

Your Output Is Not His Mission

By C.C. Simpson

Most professionals measure their worth by output. Deals closed. Projects shipped. Inboxes emptied. We live inside metrics and deadlines, and somewhere along the way, we start to believe everything depends on us. If we do not show up, the whole thing stalls. If we do not produce, nothing moves.

That lie does not stay at the office. It creeps into our faith. We start thinking God's work in the world depends on our effort, our competence, and our willingness to carry the load. Calling begins to feel like pressure. Obedience begins to feel like weight. Service, at the desk or in the sanctuary, starts to feel like strain.

John 21 tells a different story. After the resurrection, the disciples fished all night and caught nothing. At dawn, Jesus called out from the shore and asked if they had anything. They said no. He told them to throw the net on the other side of the boat. They obeyed, and the net came up so heavy they could barely haul it in. For a moment, it looked like their labor had finally paid off. Then they reached the beach. Jesus already had a charcoal fire burning. Fish were already cooking. Bread was already waiting. Breakfast was already underway. And then He said something that should wreck every self-important worker who reads it. "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught" (John 21:10).

Catch that. The meal did not depend on their catch. He still wanted their contribution. Christ did not need their fish to feed them. He had already provided what was necessary. But He welcomed what they brought. Their labor did not create the provision. It connected them to it. The miracle was not that they handed Jesus something He was missing. The miracle was that He let them participate at all.

That changes how we understand our work. God does not need our productivity to accomplish His purposes. He is not limited by our performance. He is not leaning on our competence to act. Our jobs, our influence, our witness are not tools He desperately requires. They are gifts He graciously gives. An invitation into collaboration with what He is already doing in the world. That changes the tone of our work. We do not show up because the world will fall apart without us, but because God has chosen to involve us. We do not labor to prove our worth. We labor because we have already been called. We do not witness for Christ because God is helpless without our voice. We witness because He delights to use human obedience in divine purposes.

Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." That is a call to privilege, not pressure. Your daily work is not just employment, but participation. The danger is forgetting that and turning divine collaboration into a personal burden. When that happens, we resent what should be received with gratitude and treat obedience as an obligation instead of an opportunity. We live as if God depends on us rather than remembering that He has invited us.

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The risen Christ did not ask the disciples to provide the meal. He asked them to bring what they had caught and join Him at the fire. May we never confuse being invited with being indispensable. May we never treat calling as weight instead of wonder. To labor with Christ in the marketplace is not something we endure. It is something we are honored to receive.

© 2026. C.C. Simpson is dedicated to fostering a bold and triumphant Christian faith within the global marketplace. Before becoming President of CBMC International, Chris dedicated 28 years to a distinguished career in the public sector – as a Commanding Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, and serving in the U. S. Secret Service, responsible for protecting seven American presidents and leading elite teams in complex, high-stakes international missions. With his wife Ana, Chris resides in Boca Raton, Florida.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When you go to work each day, who is depending on you? Who stands to lose if you fail to carry your share of the load? Does that create pressure to perform and meet the expectations of others? Explain your answer.
2. If you are a follower of Christ, what are His expectations for you? Do you ever feel like God's plans will unravel if you do not fulfill your part in His work, that His calling on your life is something you must endure?
3. Today's marketplace, perhaps more than ever, needs the active presence of men and women willing to serve as what the apostle Paul called "Christ's ambassadors" (2 Corinthians 5:20). What difference does it make to realize the Lord is not dependent on our productivity to accomplish His purposes, and that He instead invites us to participate, to collaborate with Him in what He is doing?
4. What do you think it means to "work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men"? How would that look in how you actually carry your responsibilities on Monday morning?

Challenge for This Week

As you think about your current job or career, do you regard it as a calling from God, or merely a means of earning a living, paying bills, and buying what you need and want? Those are legitimate considerations, but the Bible teaches that the Lord promises to meet our needs. He places us where we can be useful for His purposes.

Set aside some time this week to talk this through with a trusted friend, mentor, or advisor. Invite their feedback on how you can more faithfully carry out the calling God has for you in the marketplace, in your home, and in your community.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Matthew 9:37-38; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, 6:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 3:2

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