

Can This Job Be Saved?

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Air Dates: April 13 – 17, 2026

Day One

I want to present some job situations that are touchy and difficult, and ask the question: Can this job be saved? If you're a Christ-follower, then God has you there for some good purpose. When I ask the question—Can this job be saved?—what I'm really asking is, "What is the course of action a Christian should take in order to resolve the issue or make things better?" Here's situation number one.

You work with a person who knows you are a Christian. And it seems this person makes a point of trying to offend you with foul language and crude jokes. Just today this person told a crude joke in your presence, and when you didn't laugh, they said sarcastically, "I guess you don't get it, huh? She doesn't get this kind of humor." You were so angry you almost cried. But somehow you bit your tongue, gave him or her a look, and didn't say anything.

What should you do now? Should you get tough and demand they stop it or just keep taking it?

First, what biblical principles apply in such a situation? Here are two that come to mind:

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18).

Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:21).

Can this job be saved? Sometimes Jesus puts people into our lives who are not comfortable for us and who do offend us, but they're watching how we respond. Anyone who purposely focuses on trying to offend you is more than likely fighting a battle inside, often under conviction, and releasing their inner struggle in unhealthy ways. The question is how can you live at peace with this person never taking a stand against the offense?

First, don't see this person as the enemy; look at him or her through God's eyes. Something's going on in his or her heart that causes him or her to lash out at you. It would not be wrong to have a private conversation with this person, asking what can be done to relieve the tension between you, but do so without pointing fingers of accusation. Never be ashamed of your Christian principles—you don't have to apologize for your refusal to take part in those offensive conversations or language. But remember, this person's real problem is not that he or she makes you uncomfortable or offends you; the real issue is this person needs Jesus desperately, and God has put you in this person's life to be an example of Jesus to him or her.

Day Two

Can this job be saved? I'm examining five different job situations and asking: As Christians, what should be our course of action if we find ourselves in such a predicament? Here is today's situation.

You have recently been promoted and now work closely with a new coworker who is a single man. He's very pleasant to work with, and you get along fine with him. However, you've noticed your husband is

not too excited about this new job, and it seems to be because of your close working relationship with this single man.

How can you handle this situation so you don't lose the promotion but still assure your husband he has nothing to worry about this coworker?

I might begin with asking what has caused your husband to have any uneasiness about your working relationship with this man? Is it because your husband tends to be the jealous kind, or have you talked about your coworker so often or so favorably it has aroused his feelings of jealousy? Possibly a change in how you speak of him would solve the problem.

If it's a little more complicated than that, you must decide what is more important to you: A peaceful relationship with your husband or keeping your promotion. His fear or jealousy may be totally inappropriate and unfounded, but if that's where he's coming from, you should do whatever you can to allay those fears.

Have an honest conversation with your husband. Tell him you are willing to forfeit this job if that's what will resolve this issue. You might consider inviting some coworkers to your home, including this man, so your husband can see for himself that your relationship is purely professional.

Above all else, don't allow anything to start to replace your feelings and love for your husband. Don't let the enemy get his foot in this door and try to ruin your marriage. Believe me, many illicit relationships have started just this innocently.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it (Proverbs 4:23).

This is a time to closely guard your heart.

Day Three

Did you ever work in a situation that seemed like mission impossible? I'm asking the question: Can this job be saved? When you do find yourself working in a very stressful environment, as a Christ-follower, what can you do? What should you do to make the best of a bad situation? Here's another situation to consider.

Your departmental manager is not liked by any of the employees. She is very unfair, discourteous to everyone, and in addition, doesn't perform her own duties well. Everyone in the department talks about her in derogatory ways all the time. Nobody can figure out how she keeps her job. You've been part of that malicious talk at times.

As a Christian, you've now decided you don't want to be a part of that character assassination toward your manager (even though she deserves it!). How will you keep from getting caught up in this office gossip? What could you do to change the climate?

Gossip is a vicious and deadly disease, and once it gets started, it is not easy to stop. There's no question a Christ-follower should never be a part of this kind of malicious talk. In Romans 1, malice is described as wickedness, along with envy, murder, strife, and God-haters. God doesn't take malicious talk lightly; it is sin.

Step one is to remove yourself from these conversations. Make it clear you won't participate in malicious talk about anyone, including the boss. You probably won't have to make a statement to that effect; the fact you don't do it any longer will speak for itself.

Then use every opportunity you can to change the conversation. Sometimes one person can have a good influence on the corporate climate. Ask God to help you see your manager through his eyes, and reach out to her in some way, with encouragement and support. That kind of action on your part will not go unnoticed by your coworkers. Will it change their behavior? Who knows—it might, but it will certainly make a statement about your integrity and your testimony for Jesus.

Day Four

Can this job be saved? For example, take this situation.

You are the human resources director for a company that does a lot of business with the government. As a result, you have to complete government forms and abide by government rules in order to secure and keep your contract. Currently, you are required to complete a form which asks if you're in compliance with some of their rules—and in fact, you are not.

Policies and procedures need to be changed in order to comply. You turn the forms into the president without your signature, noting the lack of compliance. Instead of agreeing to the needed changes which take time and cost money, the president insists you complete the forms, making up numbers and facts to satisfy the government requirements and sign and submit them. After all, he tells you, nobody will know the difference!

You explain you can't do that as a matter of integrity. He is furious, grabs the forms, and says he will complete and sign them himself. What do you do now?

The question is, do you have further responsibility to alert anyone that the forms are not correct, or have you done all you can and should do? Certainly, taking this kind of stand could put your job in jeopardy. So, do you make matters worse by any further action on your part?

Every situation would have to be carefully considered. In most cases, I think simply refusing to be a part of any deceptive action is where your duty ends. But there could be situations where safety or other bad consequences might cause you to speak up against this illegal action.

And it may be true this job cannot be saved. You could lose your job as a result. Peter wrote about unjust suffering, and he said, *but if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps* (1 Peter 2:19-21).

Suffering unjustly for the sake of what is right gets God's attention. It's the same kind of suffering Jesus endured, and he will give you the grace to endure as well. None of us asks for suffering, but if it is unjust, believe me, God will have the last word, and you will receive his favor.

Day Five

I'm examining, "Can this job be saved?" Here's the last situation to consider.

Your manager doesn't know the job, the company, the product, or the customers as well as you do. He is a young man recently promoted to the position, but with little experience or skills to do the job right. He makes a great many mistakes in dealing with customers, violates some company policies (through ignorance), and irritates other departments because of his lack of knowledge and expertise. Frequently he asks you to bail him out, but he never seems to learn and makes the same mistakes over and over.

You realize the department morale is rapidly deteriorating, and you've lost some good customers because of his ineptness. You feel strongly something needs to be done for the good of the company. What should you do?

This is not an easy question, because you're not in authority in this situation, right? And for you to do anything to correct it, it seems you would have to go over your boss's head to higher management. Is that the right thing to do? It's a risky thing to do, to say the least. But on the other hand, for the good of the company and its customers, don't you have a responsibility to do whatever you can to correct this situation?

Jesus told his disciples, *I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves* (Matthew 10:16).

In this situation I believe that means trying to find ways to make things better without overstepping your boundaries or making the boss look bad. I would begin by having a private conversation with the boss, carefully noting some issues have arisen, and offering your help. Perhaps you can even suggest taking some of the workload off his desk, as long as you don't seem threatening. He might really appreciate some behind-the-scenes help because he probably knows he's not doing a good job.

A time could come when all else has failed and you believe others need to know what's happening. But that should be a last resort and should be done with great caution, not with a vindictive and critical attitude.