

To the Best of His Ability

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When I was in high school, my principal did not measure the performance of one student against the performance of another. He knew that different people were good at different things. He would say, “I want you to do your school work to the best of your ability.” A student who was very capable in science but had trouble understanding math was never expected to perform in math the same as a student who was very capable in math. If a student worked to the best of their ability and got all B’s on their report card, they were congratulated for their hard work, not frowned upon because they didn’t get any A’s.

Working to the best of one’s ability is a concept that is rooted deeply into creation by the Creator. God would have us to work hard at things, not to be lazy. This concept is shown in Jesus’s “parable of the talents” in Matthew 25:15. The lord of the servants gave five talents to one servant, two talents to another servant and finally one talent to a third servant. The lord didn’t do this because he favored one servant over another, but, as verse 15 shows, he gave “to every man according to his several ability.” When the lord returned, the first two servants had performed to the best of their ability, but the third servant did not. The lord was displeased with the servant that did not perform to the best of his ability.

We have a God who is infinitely capable to do everything He pleases. While every Christian I have ever talked to would admit this, they refuse to believe that our God would work to the best of His ability to accomplish what He wills. In fact, most Christians believe that while it is God’s will to see all men saved (I Timothy 2:4), and it is contrary to God’s will to see any perish (Matthew 18:15), that God will accomplish abundantly more against His will than He will accomplish for His will. If the almighty Creator of the universe will, in the end, be farther from His goal than He was in the beginning, as the Arminians teach, how foolish it would be for man, who can accomplish nothing without God, to put any energy at all into working after God’s will. If the all-powerful God will be exceedingly counterproductive in accomplishing His will, any attempt by man to accomplish God’s will can be nothing but pure evil.

I hope, in the future, to see more Christians embrace a God who works to the best of His infinite ability to accomplish the good pleasure of His will; and that when they hear a strange doctrine like that of eternal conscious torment which is entirely uncharacteristic of God, they will not hold fast to their belief of eternal conscious torment simply because it is what they, or their preacher, have always believed, but will discard their bias and search the Scripture to see what it says on the matter. Let it not be so important to ask, “Do you believe in God?” but to ask instead, “Who is the God in Whom you believe?” For if the nature of one’s God is anger, frustration and inability, I submit that it may be better to believe in no God at all than to worship a monster who makes Adolf Hitler look like a generous man.

Taken from the *Bible Student’s Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed)

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