

KEEP VIGILANT: THE BOSS MIGHT COME TODAY

By Robert J. Tamasy

Have you ever had a boss that whenever he or she were out of the office, it was a time for celebration. I was fortunate to have several superiors I reported to that I enjoyed being around, but there were a couple bosses whose absence would cause me to exhale a breath of relief.

They were not bad people, but their management styles were such that they created an oppressive atmosphere when they were present. Everyone felt on edge, not certain what the boss would do next or how he or she would disrupt their accustomed routines. So, their absence from the office immediately eased the tension and made for a more congenial working environment.

Even with the best bosses, however, there is a tendency to relax when they are away. We will not be suddenly summoned to their office. We have time to work on and complete assigned projects before they return. We might even be tempted to put our feet on our desk and take it easy for a while, knowing there's no one to order us, "Get your feet off the desk!"

Some people choose to take advantage of the situation. For them, the boss being away means slacking off on their work. As the adage says, "When the cat's away the mice will play." But what if the boss has a change of plans and returns unexpectedly, interrupting their impromptu "vacation"?

For those of us who regard ourselves as "Christ's ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:20), the importance to remain diligent in serving God and those for whom we work is even greater. Jesus Christ told His followers the "parable of the talents," about a businessman who was going away on a journey. He gave three servants differing amounts of talents (money), trusting them to use it wisely in his absence.

When the "boss" returned, he asked each servant to give an account for what they had done with his money. Two of them had put the talents to good use, investing the money well, and the businessman commended their faithful work. The third had simply buried his single talent, offering the excuse, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and buried his your [money] in the ground" (Matthew 25:24-25).

That answer was not acceptable. The boss took the money from the lazy servant, fired him, and gave it to the most enterprising servant. Then he declared, "For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him" (Matthew 25:29). Two servants heard the words, "well done good and faithful servant." The other was cast out.

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Writing to Christ followers in ancient Corinth, the apostle Paul stated, “So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). For those of us in the marketplace, this involves not only the expressions of biblical truth, but also properly representing the God we serve.

One day we will all be asked to give an account for how we used the abilities, opportunities, experience, and resources the Lord entrusted to us. This is why we are told, “And now, dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming” (1 John 2:28).

© 2023. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A. Stoddard.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had a boss or supervisor who was overbearing or hard to work with, and you could feel a sense of relief when he or she was out of the office or even out of town? How did you respond in their absence, in terms of your work ethic?
2. What do you think it means to be an “ambassador for Christ”? How should this understanding affect how we approach our work, whether someone is there to observe firsthand what we are doing or not?
3. Do you think the lazy servant in the parable was in any way justified in doing the minimum for the businessman he worked for, knowing he was “a hard man”? Why or why not?
4. How do you respond to the idea of one day having to give an account to God for our lives and our work, knowing that “those who have been given a trust must prove faithful”? How should this affect your attitude and approach toward your work each day.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 10:4-5, 12:11, 22:29; Matthew 25:1-13; Colossians 3:17,23; 2 Peter 3:13-16

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