"Work: A Christian Perspective"

Pastor Dave Vasquez, September 2-4, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Most of us will spend the majority of our adult lives working. We may labor for employment, as a volunteer, or perhaps running our household, but in some way our days are spent working. We may tend to consider our work lives separate from our worship of God. But in fact, God has much to say about our work. If we are going to live our lives as a reflection of our faith, then we need to know what God's Word teaches us about the Christian perspective on work.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What was the first job you've ever held?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Regard work as blessing, not a curse.

Q1. Read Genesis 2:15, 7-19, Ecclesiastes 5:18-19

Paradise itself was not a place exempt from work. What was man's role in the Garden of Eden? What was it that changed work from a blessing to a curse? How does Solomon describe his perspective on work (Ecc 5:19)? When have you experienced joy associated with your labors?

Approach work with diligence, not sloth.

Q2. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

In 2 Thessalonians Paul addresses a church that thought their only duty was to sit back and wait for Christ's soon return. How did Paul describe the example he gave them through his work while he lived at Thessalonica (2 Thessalonians 3:7-8)? What command did he give them in verse 10? What sin was named as the result of their idleness (verse 11)? In 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 Paul encourages the Thessalonians to aspire to depend on no one. How have your aspirations to become self-sufficient caused you to depend more on God's provision?

Do what is exemplary, not just expected.

Q3. Read Matthew 5:16, 40-41, 44-47; Luke 17:7-10

These passages call the followers of Christ to extend themselves beyond the expected. How would being able to live out the love commanded in Matthew 5:44-47 allow you to give more than asked (vv. 40-41)? When we are tired, frustrated, disillusioned, or taken advantage of in our work and we want to 'call it a day' or outright quit, how can Luke 17:10 help

you to continue on in your work. If we demonstrate the attitude of Christ in our work and let our 'light shine', what response can we hope for (Matthew 5:16)?

Work to please God, not men.

Q4. Read Colossians 3:22-24; Matthew 6:31-33

Sometimes we allow our motives to drift from what God intended. What would you say is the primary reason for working? If we see our work merely as a means to provide for our needs, we can easily allow our focus to drift to pleasing those we work for. When you work, do you anticipate that God will evaluate you work? If not, how would that change the way you work? If you did your work as if the name and reputation of Christ were at stake, what would be the most noticeable difference?

Wrap-Up

God intended our labors to be a gift that would bring us joy and rewards. With Jesus as our focus and our example, we will do our work diligently. Rather than seeking recognition or watching the clock, our work should be the very best we can offer, because it is our offering to God. And knowing that it is God we ultimately seek to please, the quality of our work will not be affected by who is watching us because we recognize that God is always with us.

Memory Verse

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, Colossians 3:23 NIV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:
Pray for your group members' needs:

Challenge: Thank God for the place he has given you to serve him through work. Pray for those you work for and with this week.

Q1

Genesis 2:15 ESV - 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Genesis 3:17-19 ESV - 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Ecclesiastes 5:18-19 HCSB - 18 Here is what I have seen to be good: it is appropriate to eat, drink, and experience good in all the labor one does under the sun during the few days of his life God has given him, because that is his reward. 19 God has also given riches and wealth to every man, and He has allowed him to enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. This is a gift of God,

Q2

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 in your Bible.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 ESV - 11 and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

Q3

Matthew 5:16 ESV 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:40-41 ESV 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

Matthew 5:43-44 ESV 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Luke 17:7-10 NIV "Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in

from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8 Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9 Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10 So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' "

Q4

Colossians 3:22-24 ESV - 22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Matthew 6:31-33 ESV - 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Prayers Con't:	 	 	