

## WE DO NOT WORK JUST FOR OURSELVES

By Robert J. Tamasy

When many people go to work, their motivation is typically self-oriented. They need to earn a living. They need to provide for their family. They need to have enough money to support their chosen lifestyle. They have found a vocation they have passion for – they enjoy the work they do; it feels rewarding; it gives them a sense of affirmation and meaning.

None of these is wrong in itself. Each can be a reasonable byproduct of the work we do. However, even the smartest, most talented, most experienced person cannot accomplish everything that needs to be done all on their own. A “me-centered” approach to our work – and life – can be disastrous.

I think back over my own career. When I arrived at CBMC more than 40 years ago, I made a big step from being a community newspaper editor to publications director, charged with developing a magazine. I had experience in writing, editing and photography, but knew nothing about how to design a magazine. I lacked the ability to create illustrations for various articles. And I did not have the expertise to produce columns about subjects like personal finances, time management and family relationships.

Fortunately, we found talented people to fill those roles – a graphic designer, illustrator, experts to contribute quality columns – along with an assistant editor and administrative assistant. We each contributed according to our unique gifts and abilities. Every time an edition of the magazine appeared, it exceeded our expectations. I would conclude, “the whole was greater than the sum of the parts.”

The same applies for any vocational endeavor. Whether we are an entrepreneur, business owner, corporate executive, manager, sales representative, professional person like an attorney, physician, CPA, engineer or architect, or a member of the clerical staff, we cannot work only for ourselves. We need each other for the optimum outcome. One of the best passages in the Bible about this is Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, which underscores the value of working together. Here are some teachings from it:

**Greater productivity.** A workhorse may be able to pull a certain load, but team two workhorses together and they can pull multiple times the same weight. The same principle applies to pursuing a goal or collaborating on a project. “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work” (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

**Greater recovery.** No one is perfect and we all will make mistakes or stumble from time to time. It always helps to have coworkers available to help us to get back up, shake ourselves off, and dive back into the work at hand. “If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!” (Ecclesiastes 4:10).

**Greater resources.** Teaming up in unity enables us to better respond to challenges. “Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?” (Ecclesiastes 4:11).

**Greater strength.** Have you noticed that a single strand of string can break easily and two strands present more resistance, but three strands twisted together are much more difficult to

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break? The same holds true when we work together toward common objectives. Adversity that might break one of us, or even two, can be handled better when we work together as a team. “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

© 2026. 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, and numerous other books and magazine articles. Bob's biweekly blog is: [www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com](http://www.bobtamasy.blogspot.com).

### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Do you or someone you know arrive at work each day with one primary intent – to accomplish as much as possible for yourself (or himself or herself)? What has been the result of holding that type of attitude?
2. Have you often taken time to recognize and appreciate the unique contributions of the people with whom you work each day? Why or why not?
3. Think of a time when you saw clearly proof of the adage, “None of us is as smart as all of us together.” Compare that to a time when you and others chose to work independently, rather than to pooling ideas and resources. What was the difference?
4. Can you think of a time when you fell or stumbled, figuratively speaking, and benefited from someone coming along to help you up? Or perhaps there was a time when you offered a helping hand to someone else who had fallen or failed. What was that experience like?

### Challenge for This Week

Sometime this week, take time to consider how you approach your work. Are you striving simply to get everything out of it that you can, or do you see yourself as a valuable member of the team?

If you realize you have not properly paid attention to the value others contribute to what is being accomplished, this might be a good time to recognize and express your appreciation for what they are doing.

#### NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 11:4, 15:22, 21:5, 27:17; Romans 12:3-8; 2 Corinthians 12:12-26

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