



System Testing: Thieme's *Christian Suffering*: Job Security, Col 3:22-24; Dealing with Unjust Treatment: Royal Law, James 2:8; the Shulammite's Faith Rest

Personal love for God is a motivational virtue which is extremely useful within a system that is unfair and unjust, a point amplified by Paul in:

Colossians 3:22 - Employees, submit to the authority of your employers, not with eyeservice [ὀφθαλμοδουλία, ***ophthalmodoulia*: work performed only when in the presence of authority**], as pleasers of men [ἀνθρωπάρεσκος, ***anthrōpareskos*: wrong motivation**], but with sincerity of heart [ἀπλότης καρδία, ***haplotēs kardia*: absent ulterior motives and without deceit but rather faithful from the source of right motivation from the stream of consciousness**], fearing [φοβέομαι, ***phobeomai*: out of respect for**] the Lord.

v. 23 - Whatever you do, keep doing your work heartily [**ablative of source of ψυχή, *psuchē*: from the source of the soul**], as for the Lord rather than for man;

v. 24 - knowing that from the source of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance [**escrow blessings**]. It is the Lord Christ Whom you serve [**aoristic present active indicative of the verb δουλέω, *douleuō*: to willingly obey in voluntary service**].

7. In spiritual autonomy the believer is motivated by his love for God. In any system to which he belongs, he does his job "not as pleasing men but God" (1 Thessalonians 2:4). He does not rely on the organization to furnish his motivation because he is self-motivated. The organization cannot destroy motivation that it did not create in the first place. With personal love for God as his motivational virtue, the spiritually autonomous Christian can contribute to the organization even when it may treat him unfairly. (p. 121)

In the case of the Shulammite, her duty is to contribute nothing to the organization Solomon wishes her to join. There are times when a system is so evil and corrupt that in good conscience the mature believer must refuse to submit to its policies.

In her case she could not resign either. Therefore, her faith sustained her until the Lord provided the "way of escape" by means of the Shepherd Lover. Nevertheless, some situations require the believer to endure under unfair and unjust treatment.

8. Many human beings in authority may be despicable, but God is always worthy of respect. The spiritual believer's personal love for God motivates (unconditional) love for mankind, which enables him to be tolerant of the weaknesses and failures of others. When he is a victim of unfair leadership, unjust management, or an inefficient system, he deals with personality conflicts on the basis of (unconditional) love. In other words, he takes the attitude that the people who inflict system testing on him are simply contributing to his spiritual advance. Since he loves God, God is working "all things together for good" in his behalf (Romans 8:28). (pp. 121-22)



This attitude reflects cognitive invincibility. No matter how the devil's world abuses the mature believer he orients through doctrine and grace.

The Shulammite was confronted with maximum pressure yet she did not react with emotion and various expressions of the sinful nature but managed the circumstance with wisdom, courage, and savoir-faire. If the relationship with Solomon is to be resolved then the Lord will have to provide the solution. Her job was to stand fast and wait on the deliverance of the Lord.