

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

[www.twojourneys.org](http://www.twojourneys.org)

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at [twojourneys.org](http://twojourneys.org)

## Offering Work as Worship

**Colossians 3:22-4:1**

Chuck Colson's *Why America Doesn't Work*: Began with a "A True Parable" showing the incredible importance of work in the life of human beings:

During World War II, those Jews that were not immediately executed by Hitler's brutal henchmen were herded into disease infested concentration camps. In Hungary, the Nazis set up a camp factory where prisoners were forced to distill tons of human waste and garbage into alcohol to be used as a fuel additive. The only thing worse than being forced to labor amid the nauseating odor of stewing sludge was the realization that their work was actually helping to fuel Hitler's wicked war machine. Yet month after month, these slave laborers survived on meager food and disgusting work.

In 1944, Allied aircraft began to make bold airstrikes deep into Europe. One night this area of Hungary was bombed, and the hated factory was destroyed. The next morning the guards ordered the prisoners to one end of the charred remains where they were commanded to shovel the debris into carts and drag it to the other end of the compound.

As the prisoners began this labor, many of them were thinking the same thing: *They're going to make us rebuild this wretched place.*

But the next day, they were commanded to move the pile of debris back again to the other end of the compound. The prisoners thought their captors had made a big mistake and now all their labor from yesterday was wasted. But they obeyed and moved the pile back again.

But it was no mistake. The third day revealed the horrible truth... again, these prisoners were commanded to move that same pile back across the compound. Day after day, the slave laborers hauled the same mountain of rubble back and forth across the compound.

After several weeks of this meaningless drudgery, one old man began sobbing uncontrollably and was led away by guards. Another screamed until his captors beat him into silence. Then a young man who had survived three years of the vile labor in that camp before it had been bombed now could take it no longer. He darted away from the group and ran toward the electrified fence. The guards shouted "Halt!!", but it was too late. There was a blinding flash, a terrible sizzling noise and the end of a human life.

The worthless, meaningless labor continued, and in the days that followed, dozens of prisoners went mad and ran from their work, only to be shot by guards or electrocuted on the fence.

Their captors didn't care of course... Indeed the barbaric camp commandant had only ordered this monstrous activity as an exercise in mental health... he said to one of his aids, "If this keeps up, we won't need to use the crematoria any longer."

This is the effect of meaningless work on the human psyche... bottom line, if you want to destroy a man, give him utterly meaningless work to do

Deprived of meaningful labor, human beings lose their reason for existence and go stark raving mad."

So began Colson's book on the value of good hard labor

A bit negative, perhaps... maybe we could put it more positively:

One of the greatest gifts of the gospel is the power to do labor that has eternal consequence... labor that builds a kingdom that will last for all eternity!!

### **Context:**

Our passage today seems on the surface like it has NOTHING to do with 21<sup>st</sup> century America

After all, it is about Master-Slave relationships, and slavery ended in this country with the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution on December 6, 1865.

However, the core of the commandment has to do with WORK... with labor, submitted to in authority... therefore most commentators rightly draw the connection to the modern-day employer-employee relationship

The real issue comes down to WORK... why do you work? What is your motivation for work? What do your work habits display about your faith?

And in these areas, Colossians 3:22-4:1 has a lot to say to us still

I will also try to address the thorny issue of INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE ... the Biblical view of slavery somewhat, toward the end of the message.... But the majority of this issue has to do with WORK

## **I. Understanding Work Biblically**

### **A. Greeks' Faulty View: Work is Punishment**

#### **1. Gods punished us by making us work... they relax all day long!**

Greeks: considered work a curse. "The gods hated mankind, Homer argued, and out of spite condemned men to toil

#### **2. Two-tier concept of work: physical vs. intellectual**

“Plato & Aristotle promoted a two-story concept of work—that the majority of men should do the heavy lifting so that the minority, like themselves, might engage in higher pursuits such as art, philosophy, and politics.”

Biblical Account Entirely Different!!

## B. God a Worker, Not an Idler

1. Bible opens with God at work
2. Immensely creative and active... shaping a universe filled with stars, planets, sun, moon, sky, seas, dry ground, all kinds of vegetation, birds, fish, animals, creeping things, then MAN
3. Resting on the Seventh Day

***Genesis 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.***

4. Furthermore, Christ revealed that the Father never stops working

***John 5:17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day"***

## C. Work in Eden: The Gift Given

1. Adam and Eve given a world-embracing commission of creative labor

***Genesis 1:26-28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."***

2. There was a world to be explored, studied, subdued, and worked until it could reach its fullest potential... and reveal the glory of God woven into every atom
3. So Adam's calling was one of creative LABOR from the very beginning

***Genesis 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.***

- a. Adam's labor before the fall was to be physical: tilling and cultivating the soil... literally "serving" the soil, the word used commonly for a slave
- b. Mental labor: naming the animals

Conclusion: work a good gift from God, not a curse and punishment because of sin!

## D. Work After the Fall: The Gift Cursed

1. Not that “Now, Adam, you need to work” ... but rather, “Now, your work will be cursed”

***Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, ... "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."***

2. Greatest curse on work: ultimate futility!!

***Ecclesiastes 2:22-23 What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? <sup>23</sup> All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.***

3. Work, then, was carried on after the Fall... and included creative work with metallurgy and livestock
4. Noah labored hard building an ark to save his family from the flood
5. Jacob worked for seven years for his uncle Laban to marry Rachel

***Genesis 29:20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.***

Key principle: work is changed by heart attitude... if we are working for a desired goal, the labor is sweet

However, the harshest experience of labor was yet to come

6. The Egyptians made the Israelites' life bitter with hard labor

***Exodus 1:14 They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.***

7. After the Exodus, God regulated work after the pattern He had set at creation

***Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work...***

a. Here work is COMMANDED: “Six days you shall labor”

b. Here work is LIMITED: “On the seventh, you shall rest”

E. Christ's Example: Glorifying the Father by Labor

1. Jesus works alongside His Father

***John 5:17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."***

2. Jesus imitates and obeys His Father

***John 5:19 "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."***

3. Christ gets joyful nourishment from laboring for the Father

***John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."***

4. The greatest glory the Father has ever received: The Labor of the Son

a. Comprehensive obedience in all the work the Father gave Him to do

***John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.***

#### F. Paul's Example and Commands

1. Paul's hardworking example: Acts 20

a. secular work

***Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.***

Acts 18:3 tells us Paul was a tentmaker by trade... and worked hard with his own hands to make tents

He even worked late at night to do this so his days would be free for gospel ministry

b. Gospel work

***Acts 20:20, 31 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.... Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.***

2. Paul's consistent commands

a. idleness is sin... provide for your own needs & those of your family

***2 Thessalonians 3:7-10 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live***

***according to the teaching you received from us... "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."***

- b. work is an act of worship to God
- c. Master-slave: work must not be done to “please the eye,” but to please the Lord

#### G. Work in the New Heaven and New Earth

- 1. In one sense, we will “enter our rest”, and “cease from our labors”
- 2. But some people do not think this means we will do no creative work in heaven

***Revelation 22:3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.***

- 3. To serve God and reign with Christ in the New Heaven and New Earth means active creative labor
  - a. BUT there will no longer be any curse
  - b. No failed projects, no deadlines, no frustration in labor... everything we do will succeed and glorify God... we will DELIGHT in creative labor for eternity

So, how now should we work until then?

## II. Paul’s Commands to Slaves: Serve Christ in Your Work

### A. Basic Command: Obey Your Earthly Masters

***Colossians 3:22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything***

- 1. Comprehensive obedience: “in everything”
  - a. As in the case of the wife’s submission to her husband “in everything” and the children’s obedience to their parents “in everything”, this does not mean we MUST violate any of God’s other commands simply because they say so
  - b. BUT it does imply God-ordained authority... and submission to it is glorifying to God
- 2. “Earthly” masters: Greek phrase is “according to the flesh”
  - a. Implication is they have control over our bodies... can command our physical existence

- b. ALSO implication that their authority is temporary and earth-bound... God alone rules over both soul and body
- 3. Thus: submission to God-ordained authority is the regular pattern established for God's people... AWAY WITH REBELLION!!!
- 4. Christian slaves are to give Christian masters even better service because they are brothers:

***1 Timothy 6:1-2 All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. <sup>2</sup> Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them.***

#### B. Working with Integrity

***Colossians 3:22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.***

- 1. Paul delves down even deeper... into the HEART attitude of the slave as he works for the master
- 2. The question is one of INTEGRITY OF HEART...
- 3. So, he takes on the matter of "eye service" and "people pleasing"

***ESV Colossians 3:22 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.***

- a. Eye-service is an act... a smarmy deceiver telling his boss "Yes, sir, right away sir..." then making a face as he turns away and slandering his boss after he's gone
- b. 'people-pleasing' is an issue of hypocrisy and it is faithless
- c. Paul is commanding integrity of heart: being the same person all the time
- d. A diligent work ethic, consistent whether the boss is watching or not

Illus. Years ago, I had a chess computer game... and it had a hot-key for if the boss walked in suddenly... it put up a fake spread sheet with a bunch of bogus numbers to deceive the boss that the user of the game was working diligently

That is "eye-service"... behaving differently when the boss is watching!!

- e. "sincerity of heart" = simplicity, purity of heart...

- i) “O what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive
- ii) A worker who works differently when the boss is watching is a deceiver... and thus a complicated person; that person has to keep up a lie, a persona not natural

### C. Worshiping Christ Through Work

- 1. The key to this kind of labor: Christ-focus... working for the Lord
- 2. The true Christian attitude is, “I am working for Christ”
- 3. Note the Christ-centered attitude Paul commands:

***Colossians 3:22-24 with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.***

- 4. Thus everything you do in your job should be done as an act of worship to Christ
- 5. We have already seen this in Colossians

***Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***

### D. An Eye Toward Judgment Day

- 1. A Christian slave can work for poor wages and no respect here on earth only if they have an eye to eternity
- 2. Paul has already commanded this

***Colossians 3:1-2 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.***

- 3. Now he gives the slave the true perspective toward his service

***Colossians 3: 24 you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.***

Implication: your earthly master may be brutally unfair, depriving you of wages and of commendation for the good work you do... Christ, your true master, will not miss anything

***Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.***



“Inheritance” = a piece of the New Heaven and New Earth; an eternal possession, based on faithfulness to Christ here on earth

The more humble and slavlike we are on earth, the richer will be our inheritance in the New Heaven and New Earth:

There is also a warning for the disobedient slave:

***Colossians 3:25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.***

### III. Paul’s Commands to Masters: Deal Fairly with Slaves

***Colossians 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.***

#### A. Understand Your True Master: Christ

1. It is easy for the master to lose perspective
2. He may play the role of tyrant and abuse his slaves

In 1853, Harriet Beecher Stowe published the second edition of her novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a vividly dramatic depiction of the abuses of African people in American slavery, the deluxe edition was published with artistic renditions of many of the most poignant scenes from the book; in one of the drawings, the wicked master Simon Legree is beating Tom savagely, while Tom is praying and crying aloud to Jesus... in the artistic rendition, Jesus is watching the beating though unseen by Simon Legree

Colossians 4:1 reminds every master that Jesus watches everything he does to the slave... and that there will be an accounting for it on Judgment Day

#### B. Understand Your Responsibility: Fair Provision

1. Ephesians 6:9 says

***Ephesians 6:9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way.***

- a. Implication is treat your slaves the way you would want to be treated

2. Colossians says

***Colossians 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.***

- a. “what is right and fair” = wages for labor
- b. “what is right and fair” = respect and commendation for a job well done

- c. “what is right and fair” = how you would want to be treated if the situation were reversed

### C. Understand Your Future: A Full Account

***Colossians 3:25*** *Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.*

***Ephesians 6:9*** *And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.*

“No favoritism” = both Master and slave will be judged based on how they handled their roles

***2 Corinthians 5:10*** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

## IV. Understanding Slavery Biblically

### A. Why Doesn't the Bible Clearly End Slavery?

1. American context: Abolitionists and Slaveholders BOTH made their case from Scripture
2. The Abolitionists argued from principles of love and decency, rather than clear texts of Scripture
3. The slaveholders pointed to such verses as these to support the institution of slavery from Scripture
4. How should we answer this?

### B. Slavery Clearly Depicted in the Old Testament

1. Abraham had male and female slaves, like Hagar
2. When Hagar was abused by Sarah, she ran away and God told her

***Genesis 16:9*** *Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her."*

Note the amazing consistency of Scripture!!

3. Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt... then threatened his brothers with slavery for stealing his cup

4. The Jews were slaves in Egypt, but then made slaves of other nations later in their history
5. The Laws of Moses provided for slavery... but regulated it with certain laws
6. In fact, one of the most poignant passages in the OT speaks of a slave in a household being offered his freedom and voluntarily rejecting it and choosing to remain a slave of his master

***Exodus 21:5-6 But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,'<sup>6</sup> then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.***

#### C. Some Subversive Concepts, No Clear Commands

1. The Golden Rule

***Matthew 7:12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.***

2. The Command to Try to Seek Freedom

***1 Corinthians 7:21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you-- although if you can gain your freedom, do so.***

BUT...clearly, Paul felt you could productively live out the rest of your life as a slave

***1 Corinthians 7:22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave.***

3. The Warning Against Slave Traders
4. The Book of Philemon

#### D. Jesus: The Son Who Was a Slave, the Slave Who is a Master

OT Prophecy: The Suffering Servant who Brings Justice and Justifies Sinners

***<sup>ESV</sup> Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.***

***Isaiah 53:11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.***

NT Fulfillment:

***Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."***

***Philippians 2:6-7 [Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.***

Greek word here: doulos... the lowest form of slave... not merely "servant"... AND Jesus was as much slave as He was God...

He didn't play act at being a slave... he WAS a slave... He was every bit as much slave of God as He was the Son of God

He came to do the will of His Father, and that meant death, even death on a cross

No slave ever had it harder or was more constricted than Jesus:

***<sup>KJV</sup> Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!***

Literally, "I am in bondage, as in a straightjacket, until I finish my work by dying on the cross"

Was there ever a greater form of bondage than this?

***Matthew 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."***

This same Jesus was the greatest slave of all... washing feet as a slave, and teaching a principle of slavery to his disciples:

***Matthew 20:25-28 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."***

AND Jesus' life of serving is not yet finished:

***Luke 12:37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.***

What an image!!! Jesus dressed like a servant in heaven, coming to us at table and asking what we'd like to drink!!

In heaven, then, everyone will be serving everyone, if this is how the King will behave!!

### E. All of us Slaves of Christ

In the pattern of Christ, we have now become Sons AND Slaves at the same time

1. Paul's most exalted titles: son of God and slave of Christ

***Romans 8:14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

***Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus***

2. So also all of us should consider ourselves as slaves of Christ
3. Furthermore, we are to become slaves of others

Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*:

**A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none, a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one.**

**How are Christians free from all, subject to none? Because we are sons of the living God**

**How are Christians servants of all, subject to everyone? Because we are called on to imitate Christ in a life of service to every person**

- a. To lost people, to win them to Christ

***1 Corinthians 9:19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.***

- b. To brothers and sisters, to love them in Christ

***Matthew 20:26-27 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be your slave***

***John 13:13-15 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.***

### F. Slave vs. Employee

1. Slave has no choice, but cannot legally leave the service of the Master
2. Employee makes the choice about whether or not to continue serving the employer
3. Do we really have a choice? Are we not to be like Christ who had a baptism to undergo, and how restricted we are until we are finished?

4. Aren't we to be like the slave in Exodus 21 who loves his master so much he becomes a voluntary slave for life?

## V. Application: Work Made a Sacred Offering

### A. Faulty Division: Sacred and Secular

#### 1. Roman Catholic separation: "sacred & profane" labor

Eusebius, 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.: "Two ways of life were given by the law of Christ to his church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living.... Wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone.... Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life. And the other, more humble, more human, permits men to ... have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests as well as for religion.... And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them."

#### 2. Medieval Catholicism: hierarchy of holiness...

- a. "sacred": pope, cardinals, bishops, monks, priests, nuns... full time servants of God
- b. "profane": everybody else... lower-level work: tradesmen, clerks, secular leaders

### C. Protestantism: The Sanctity of All Legitimate Types of Work

#### 1. Martin Luther: priesthood of all believers

Luther: "When a maid cooks and cleans and does other housework, because God's command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns."

And: "Seemingly secular works are a worship of God and an obedience well-pleasing to God."

And: "Your work is a very sacred matter. God delights in it, and through it He wants to bestow His blessing on you."

#### 2. Puritans Agreed Unanimously

William Tyndale: [If we look externally] "...there is difference betwixt washing of dishes and preaching the word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all."

William Perkins: "The action of a shepherd in keeping sheep ... is as good a work before God as is the action of a judge in giving sentence, or a magistrate in ruling, or a minister in preaching."

Even the great Martyn Lloyd-Jones erred in his statements about the high calling of preaching the gospel:

In *Preaching and Preachers*, the great doctor called the work of preaching

**“the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called”**

Actually, you can do no more glorifying work at any moment than whatever God calls you to do

### 3. Work and worship thus INTEGRATED

All of life is spiritual... an arena for glorifying God!! Thus every day at work was a chance to display the nature and love of God

#### D. The Puritan Concept of Calling

##### 1. Every Christian “called” by God to a certain employment

William Perkins: “A vocation or calling is a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on man by God, for the common good.... Every person of every degree, state, sex, or condition without exception must have some personal and particular calling to walk in.”

We need to recover this idea!!!

Practical Application:

- See your work as a direct avenue for glorifying God
- Make every task, no matter how menial, an act of worship to Christ
- Serve your employer with great reverence as if you were serving Christ
- Speak respectfully of your boss, and go beyond what he asks of you
- Recover the doctrine of “calling” ... what does God want you to do BIG PICTURE with your life??
- Seek the highest calling you can have... as much connected to the gospel ministry as God wills... and then labor in it for the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom
- Make the workplace a key place of evangelism... when people see you working like this, they may well ask you WHY

***1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,***