

HABIT 6
MISPLACING RESPONSIBILITY:
WORKING AS UNTO
THE LORD

A decorative border with intricate scrollwork and flourishes, framing the central text area.

Reading in *Awakened*

Pgs. 86-94

Opening Reflection

What are the benefits of working to serve the Lord instead of working to serve people?

Notes

What God's Word Tells Us

Sometimes we take on more responsibility than we should. At other times, we neglect our responsibilities, procrastinating and passing them off on others. In both situations, Ephesians 6:7-8 can give us a quick attitude check: "Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do." Our work as teachers is not just something we do to get a paycheck. It's not even just something we do to contribute to society or help children. *We teach for the Lord.*

That principle was not established to be a burden or foster a legalistic attitude: *Geez, I can't leave work five minutes early even though no one's paying attention—God is watching and He's my real boss. I wish I only answered to an earthly authority.* Nor does it mean that the Lord requires you to work 16 hours a day and come home exhausted and full of guilt for not meeting every need of all the people in your life.

Rather, working unto the Lord means that the earthly and the divine are intertwined. Having that mentality lends a sense of sacredness to every menial task we complete. Instead of, *How little can I get away with doing?* our perspective becomes, *How much do I get to do in order to feel more connected with God and honor Him?* Instead of, *I have to do everything myself to keep this place running smoothly!* your outlook becomes, *What does God want me to get done today, and how can I keep Him first in my mind and heart while I work?*

When we grade papers, we can choose to work with an attitude of reverence toward God, knowing He has given us the task and is pleased when we tackle it without complaint. When we patiently explain something to a child for the seventy-seventh time, we have the satisfaction of knowing we have shown honor toward God by not considering ourselves too busy to help with something trivial. No matter how monotonous we might consider a task, it glorifies God when we do it with sincerity of heart. Colossians 3:23-24 says that when we work to serve Christ, we will be richly rewarded! "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Working unto the Lord is the solution to our habit of misplacing responsibility. It means choosing to move away from an attitude of blame shifting or self-condemnation and faithfully completing whatever job God has given you in the moment. When you work unto the Lord, God will speak softly into your heart, reminding you that He has entrusted you with the work and will empower you to do it. Invite the Lord into your daily tasks and ask Him to make them more enjoyable and meaningful. Allow Him to open your eyes to see your job the way He sees it: as an opportunity to be the physical representation of Christ in your classroom.

Application Questions

In what ways do you tend to get out of balance with personal responsibility?
Can you identify the areas in which you take on too much and the areas in which you take on too little?

Who are the people in your life that collude with you—those who share and reinforce your unhealthy thinking patterns? What role do you play in those collusions?

Who are the people that can help you choose to be powerful instead of pitiful?
What practical steps can you take to support each other in working unto the Lord?

Additional Scripture

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(1 Thess 5:12-18)

"To Do" Challenge

Divide the area below into two columns. On the left side, list a handful of self-defeating, self-pitying truisms about teaching that you frequently hear repeated by yourself or others. Some examples include: *Students today have no ability to concentrate. The parents at this school don't care about their kids' education. This school district puts the needs of students dead last.* On the right side, jot down some rebuttals to those statements that accept a healthy, appropriate level of personal responsibility: *I can teach my students techniques for concentrating, and I don't have to become discouraged by the kids who reject my help in this area. I can reach out to parents who want to be involved with the school, rather than assume that none of them care. I can stop dwelling on the test-prep culture created by the school system and focus my energy on making at least some of the assignments I give more relevant and meaningful.* Add to your list of empowering statements as you retrain your mind to avoid self-pity, collusion, and misplaced responsibility.

Prayer: *Lord, I thank You for the opportunity to be salt and light in my school. I choose to see my job as the chance to represent Christ. Please chip away at my laziness and help me to overcome the moments of burn out when I stop caring about my work, and give me a proper perspective on priorities so that I don't swing too far the other way and make teaching my entire life. Surround me with people who lift me up, and empower me to edify them, as well. I invite You into my classroom each day, Jesus. Give me balance. Show me the divine within the mundane. Let me experience each task You give me as something meaningful and beneficial. Father, I choose to serve You whole-heartedly today: fill me with Your Spirit and equip me to work in a manner that brings honor to You.*