

CHRISTIANS AND JOBLESSNESS: WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

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Introduction

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV).

That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, (1 Thessalonians 4:11 NKJV).

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labour and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, (2 Thessalonians 3:7-8 NKJV).

Christianity teaches no man to neglect his business. It requires no one to give up an honest calling, and to be idle. It asks no one to forsake a useful occupation unless he can exchange it for one more useful. It demands, indeed, that we shall be willing so far to suspend our ordinary labours as to observe the Lord's command; to maintain habits of devotion; to improve our minds and hearts by the study of truth; to cultivate the social affections, and to do good to others as we have an opportunity; but it makes no one idle, and never support idleness in no one.

The effect of religion everywhere is to make men industrious; and every man, who is able, should feel himself under sacred obligation to be employed. God made man to work, (**See Genesis 2:15; 3:19,**) and there is no more benevolent arrangement of His government than this.

All must strive to work or do honest business to make money to support self, family and to be generous to others. No one that is capable has a right to retire from business and to live in idleness, (**see Acts 20:34; Eph 4:28**).

No one has a right to live in idleness as to be wholly dependent on others, if he can support himself; and no one has a right to compel others to labour for him in order that he may be supported in indolence and ease. No man understands fully the blessings which God has bestowed on him, if he has hands to work and will not work.

WHY THIS LESSON

Joblessness impacts are enormous and the list is endless; some are

- Creates more burden for the Church: As the number of Needy brethren increases
- Hinders the growth of the church: fund for Evangelism would not be adequate as scarce resources will be directed to solving the needs of the needy, that is more will be spent on Benevolence work that Evangelism.
- Impacts on the spiritual growth of individual brethren as some may doubt their faith.
- Affects the disposition of the church and individual families. There is a saying that “A happy home creates a happy church. Imagine when Brethren with happy souls gives praise worship to the Lord! A grateful and humble heart sings and makes melody from the heart....
- Modern evangelism requires great fund and human capital. All hands must be on deck to contribute their quota; humanly and financially.

Joblessness could impact on the next generation of Christians if our children are not properly equipped with modern day challenge.

Nice to hear nowadays of members of the Lord’s Church being... Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, CEOs, Portfolio Investors, just name it – maybe President one day! Joblessness could kill these dreams when the younger ones are not given adequate training for want of fund to enable them compete with their contemporary in the 21st Century. Why use our children or wards as example; one of our duties as Parents is to teach them the ways of the Lord. Our Children/wards are the most guarantee generation of the Lord’s Church should Christ tarry in His second coming.

SELF PROFILE: I encourage all to be attentive to the discussion today. Wealth of experience is derived from practical life experience. Explain self

PREAMBLE

Basic requirements; i) **Seek God’s wisdom** (to guide you in your decisions and Ventures in life. “ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 NKJV)”. {see **Eccl. 9:11 all is done by the providence of God**}. ii) **Equip yourself with Christian Virtue {Phil 4:8 & 2 Peter 1:3-9}**.

JOBLESSNESS

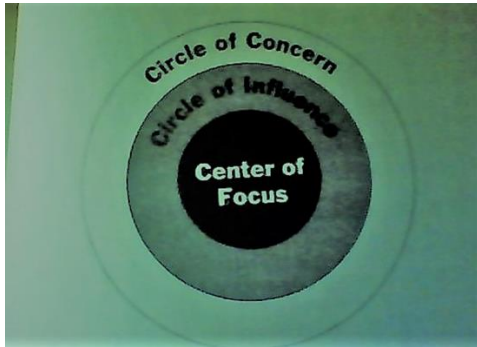
Impacts on all;

- Graduates
- Technicians
- Businesses

Many blame this on government and the society as responsible for their predicament. Such blames may not be necessary as these are beyond our/individual control {Circle of Concern}. You cannot change government policies but you can strive to understand the policy and key into it to make wealth. Make a difference in your skill {circle of influence}.

In creating wealth you need to focus on things you can control or change instead of chasing shadows {Centre of Focus}. The most effective use of our time and energy is

generally in a third circle – Centre of Focus. In this circle are the things we are concerned about, that are within our ability to influence, that are aligned with our mission and are timely. To spend time and effort in any other circle diminishes our effectiveness. When we operate in our Circle of Concern we basically waste effort on things we have no ability to control or affect. When we operate within our circle of Influence, we do some good, but what we do may be at the expense of something better. When we set and achieve goals that are in our Centre of Focus, we maximise the use of our time and effort.



Joblessness has being a major challenge to us as a Nation since independence. There may be no time in the near future to close this Gap. Population growth is a key factor on the rising level of joblessness. The rate of increase in population is not proportional to job creations; hence many people are chasing fewer jobs that are available. The census conducted in Nigeria in 1991 put Nigeria's population at 88.9 million people; in 2009 the Nigeria's population stood at 140,003,542 and this year projection is about 200 million people. Unemployment occurs as a result of the insufficiency of jobs to commensurate with the growing population, even those who are employed live with fear of job loss due to job insecurity, economic recession and retrenchment of workers. Those that are old due retirement refused to leave the stage for younger one. Every year, tertiary institutions turn out thousands of graduates in large mass with no absorptive capacity in the labour market.

Nigeria is faced with unemployment, poverty, corruption, income inequality, population explosion and political instability. These are concerns beyond our control, which government tends to address with their various policies. What can I do differently or what can I focus on to create wealth, put food on table? How do I convert my certificate, my handiwork, my trading etc. to wealth? How can I compete with the mass population for the fewer jobs and businesses that are available?

NEED IMPROVEMENT IN YOUR COMPETENCE

What is Competence?

COMPETENCE: **SKILL** - i) An ability that has been acquired by training.
ii) Ability to produce solution in some problem domain.

BEHAVIOUR: i) Manner of acting or controlling yourself
ii) The action or reaction of something or situations under specified circumstance
iii) The way a person behaves towards other people.

A skilful worker without a good conduct cannot grow in his career, cannot be successful in his business, trade or craft. A competent worker is one that is skilful and very sound in behaviour. Both complement each other to be successful in your career or business. Examples i) Technicians ii) Business man or Trader. ii) Employee in factory or company; Staff may be skilful but without good behaviour, such person may be seen as not dependable, reliable and a bad influence to other. Positions of trust, decision taking and leadership may elude such a person.

Wonder while some workers are always busy while some could hardly get a job. It all borders on competence; Skill plus Behaviour. Many fail in behaviour, even some of our brethren. Those that equipped themselves with skill in their respective trades and have good conduct will not be spending time blaming government or Buhari. They are always busy at their trade/craft. They don't run advert but their competence speaks for them. Those they work for tell others.

COMPETITIVE COST AND QUALITY DELIVERY OF PRODUCT

Jobs are scarce because you have many people chasing fewer jobs or businesses. **Customers that want to hire your services will want to get it at a good bargain as well as quality and timely delivery.** A job that other Technician can do for 2 hours takes you 8 hours, such will certainly discourage patronage. Reorganisation of work practice may be necessary to achieve quality and timely delivery; give example. Key advice is to avoid a re-work. Worthy of note is that spending 8 hours to execute a 2 hours work will not guarantee an 8 hours pay.

MAKE SELF EMPLOYABLE

Human resource is a great asset for the Nation and needs development. Majority of employers of labour are in business to make profit and not out there for training; except for few exceptions. Adequate training is crucial to facilitate healthy competition for scarce job. Majority are unemployable. Special training is required to bridge the competence gap. Most employers are looking for employee that will hit the ground running; you need to equip yourself with relevant skills. Education is not a guarantee for job but helps you in creative reasoning. Education cannot give you that special training. Try to tie your challenges with solutions as you do your job hurting.

GRAB OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding opportunities is very crucial for wealth creation. Know when an opportunity knocks. Current economic challenge may wake up your creative reasoning. Could help you think outside the box. See opportunities in every situation instead of complain. Example; two persons were traveling and arrive at a community where the people were naked and primitive. Both reacted differently. The wise investor went to the city grab loads of clothes and went back to the community for sales, using himself as advert to the people. The people received him with joy for the transformation he brought to the community. He made great sales and established a supply link. The other fellow only make jest of the people going naked in a 21st century! See opportunities in any situation.

AVOID MEDIOCRITY

Mediocrity had eaten so deep in our culture of doing things. We tend to accept moderate or low quality, value, ability or performance in almost all facets of our lives. Look at what happened recently to the Nation's image with the postponement of the National Election and the several billions of Naira lost because of how we perceived performance. The local aviation industry alone lost over eight billion Naira due to rescheduled flights. All our borders; land, air and water were closed. The economy was virtually shut down. Individuals' private engagements were deferred. Just name it, so much was lost because of mediocrity and incompetence.

The Count down to the Election INEC chairman has been giving assurance that the election will go as planned, even a day to election the Prof assures the Nation that all is well. Early hours of Election Day, it dawned on INEC chairman that it was not feasible to conduct the election due to logistics and operational challenges. Who caused this National embarrassment? What punitive measure has been taken; none. It's our way of life. We make promises to deliver projects or tasks, it slips; no qualms... we laugh over it.

Mediocrity could be viewed in Bible language as Lukewarm. You are neither cold nor hot. You do your work without standard, haphazardly and you expect to thrive in business! This may be an illusion if you are thinking you won't be out of job/business. Give examples; (i) the shower Rose in the five star hotel (ii) Our recently refurbished Toilets. Always strive for the best when you have an opportunity. Showcase your talent with joy. Focus on timely, quality and cost effective delivery of services to always give you an edge over others in your business or place of work.

DON'T FOLLOW THE CROWD

There used to be a tract that says "*Don't Follow the Crowd*". In business this also applies. Examples (i) Keke Business (ii) Shares (iii) sales of Cement (iv) Course of study or apprenticeship. These are examples of following the crowd. Before you say hey, the market is saturated and heads for the woods. The fraudulent businesses (Ponzi scheme), thrive on this principle to defraud the gullible and lazy individuals looking for where to make quick money.

Instead follow your God's given vision to create your wealth. Your visions are far-ranging and effective: you know what you want to bring into the world, and how you want to make your mark. You don't feel limited by today's reality. Give example..... challenge self; what do I want to create for myself and the people I care about? How did I create this situation?

CONCLUSION

I will draw my conclusion from Manoj Arora quote:

Coming out of your comfort zone is tough in the beginning, chaotic in the middle, and awesome in the end... because in the end, it shows you a whole new world!

Ask yourself, where do I have room to grow? Your potential for growth (Spiritual & Physical) is limitless.