



Working with Joy Devotion

[Please provide: if singing the hymn, musical accompaniment; hymnals for attendees.]

... *whatever you do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Corinthians 10:31b).

One of Aesop's fables "The Gnat and the Bull" reads: "A gnat flew over the meadow with much buzzing for so small a creature and settled on the tip of one of the horns of a bull. After he had rested a short time, he made ready to fly away. But before he left he begged the bull's pardon for having used his horn for a resting place. 'You must be very glad to have me go now,' he said. 'It's all the same to me,' replied the bull. 'I did not even know you were there.'" The point of the fable is that we are often of greater importance in our own eyes than in the eyes of our neighbor. The smaller the mind the greater the conceit. (*The Aesop for Children*, Milo Winter. New York: Checkerboard Press, 1947, page 21.)

Too often we mute the Gospel's power because of our lack of concern for others. When our focus is on ourselves, we often see others as the bull saw the gnat. What motivates us to bring glory to God in all that we do? The answer is when, by faith, the Holy Spirit helps us to see our neighbor as Christ sees her. Particular neighbors may not be very lovable, but Christ loves them and died for them. Holy Scripture reminds us, *We love because he first loved us* (1 John 4:19). Jesus Himself commands us "... *You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (Mark 12:31a).

Webster's Dictionary presents a synonym for work: **calling**. Paul reminded the Corinthians that their lives were a living testimony to others of God's glory. The same is true for you and me. Through our words and actions, we reflect our core beliefs, desires, faith, and fears. When the Holy Spirit empowers us to care for another person freely rather than out of obligation, we express God's love to that individual. When we tell someone about the reason for the hope that is in us, we honor God. He calls us through His Word to build up one another and to witness to His love in all aspects of our lives.

We do not earn our salvation by works. It comes through the work that Christ did on the cross. The ultimate goal of our existence is to bring glory to God in "whatever we do." Our power comes from the Holy Spirit. Paul learned how to serve his neighbor with joy in everything he did. He tells us: ... *I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:12b-13).

God gives us joy and works in us to give Him glory by **Making Our Mission Meaningful**. Part of a recent LWML Primary Focus states: "We challenge and equip women of all ages, stages, ethnicities, and experiences to make a meaningful difference in the lives of hurting, helpless, and unbelieving people at home and throughout the world." This mission is accomplished as God works in us and through us. *For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building* (1 Corinthians 3:9).

As Paul prays for the Ephesians, he closes his prayer with the criterion for working with joy: *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all*

generations, forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:20-21). Joy in work comes when we continually look ... to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith ... (Hebrews 12:2a).

The psalmist warns us to not think we are of greater importance in our own eyes than in the eyes of our neighbor. *Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! (Psalm 115:1)* Are you doing what you are doing for your own glory, or are you bringing glory to God in “whatever you do”? By the power of the Holy Spirit, may all that we do be done in joyful recognition and gratitude for all that our great God has done and continues to do for us. To Him be the glory!

Sing or say the words to "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying" LSB 826, TLH 496, LW 318.

We Pray: Dear Savior, You have called us through the gospel to be part of Your church, the fellowship of all believers. Through this unique and special calling, enable us to experience the joy and blessing of working together with fellow believers, doing things together for Your kingdom that we cannot do alone. Sharing a common faith and purpose, may we cherish the unity You give with all believers. May all that we do be done in joy to glorify and proclaim You. Amen.