

## **DOES IT MATTER WHO GETS CREDIT FOR THE WORK?**

**By: Robert J. Tamasy**

Have you ever worked hard on a project, seeing it to completion, only to not receive the credit for your efforts that you felt you deserved? Or worse yet, have you ever finished an important assignment, only to see someone else get all or most of the recognition?

It is a natural response to want to be acknowledged for the good work that we perform, but sometimes we do not receive the commendation that we expected. At times like that we can easily become discouraged, wondering why we worked so hard and diligently if no one noticed. Such an attitude can foster bitterness, jealousy of others who receive the acclaim we believed we deserved, or even feeling disheartened. When such thoughts persist, they can detract significantly from our future performance.

With this in mind, a wise leader once offered this observation: "It is amazing what can be accomplished when we don't care who gets the credit."

Not care about who gets the credit? "Get serious!" you might be thinking. "Who wouldn't want to get the credit for what they accomplish?" That's true, we all like to have our work recognized, whether by a compliment given in private; a simple "Good job!" expressed by e-mail, or a public statement expressed during a meeting where we are present. Too often, however, our work can be tainted by a competitive spirit – a desire to show we are better, smarter, more successful or more highly valued than someone else. We compete for praise and when we "lose," we wallow in disappointment.

Some of the most important work, however, is that which is done out of public view. Years ago I knew several leaders that actively avoided public attention. Each worked diligently behind the scenes to make sure that important meetings went smoothly, handling details in advance, greeting guests as they arrived, and attending to other details after the events were over. But they never sought credit for their work. To see the meetings proceed successfully, without any snags, was enough satisfaction for them.

How could they do this? How were they able to labor in virtual obscurity while others performed the visible leadership roles, speaking from the podium and receiving the applause? It was simple: They did their work for "an audience of one."

They viewed themselves as servants, more eager to serve than to be served. They understood that their abilities, as well as the opportunities to put those skills into use, were a gift from God and every day they humbly performed their roles in gratitude to Him. They also drew their inspiration from the Bible:

**Serving rather than being served.** Describing His own role on earth, Jesus told His followers, "*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*" (Mark 10:45). If anyone was entitled to demand to be served, it was Jesus. But instead, He chose to serve.

**Seeing roles with humility.** Writing to followers of Christ in the city of Corinth, the apostle Paul reacted to people who were arguing over whether they should regard him or Apollos as their primary leader. This issue, he declared, was irrelevant. Paul stated, "*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase*" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

1. Can you think of a specific time when you did not receive sufficient recognition for work that you accomplished? Or was there ever a time when someone else received the credit that you felt you were entitled to? If so, how did that make you feel?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you consciously seek to acknowledge others for their good work? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What difference would it make, in your opinion, if the concern about who receives the credit was no longer a motivating factor in the work that we do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Do you think it is important to perform work to the best of your ability, regardless of whether you will receive the credit that you deserve? Explain your answer.

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to consider some other passages on this topic, turn to the following verses:*

Proverbs 11:2, 12:9, 15:33, 18:12, 22:4; Philippians 2:3-4; Colossians 3:17,23; 1 Peter 5:5-6