

MONDAY, October 12, 2009 *"Everybody wants to be somebody; Nobody wants to grow."* _Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1834

Proverbs 22:29 Do you see a man *who* excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown *men*.

Today let's look at a timeless principle that is given in Proverbs 22:29 – note especially the word "excel." Synonyms for this word are: diligent, skillful, and truly competent.

Bottom line, we are called to do what we do with excellence – to take pride in what we do. Most people think that how much they are paid or what their title is reflects the importance of their work; but the Bible teaches that all work is honorable and how we perform that work is what matters. If we excel in our labor then the pay and titles will follow in due course. Or put another way, if a person cannot excel at minimal wages then it is almost certain they will not excel at higher wages. Character, not pay determines the quality of our work.

So the question is: How can you excel in your work?

1. First, study it – there is an art to every job from digging ditches to landing a man on the moon. Be an expert at your job; don't just engage your body – engage your mind.
2. Second, be studious at it – doing something right the first time is always the best course. Why be sloppy or average – your work is a reflection on you and your Creator – give it your best.
3. Third, sacrifice – give more than is required.

These three steps will get you started and if done consistently day after day will accumulate a wealth of experience, character and ability that will propel you to the top.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:41, Nehemiah 4:6, Proverbs 28:20

TUESDAY, October 13, 2009 *"A sheep may get fat in a small meadow. In the same way a tradesman may grow rich in a little shop."* _C. H. Spurgeon

Proverbs 22:29 (See Monday)

Today, as we continue our study of Proverbs 22:29, I want us to examine another key principle that is taught – it centers on the words "his work."

It is so easy to fall for the temptation to think in terms of "someday." Someday, when I get a "real" job or when I get the job I really want, or when I discover God's will for my life – then I will excel. That mindset will never lead you to stand before kings.

What I would encourage you to do is to see each day as a workbench. In the morning you get up, put your feet on the floor and there before you is a new day (workbench). On the workbench will be your work laid out for that day. It may not be what you want to be doing for the rest of your life. It may not be what you think is your "calling" and it very likely may not be fun or fulfilling. However, it is your work for today. If you do not get it done then you will be behind in "your work." If you keep that up it will cost you long term. For you must see that God, indeed, has a plan for your life – a special work/calling that only you can fulfill, however, each day is a link in the chain that will one day connect you to that "big work." If you do not excel at the workbench called "today" then you will be unprepared when it comes time to stand before kings.

So today – do your work – do it with excellence and do it with the assurance that it is a part of the plan of God for your life.

SCRIPTURE: Zechariah 4:10, John 4:34-36 ("even now")

WEDNESDAY, October 14, 2009 *"When Aragorn arose all that beheld him gazed in silence, for it seemed to them that he was revealed to them now for the first time. Tall as the sea-kings of old, he stood above all that were near; ancient of days he seemed and yet in the flower of manhood; and wisdom sat upon his brow, and strength and healing were in his hands, and a light was about him. And then Faramir cried; 'Behold the King!'"* _J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King

Today I want to share with you the last principle that we will study from this proverb **Proverbs 22:29** – it has to do with the promise that is given. The promise or application of the proverb is that if we will excel in our work we will obtain honor and recognition for that achievement from "the king" no less. Now remember, that this proverb was written before Jesus had come to earth. But just think, those of us that study this proverb do so in light of the New Testament. While we in the U.S.A. live in a democracy, we can still gain the promise – for we know who "The" king is: Jesus Christ.

Just think what it will do to our work (and everything else we do) if we do it as unto Jesus. What would happen if we approached all of life's work as a labor of love to Him? What if we understood that He is watching, evaluating, and waiting for the day that He can promote us? Well the truth of the matter is – He is!

Please understand what this proverb is teaching the Christian – you are not living your life for just anyone – you are living, working and serving "The King." You may never receive thanks and promotion that is your due from man – but never doubt – even in spite of man – you are working for the King...and that changes everything.

So today and everyday, hold your head high, do your work with excellence for you are not just working for money or position – you are working for the King.

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:17, 23-24; Galatians 6:9-10, I Peter 5:5-6

THURSDAY, October 15, 2009 *"Have you lived all your life on Swan's Island? "Not yet."* (Answer given to me by a life-time resident on Swan's Island, ME)

Psalm 66:16-20

It has been said that "words are cheap." But that is not always the case. Psalm 66 records the words of a worshipper whose words made a huge difference – they got God's attention! Verse 19 sums up the result: *"God certainly has heard me and has attended to the voice of my prayer."*

I want to remind you today that your worship and your prayers will make a difference. You may be itching to get out the door and hurry into your day; but never underestimate the value of your time with God. These few moments with Him will pay huge dividends. By saying "no" to every other option, you have to say "yes" to God, you are establishing your priorities and focus. That discipline will keep you throughout this day, for you are declaring God to be first in your life and as a result, His mercy will be with you (v.20).
SCRIPTURE: Psalm 116