

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK?

By: Robert J. Tamasy

If someone were to evaluate you, based on the quality of the last project you completed, what might they conclude? I do not know about you, but for me it is challenging to give my foremost effort on everything that I do. I may feel tired, lacking the energy to do my best. There also are times when I do not feel as motivated as I should, with little or no enthusiasm for the task at hand. Or I might not be convinced of the value of what I have been asked to do.

A poster on the wall of my office, however, reminds me of how important it is to perform at my best, no matter what the job may be. The poster reads,

"Quality: Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with Quality."

Whenever I read that statement it does one of two things: It either inspires me, reinforcing my desire to do my utmost at whatever I happen to be working on, or convicts me, reminding me I have become satisfied with doing less than my very best. Do I really want to "autograph" substandard work?

Recently I read an intriguing quotation by Pearl Buck, the acclaimed writer who grew up in China, received the Pulitzer Prize for her novel, *The Good Earth*, and won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1938. The author's statement did not mention "quality," but used a very similar term: *excellence*. "The secret joy in work is contained in one word – 'excellence.' To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."

There is another reason for doing high-quality work, besides a good reputation and self-satisfaction. Our God is a God of quality, and expects us to maintain the same standard. Consider what the Bible says:

We reflect God's nature. God created an ideal world – with the exact balance of air, water and other elements – that would be suitable to sustain life. Then mankind became His ultimate creation. *"So God created man in his own image... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good"* (Genesis 1:27,31).

We work for God's approval. If you were asked to perform a task for the leader of your country, or the person you most admire in the entire world, how would it affect the quality of your work? *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men"* (Colossians 3:23).

We follow God's instructions. In the Scriptures, God provides a manual for everyday living, including in the workplace. Through proper study and obedience, we can use the Bible as our guideline for living and working as the Creator intended. *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15).

We carry out God's purposes. Although it may seem random, God has an overriding reason for where we work, the kind of work we find ourselves suited to perform, and the people we find ourselves working with. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10).

We utilize God's resources. We receive our talents, gifts, abilities, even our interests, according to God's divine plan and will, as He sees fit to distribute them. *"...so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:17).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you define "quality"? And how important is it to you that products you purchase, or work or services provided for you, be of high quality?
2. Be honest: To what degree does a commitment to quality influence the work that you do and how you do it?
3. It is easy to state that we are in favor of performing and providing quality work. But to what extent does your company emphasize work of highest quality – and how is that communicated, positively or negatively?
4. What is your reaction to the Bible passages cited that relate to God's priority on quality? What impact, if any, will these have in how you approach the quality of your work in the future?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to consider some other passages on this topic, turn to the following verses from the Old Testament book of Proverbs:

Proverbs 13:18, 14:4, 16:7, 19:20, 22:4, 22:29, 25:4-5