

JOSEPH: A "LABOR DAY" EXAMPLE FOR US (Genesis 46:31-47:26)

...Tomorrow we as a nation will celebrate "Labor Day." Congress decided that it is only appropriate to honor the working men and women of our country by creating this holiday.
...WORK is a GOOD thing created by God. God gave Adam work to do while he was still in the garden. One of the ways that we bear likeness to God is through our industry, our labors. Christians ought to model an outstanding work ethic. But much to our embarrassment, more often than not, we do not. The world does not see us sitting in church on Sunday, they see us on Monday through Saturday as we work and conduct our lives among them. Did you know your WORK is a revealing display of your character? Our work may reveal to others our: laziness, dishonesty, anger, greed, and disloyalty...as well as our respect, punctuality, team spirit, and willingness to serve.
...Joseph serves as a wonderful example for us to follow. His life and work were marked by excellence.

THREE WAYS IN WHICH JOSEPH MODELS THE RIGHT WAY FOR US TO DO OUR WORK. Remember: His work was to store and distribute grain over a 14-year period.

I. Joseph Planned His Work And Did So With Wisdom. (vv.46:31-34)

...We must think ahead and plan our work. Remember, to plan is to be like God.

- A. Joseph planned how best to save the nation of Egypt through a terrible time of famine.
 - 1. There were 7 years of plenty that would be followed by a horrible 7-year famine.
 - 2. As we have focused in recent weeks upon his family, we may have forgotten that he was very busy carrying his adopted nation through a crisis. (see more of this later)
- B. Joseph now has wisely given thought and has a plan of where to settle his family in Egypt.
 - 1. He would not merely allow them to "just show up," and we will figure it out.
 - 2. He knew they needed a place to live and jobs. (Goshen...shepherds)

II. Joseph Submitted To His Authority With Loyal Accountability. (47:1-11)

- A. Joseph went to Pharaoh, his boss, and told him of his family's status. (vv.1-2)
..."they have come here and brought everything they own..."
- B. Pharaoh interviews the five brothers, and tells Joseph what to do with them. (vv.3-6)
 - 1. They are shepherds, and desire to continue to be...(their occupation)
 - 2. Joseph is told to settle his family in Goshen, the best part of the land. (vv.5-6)
- C. Joseph did not argue or suggest an alternative. He listened and did what he was told.
...They were settled in the district of Rameses, "as Pharaoh directed." (v. 11)

III. Joseph Was Creative In Solving The Problems Of His Work. (47:13-26)

- A. No doubt for many Joseph's work was an impossible task, but not for him. He developed a plan, distributed the seed, and established rent (tax) to finance the government.
- B. Joseph was not afraid to try something that had never been done before. He was solution-oriented and innovative. During the 7 years of plenty, he caused 20% of all the grain produced to be stored in each town.
 - 1. When the famine came, he sold it to the people when their supplies ran out.
 - 2. Joseph was a man of integrity, he did not skim any "profits" off the top for himself. He treated people with dignity and did his work with integrity.
 - 3. When they ran out of money, he sold it to them for their animals, lands, and persons.
 - 4. They were starving, and glad to have the king provide for them, as they now worked the king's land and paid him a 20% tax for renting it. (v.24) (England: Middle Ages)
- C. As a result of Joseph's good work, his boss, the Pharaoh became very powerful. Joseph had worked for the success of his "employer."

WHAT ARE SOME SIMPLE, YET IMPORTANT, RULES TO REMEMBER ABOUT WORK?

- A. Make the MOST of your TIME. Be miserly with your moments and "redeem the time."
- B. Be PUNCTUAL. "Some men are always out of step with father time." "They seem to be born late and never been able to catch up their lost moments." Don't show up late.
- C. Be METHODICAL. Arrange your daily work with efficiency and order.
- D. Find ENJOYMENT in your labors. (Eccl. 2:24, 3:13)
- E. View your work as God's GIFT to you. Do it well. Do it for Him with all your might. (Eccl. 3:13)
...Colossians 3:22-24...work at your jobs, as if you were working for the Lord, for you are!!!
...Finally, consider the Lord Jesus, who did all of His Work with distinction. So should we.