

WD September 5, 2022

## “Quiet Faithfulness”

Happy Labor Day to everyone. Because its Labor Day Monday I thought I might let you see into my mind today on a topic that affects labor. A trend has taken hold of the work world and I have been reflecting on it a lot lately. It’s been termed “Quiet Quitting.” A final definition of “Quiet Quitting” seems to remain for now in a process of refinement. In general, however, it seems to refer to sticking only to what one is required to and avoiding going above and beyond. Work to live but not live to work.

Mike Roe, host of Dirty Jobs, did an interview where he reacted to Quiet Quitting. His basic conclusion was that jobs have become too much associated with drudgery. Job satisfaction has a lot more to do with the person than the job. Two people may work the same job. One may find great satisfaction in it while another may want out. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLzxNanhhXg>

Kim Kimbrough, Linkin’s chief economist was interviewed on 60 minutes. She related that we are living in the highest quit rate in history; most of which are in Education, Healthcare, Hotel and Restaurants, Construction, and Retail—jobs that deal with the public. Moms with children are especially likely to quit or insist on working from home since Covid. In fact, those working from home went from 1/76 before Covid to 1/7 today. Today companies are offering sign on bonuses and more flexible hours. She claims that companies are beginning to realize that they are going to have to be more flexible and be willing to meet employees needs or lifestyles. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brw-jN9b-Sg>

I’ve seen this here in Southern Indiana. Working from home during Covid really seems to have brought all of this to the surface. At home I have a lot of control. I can dress how I want. I don’t have to fight the traffic which means I gain a couple of hours a day that I am not paid for anyway. I can throw a load of laundry in at stopping point and touch up the house. I can eat lunch without having to pack it and keep it cold throughout the day. I can put my kids on the bus and be there when they get home which means no babysitter. I can work through lunch and get caught up quicker. OR I can go into the office and do things the old fashion way. But I can be productive while having some say about how and where I reach my goals most efficiently.

Some of the posts that reacted to Roe’s comments were loaded with emotion. In general, they feel that the companies have stopped appreciating the worker. Salaries mean too much overtime. Layoffs lead to what one termed ‘quiet promotions’ which means that now one worker is expected to do the work of three people without more pay. After working hard and aiming for promotions and recognition one gets overlooked for outside talent who are often expected to be trained by the person who deserved the promotion. Or a worker of 20 years who has worked up to a certain salary learns that a new hire with no experience has been hired on at a salary equivalent to the worker of 20 years. Or a worker gets overlooked for promotion because they are “currently needed in their current position.” In the end there is a feeling that loyalty is not getting rewarded so people are quietly quitting. They are laying low.

I have heard many opinions on this topic. But some initial observations move me to think about some basic ideas that are, I think, reasonable beginnings. First, more than being paid people want to be valued. If one is to invest in a job or a company one also wants to know that their work matters to the company, that loyalty will be recognized more than just a bottom line. In a basic human sense, we want to count for something. Secondly, people want what they do to take them somewhere positive. When people think of a job in America most would aim to have a career somewhere that moves them up the ladder in some way in the form of promotions, more vacation time, better benefits, and more pay. In the past the extra effort has assumed a recognition of the extra effort in something better, even if it is just a bonus. No one I know after a long number of years at a job chooses be in the same place as the first day on the job. Finally, people simply want to be respected as persons not production. They want their employers to be invested in them as person with families, with dreams, desires, and goals. People are not just numbers on a spread sheet but human beings who benefit from community of a healthy work environment.

I get that and think about these important ideas. However, it is not good to live angry. Angry makes a house troubled and unhappy. Anger is acid to the soul. Anger is a thief. Anger is usually not healthy to maintain. It is not good to be passive aggressive with our employer. Passive aggressive is not assertive nor constructive. It is a form of practiced anger. It may work to manipulate but it generally doesn’t achieve long-

term solutions or peace. And long-term solutions are needed if things are to change. If our job steals more peace than it gives it may be time to change. And for those of us who have been invested somewhere for a long time that becomes the tension—leaving and starting over or staying and feeling cheated.

Since, most of us will work most of our lives somewhere it may be better to keep in mind a few important scripture truths. First, work is not punishment. Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 speaks of it as an opportunity for satisfaction. “I did this!” Kind of blessing. Start by acknowledging your own work and personal progress, the wisdom and experienced gained. Second, work is as much to honor our family and our Lord as it is ourselves. (1 Corinthians 10:31). Work is honorable. The work that we do should be done with our best ability. The quality we can provide in order to honor the Lord should be done first to His glory. All of these scriptures speak of a worker’s spirit, attitude, and doing what is within our ability to do in order to maintain our personal integrity. As one recently quoted, “We may not win every battle but we can at least deserve to win.”

On the other hand, the employer has responsibilities not to be overlooked. As in any relationship two sides must work together for a common good. Even Jesus says that the worker deserves his wages (Luke 10:7). Colossians 4:1 also refers to employers treating their worker with what is right and fair because our Master in heaven keeps watch. All employers and people of authority will stand to give an account before the Lord. Philippians 2. What’s more, the most basic lesson Jesus taught the disciples who later became leaders of the Church was to learn how to be servants—to serve others and love others as the Lord loved them. It is not lost on employees that the office that celebrates their workers are the ones that gain the greater loyalty and job satisfaction.

One last, but most important thought. Jesus is quietly faithful and consistent in His labor. No one has labored more than our Lord Jesus. Also, no one was more mistreated, unjustly convicted, or suffered more at the hands of greedy, ambitious men than Jesus. He was not treated fairly but looked upon as a criminal. Yet, He went to that cross, laboring for every breath as he bled and died for our sins. As Christians He is our greatest reason for our laboring in this world. You were His labor of love and the reason He worked so hard to save us. So, I end with the words that are known to us from 1 Corinthians 15:58--“Therefore, my dear, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” Your work, whatever that is, whatever its context, when done to the glory of God is never trivial nor wasted when it is applied in faith.

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John 3:30