

## Evaluating our Work

- **Day One. Finding satisfaction in work**

Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 5:18-19

“Whistle While You Work” was the song Snow White sang while she tidied up the house of the seven dwarfs. Her attitude made light the work involved. What ways have you found to find joy and satisfaction in your work? What ways can you increase that attitude?

**Pray.** Ask God to show you how to find more joy and satisfaction in your work.

- **Day Two. Pursuing excellence**

Read Proverbs 12:24; Matthew 5:40-41; Luke 17:7-10

Think about how Jesus’ second-mile principle could be applied to your work environment. Come up with five specific examples of how you might do more than is expected in your work and in your work relationships.

**Pray.** Ask God to make you more sensitive this week to places where you can “go the second mile.”

- **Day Three. Who do you work for?**

Read Colossians 3:22-24

Reflect on the concepts of “eyeservice” (performing well only when watched) and “manpleaser” (working to please men rather than God). This week, look for specific ways you can render positive service when no one is watching except God.

**Pray.** Ask God to help you see your acts of service to others as acts of worship to him this week.

## Work: A Christian Perspective

**Bible Occupations:** Embroiderers (Exodus 26:36); Skilled craftsman (Exodus 28:6); Perfumers (Exodus 30:25), Artistic designers of gold, silver, bronze (Exodus 31:4); Stonemasons and woodworkers (Exodus 31:4); Weavers (Exodus 39:22); Farmers and field workers (Judges 19:16), Brick-makers (2Samuel 12:31). Timber-men (1Kings. 5:6); Carpenters (1Chronicles 22:15); Musicians (2Chronicles 34:12); Potters (Lamentations 4:2); Church elders (1Timothy 5:17 )

**Exodus 20:9-10** "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God"

### How should a Christian approach work?

#### 1. Regard work as blessing, not a curse.

**Genesis 2:15** (NIV) <sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

**Ecclesiastes 2:24-25** (NIV) <sup>24</sup> A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup> for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

**Ecclesiastes 5:18-19** (NIV) <sup>18</sup> Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot. <sup>19</sup> Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God.

**Genesis 3:17-19** (NIV) <sup>17</sup> To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

“...this ‘curse’ or ‘judgment’ pronounced by God upon man, because of his alienating sin, turned out to be God’s most merciful blessing, designed to bring out of man under the duress of hard labor, directed toward worthy objectives, the best and highest of his innate potential, and consequently to prevent him from yielding in slothfulness to the gravity of his fallen nature and degenerating to the lowest possible human denominator. Perhaps nothing short of the saving mercy of God in Christ is of greater benefit to man than honest, productive labor.” [C. W. Carter, "Labor," Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, ©1975), vol. III, p. 848)].

## 2. Approach work with diligence, not sloth.

**Proverbs 12:24** (NIV) <sup>24</sup> Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.

**Proverbs 10:4** (NIV) <sup>4</sup> Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

**Proverbs 6:6-8** (NIV) <sup>6</sup> Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! <sup>7</sup> It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, <sup>8</sup> yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Initiative | Planning | Timing | Persistence | Longevity

**2Thessalonians 3:6-10** (NIV) <sup>6</sup> In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. <sup>9</sup> We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. <sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.”

## 3. Do what is exemplary, not just expected.

**Matthew 5:40-41** (NIV) <sup>40</sup> And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

**Matthew 5:44,47** (NIV) <sup>44</sup> But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

**Luke 17:7-10** (NIV) <sup>7</sup> “Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? <sup>8</sup> Would he not rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? <sup>9</sup> Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? <sup>10</sup> 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.’”

## 4. Work to please God, not men.

**Matthew 23:5-7** (NIV) <sup>5</sup> “Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long.” <sup>6</sup> “They love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; <sup>7</sup> they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’”

**Colossians 3:22-24** (NIV) <sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

(NIV) “When their eye is on you” (KJV) “Not with eyeservice”  
ὀφθαλμοδουλία | ophthalmodoulia  
ὀφθαλμός | ophthalmos | eye  
δουλεία | douleia | slavery

(NIV) “To win their favor (KJV) “As menpleasers”  
ἀνθρωπάρεσκος | anthrōpareskos  
ἄνθρωπος | anthrōpos | a human being  
ἀρέσκω | areskō | to please