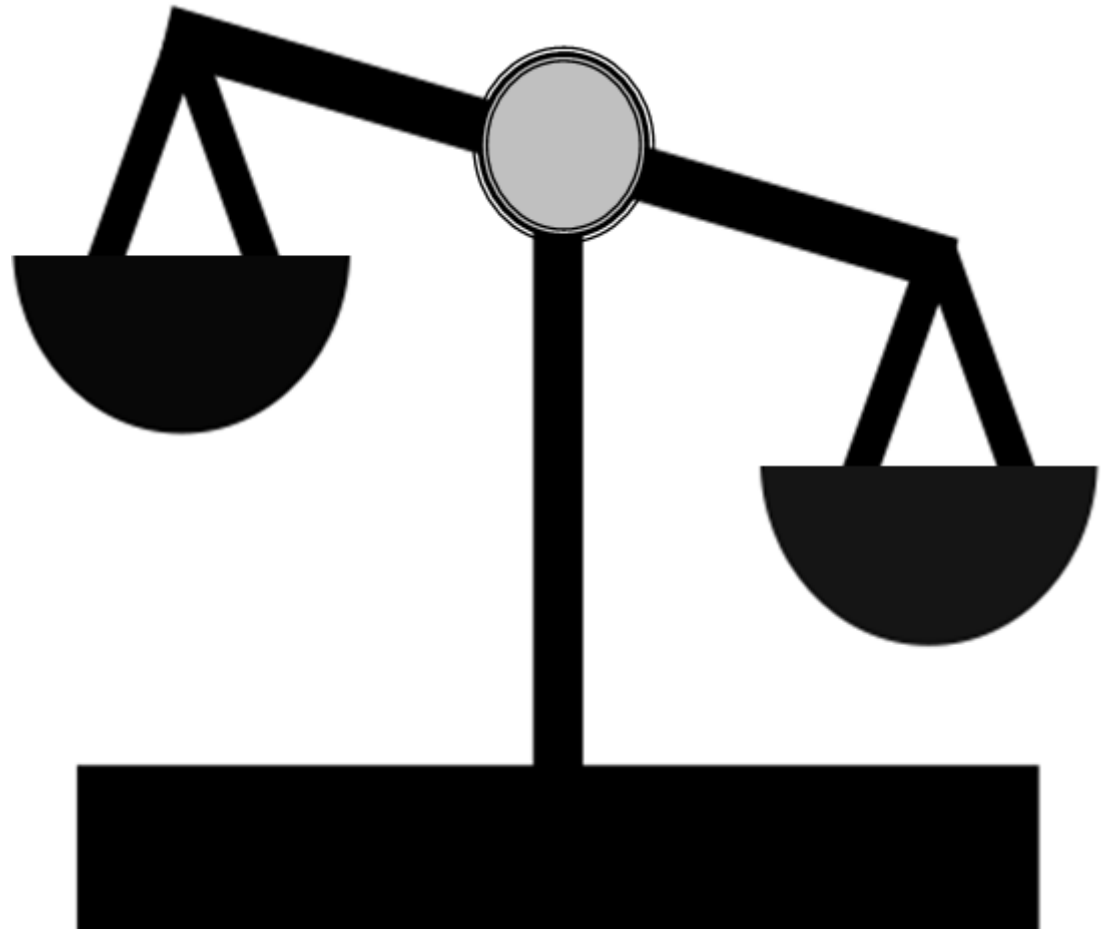


# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

1) A Christian businessman must be honest:

➤ Prov 11:1 The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.

❑ Scales were used to measure the quantity of the item being sold. Having the scales deliberately unbalanced was a means of cheating people by giving them less than what they had paid for.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

2) A Christian businessman should provide a quality product or service - at a fair price.

- Amos 8:4-6 Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?" - skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.
- Luke 16:11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

3) A Christian businessman mustn't commit usury (charging exorbitant interest - either illegal or at least oppressive).

➤ Ps 15:1,5 LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?... (He) who lends his money without usury ...

➤ Ezek 18:5  
Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right... <sup>8</sup> He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

4) A Christian businessman must be financially accountable:

➤ Rom 13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

❑ Creditors should be paid - and as far as it is in your control, they should be paid on time. While the trend today is to hold out as long as possible before you pay your debt - Christians should be different and not follow the way of the world.

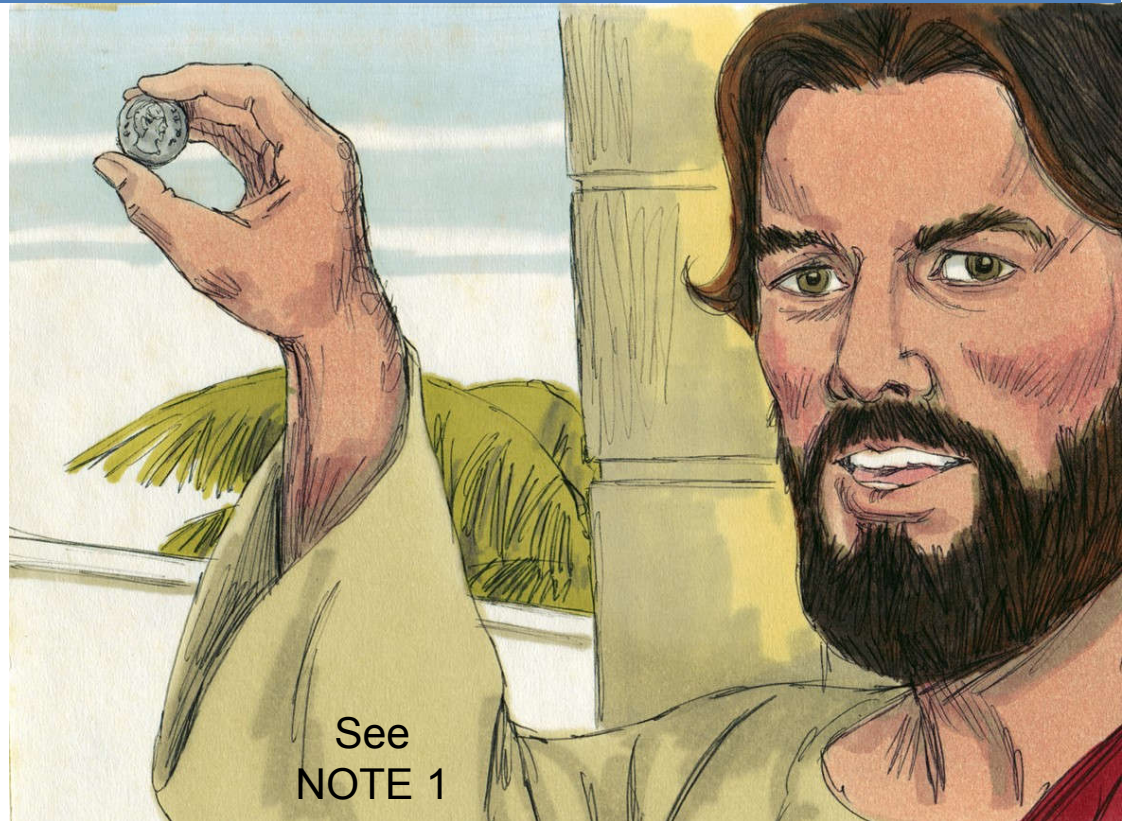
➤ Rom 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue...

❑ When you receive money, your first priority is to pay your creditors - not to purchase something else.

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

5) Christian businessmen should pay their taxes.

➤ Mark 12:14-17 ...  
Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?"  
... Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."



➤ Rom 13:6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.<sup>7</sup> Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes ...

# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

6) A Christian businessmen must honour contracts "even when it hurts":

➤ Ps 15:1,4 LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?... (He) who keeps his oath even when it hurts...

□ We must have integrity and be men of our word:

➤ Matt 5:37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

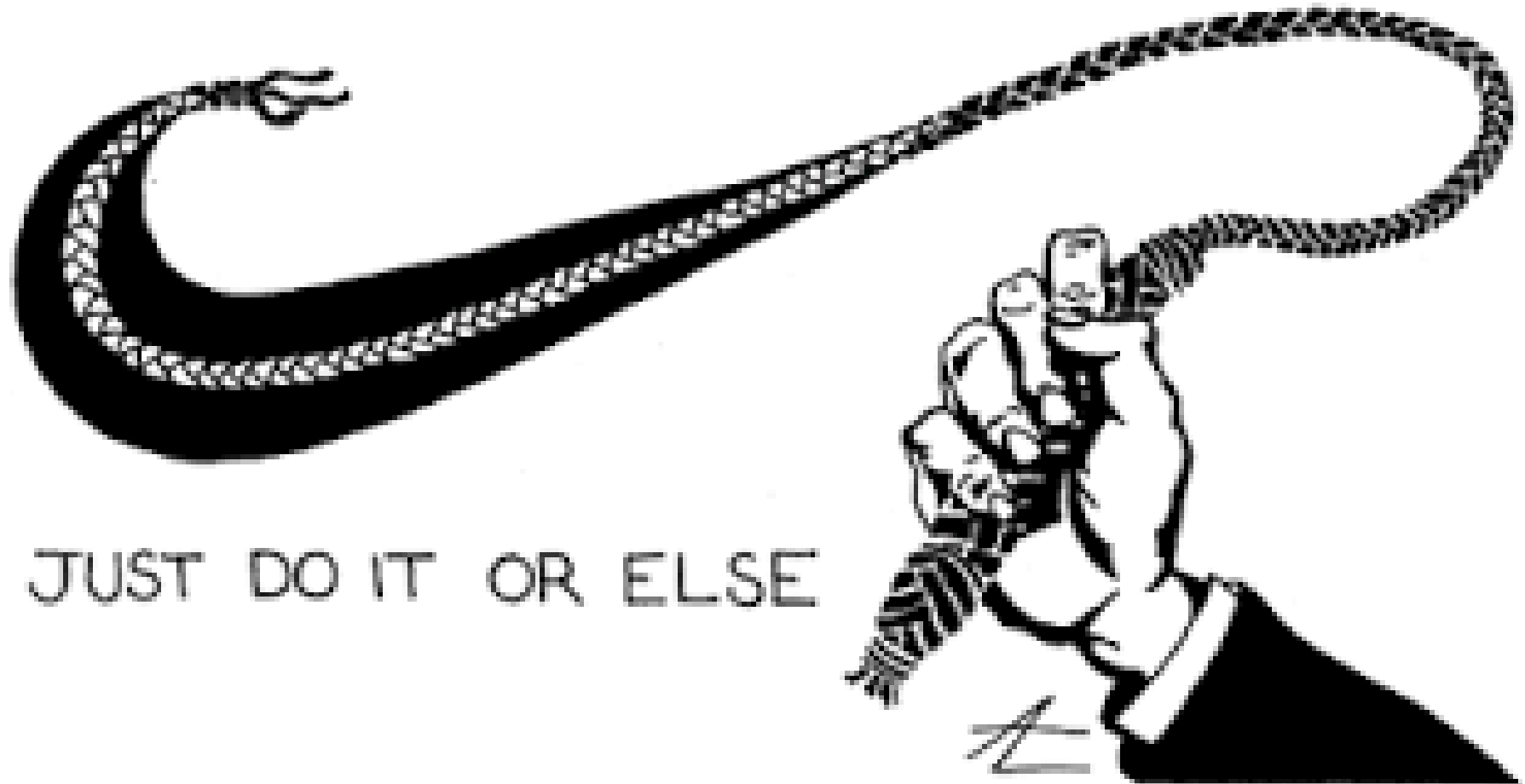
7) Christian businessmen must be fair and considerate to their employees:

- Col 4:1  
And masters, treat your servants considerately. Be fair with them. Don't forget for a minute that you, too, serve a Master - God in heaven. (The Message)



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

- Deut 24:14 (ESV) You shall not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns.



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

8) Christian managers must not be abusive or threatening:

- Eph 6:9 Masters, it's the same with you. No abuse, please, and no threats. You and your servants are both under the same Master in heaven. He makes no distinction between you and them. (The Message)



# CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS

9) Christian businessmen must pay fair wages and not withhold money that is due to workers:

- James 5:1-5 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.



A woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a blue sari, is looking down at a white cloth. She is standing in front of a stone wall. The background shows a landscape with green hills under a blue sky.

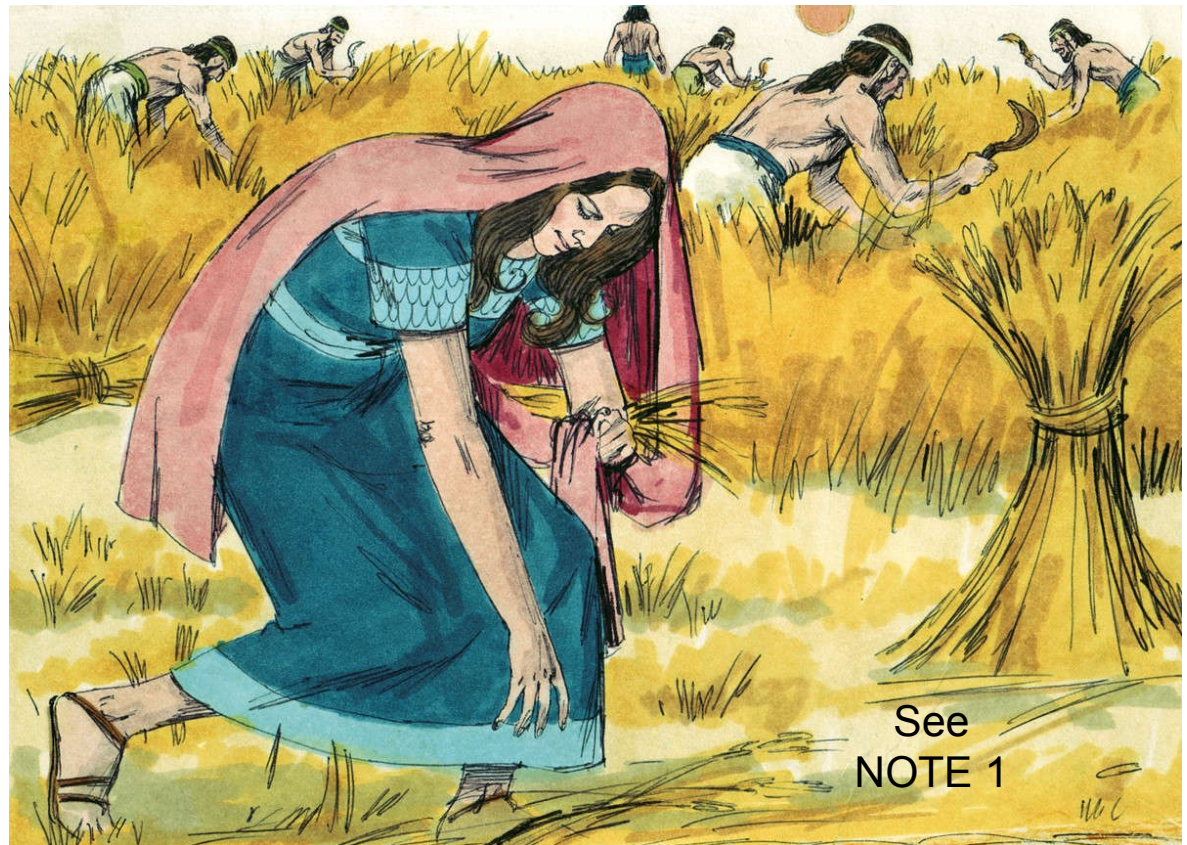
***CAN ONLY  
MEN WORK?***

# WORKING WOMEN

- ❑ In Genesis 1:28 that both man and woman were told to "subdue the earth".
- ❑ In Proverbs 31 we have a detailed description of "a wife of noble character". It is clear from the description that she is a working woman:
  - Prov 31:10-25 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies... She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.→

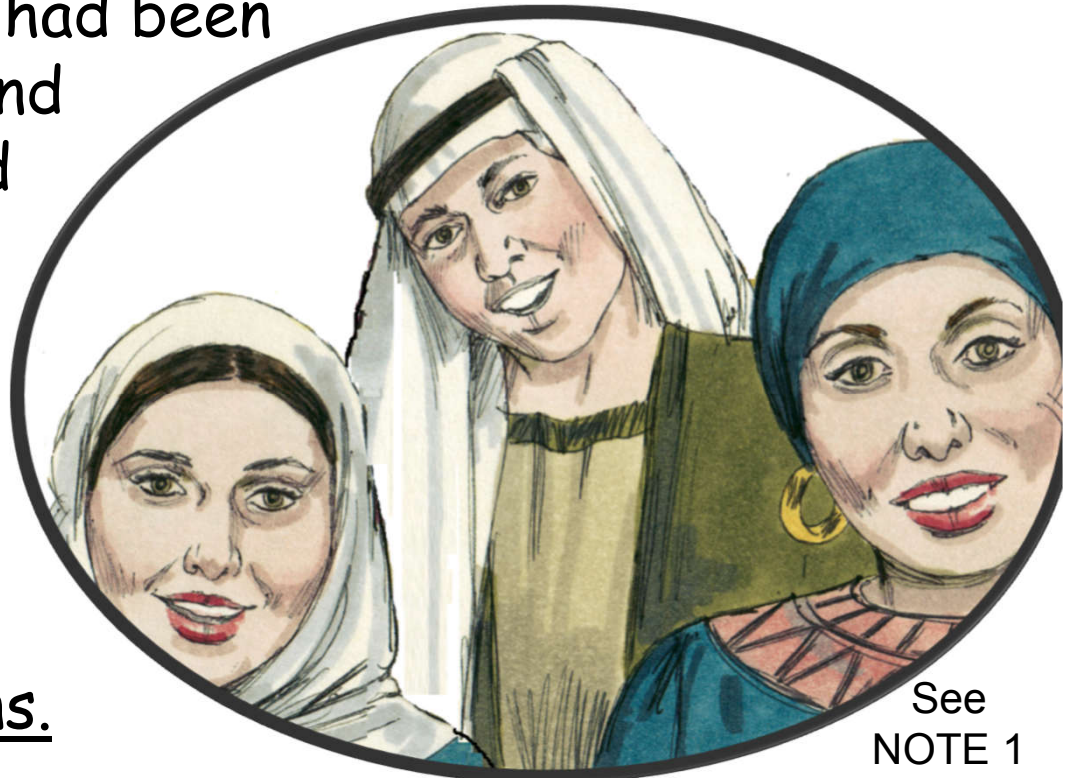
# WORKING WOMEN

← In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple... She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.



# WORKING WOMEN

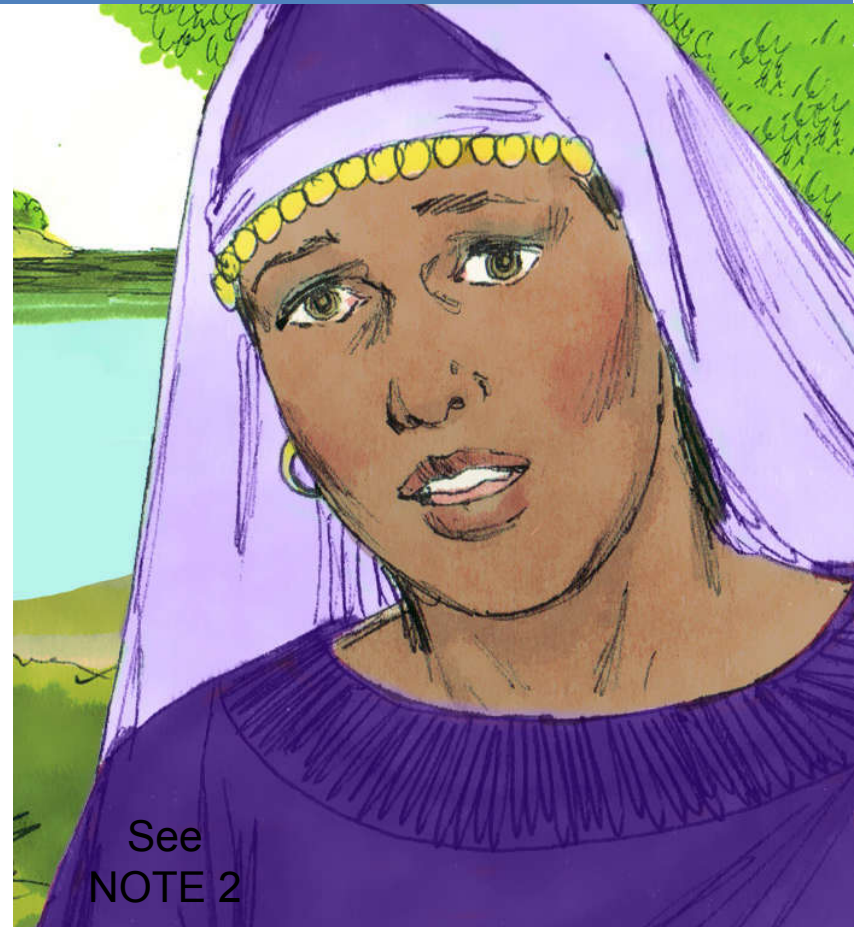
- ❑ Incidentally it is only women who are mentioned as supporting Jesus' ministry financially:
  - Luke 8:1-3 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) ... Joanna the wife of Cuza... Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.



See  
NOTE 1

# WORKING WOMEN

- ❑ Paul's first convert in Philippi was a businesswoman - who subsequently gave Paul accommodation at her home:
  - Acts 16:14-15 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house."



# CLOSING EXHORTATION

1 Thess 4:11-12 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.

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