

Professional Scientists & Engineers and GOD

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When we work as professional scientist (CSci, CGeol) or engineers (CEng, CGeol), we do so within a secular and often apostatical environment. What is it we should be doing as *disciples* of Jesus; and to please and honour our living God?

Scripture does not expressly mention our professions – or Eurocode 7, other than the number 7 being ‘God’s Number’ that appears over 700 times in Scripture. However, Scripture gives us true guiding principles as to *how and why* we should work. So much so, it is a topic fit for a whole book or more. Others are well ahead of me and their books are available from Amazon.

What follows is a paraphrased summary of particular work principles the Spirit has drawn me to, which I share with you.

Talking and Walking

Firstly, our Christian life should never be mere words, talking the talk – like so many preachers I have come across. It is walking the walk – with Jesus.

We should no longer live, but let Jesus live His life in us^[1]. Scripture tells us that whatever we do - no matter what it is - we must do *in the name of Jesus and in dependence upon Him, giving praise to God through Him as we do so*^[2]. This is a corner stone of our work ethic.

Work Ethic

Paul wrote, in his letter to the Romans^[3], *Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically*. He repeats it in his letter to the Ephesians^[4], *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord*. We are commanded not to do just the minimum that will get us by. We are to give our best. A real attention-getter is in Proverbs^[5], *Poverty Comes to the Sluggard* – now that’s my kind of language. The work ethic theme occurs in various ways throughout Scripture^[6].

In essence, we are to work diligently and use up-to-date knowledge and skill with care for favourable effect. And, to do so with enthusiasm - as something done for God and not for men (or women!).

Disobey the law

Paul went to exquisite literary lengths to tell us why we need no longer conform to the law^[7].

But, not so fast. Paul was talking here about the Jewish religious Mosaic Law of the Old Covenant. Not the laws and regulations of the land made by our government, the authorities and (of course) the EU. The repeated scriptural message of Paul in the New Covenant^[8] is unequivocal. We are to obey the law of the land and the authorities – including the EU!

Are there occasions when we should intentionally disobey these things? The answer is clearly given in Acts^[9]. Where the law of the land contradicts God’s Word, we are to disobey the law of the land and obey Scripture. No ifs, no buts.

So just how should all this take effect as we go about our work?

Regs and Tech Standards

The practical application of our scientific learning and skills aims to bring about beneficial outcomes. A critical feature is that this must be done within a framework of law (e.g. contract, duty of care), regulation (e.g. The Building Regulations, The Waste Regulations), current technical standards (e.g. British Standards, Codes of Practice) and best practice (e.g. publications by CIRIA, BRE, Defra). These crucial aspects are obligatory. However, they change and are an ever-increasing incoming tide for us to keep up with and to apply.

As we go about our work, compliance to relevant law, regulations and current technical standards and best practice, is God's will for us. He is to be obeyed. Likewise with the legally binding contracts we have entered into with our professional institutions to walk the walk of professional Codes of Conduct, Ethical Standards and CPD.

CPD

Few (if any) would want to be operated on by a surgeon or seek treatment from a GP, or be advised by a lawyer, or get tax advice from an accountant, or (worse) have an electrician re-wire the kids bedroom, who are years out of date. Yet, there are those among us who are unperturbed when inflicting their 'out-of-datedness' on unsuspecting employers and clients - who pay for the privilege.

Whether an aspiring professional or a Chartered professional, we must embrace keeping abreast of evolving current standards and best practice - and to learn and apply beneficially creative and innovative pertinent technologies. It is a matter of lifelong learning and skill enhancement to maintain and improve our professional *competence* and usefulness - and, our devoutness. Our commitment and diligence to CPD must become a regular habit and, just like prayer and Scripture meditation, for it to become normality in our day-to-day routine - both before *and* after Chartership!

Money

Most of us (if not all) have a rightful desire to be paid fairly for the work we do^[10]. However, some see the monthly pay cheque as only what matters. The bottom line is their solitary satisfaction. Such attitude polarisation can bring about frequent job changes to satisfy an insatiable appetite for increasingly bigger bottom lines - and grander exalted motorcars. We must be mindful that it is the love of - a singular devotion to - money that is the root of all kinds of evil^[11]. Herein lays conflict. We cannot serve two masters - God *and* money^[12].

Last is First

I have left the primary commands until last. However, the last must come first. The two foremost commands Jesus reminds us of^[13] - the 'Golden Rule' as they are sometimes termed - are fundamental to all that we do. They embody *love*. Unrelenting and unencumbered love of God. Putting God before self and *all* others and things^[14]. Secondly, putting others before self, *love one another [just] as I (Jesus) have loved you*^[15]. These are the real test, which differentiate easy-believers (counterfeit christians) and *disciples* of Jesus.

This form of scriptural love is no Western sentimentalised lovey-dovey, gooey-eyed *lurve*.

American preacher and writer Gordon McDonald favours the word **devotion** rather than the love word. He says, *devotion suggests something more deliberate, even calculated*. Well known American missionary, writer and pastor, Dr Cooper P Abrams III, expresses the primary meaning of the love word in Scripture in practical day-to-day terms as, *a purposeful commitment to sacrificial action for another* - from giving up your seat on a train through to giving up your life, for another - *agapē* (pronounced ag-ah'-pay) *love*. Firstly, self comes last - in *all* that we do.

In Scripture, it is a matter of fact that ‘loving’ – being *totally devoted* to - God equates to obeying His Word and what He tells us to do (and not to do!) at a personal level. These aspects are inseparable.

We are Christ’s ambassadors^[16]. We must display as much in our places of work as we do within church fellowship. We must have devotion to our colleagues – and clients – and be ready to be witnesses for Jesus.

Health & Safety

Just how does elf’n’safety sneak into these Godly matters? The answer is perhaps not what most might expect. If you delve into the basis of health and safety legislation, it should become apparent that it embodies the latter part of the Golden Rule - intentionally or otherwise. Its underlying elemental aim (and success) is unwavering devotion to others wellbeing. This is to be distinguished from liability exclusion and liability limitation clauses in insurance contracts, neatly tucked under ‘Health & Safety’ sub-headings. They are rarely Health and Safety Executive (HSE) derived, but money motivated creations of self-interest by insurers to diminish their perceived financial risks – often outrageously so.

In any event, HSE health and safety matters are embodied in the law of the land. As that within the preceding commentary, we become sinners of the darkest dye when we are disobedient by intentional failure to comply with that commanded of us.

Finally

As scientific and engineering practitioners who are disciples of Jesus, we must obey God’s commands - His Word and (importantly), what He tells us during our personal relationship with Him - as we apply our professional knowledge and skills for beneficial effect.

If we talk the talk, or listen to the talkers of the talk, and we do not walk the walk, we are deceived. We can attend churches for years, decades. We can listen to preacher after preacher. We can repeatedly read Scripture from cover to cover. If we fail to let the Truth change and renew us, we acquiesce to becoming rustled from the sheep flock to join the goatherd - deceptively lured along the broad road leading to the metropolis of Apostasy.

God’s Word is meant to bring about progressive change in us^{[17][18]} so we become conformed to the image of Jesus^[19] - the Sanctification process. Unless we invite and submit to the Holy Spirit to put the Truth in us, and into practice by living it, we remain empty jars of clay and fruitless vines – fit only for the fire.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as we go about our God given work, let the Holy Spirit work within us to deliver benefit and blessings to others – and pleasure and all honour to God, and bring others to Jesus. Amen.

References

1. Galatians 2:20
2. Colossians 3:17
3. Romans 12:11
4. Ephesians 6:7-8
5. Proverbs 24:30-34
6. E.g.: Ecclesiastes 9:9b-10, Colossians 3:23-24, Deuteronomy 24:14, Proverbs 12:11, Proverbs 14:23, Genesis 2:15, 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12,
7. Romans 7
8. Romans 13:1-7, Hebrews 13, Titus 3:1, 1 Timothy 6:2, 1 Peter 2
9. Acts 5:29
10. Romans 4:4
11. 1 Timothy 6:10
12. Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13
13. Matthew 22-35, Mark 12:28-34
14. Matthew 22:37
15. John 15:12
16. 2 Corinthians 5:20
17. Psalm 119:11
18. John 17:17
19. Romans 8:29