

Life@Work

Week of September 6

Work is a part of living. In the beginning God spoke and the world came into existence. For six days, God worked hard and gave explicit assignments to every tier of His creation—let there be light, let the land sprout vegetation, let the waters swarm with fish, let the skies be filled with birds. God created human beings in His image, blessed them and said: “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals...” (Genesis 1:28). In Genesis chapter two, God placed man in the Garden of Eden and told him to tend and watch over it. Work has been designed by God to be a good thing.

To what extent God was active (at work) prior to the birth of our galaxy and planet we have no way of knowing. However, Jesus did say: “My Father is always working, and so am I” (John 5:17b). Although work became difficult after the Fall of man (see Genesis 3:17-19), God in His mercy allowed man to produce a living from the earth even though the ground was cursed. The Lord created us to work and knows we yearn to be fulfilled in what we do. He cares about us and wants to lead the way when it comes to work. If we look to Him, He promises to sustain us and give us purpose and meaning in life:

The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it.
When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.
The LORD is righteous in everything He does; He is filled with kindness.
(Psalm 145:15-17)

David, the man who wrote this psalm of praise, was a hard-worker and God put him in charge of shepherding His people. Psalm 78:70-72 gives us insight into the LORD’s call upon this young man, his humble beginnings, and the integrity in which he governed Israel. As you read these three verses, notice the close relationship David had with the Lord. Think about these three questions: Why do you think God chose David? How did David care for God’s people? What in David is worth emulating when it comes to your sphere of work and influence?

Read Psalm 78:70-72

1. In the space below, write the five “work myths” shared in this weekend’s message? (Recall them as best you can, and feel free to paraphrase)

What truth counters each myth? (feel free to briefly share how you have encountered these myths vs. truths in your own work experience)

2. Even though David was not perfect, David was a man who kept coming back to the Lord during times of uncertainty and even after his own sin. What does Acts 13:22 say about David?

How would you define a person “after God’s own heart”?

There are times we may love what we do at work, and there are times we may eventually abhor it. The third King of Israel (David’s son) was a very wise and wealthy man and he experienced this. After looking for meaning by building huge homes, planting beautiful vineyards, designing gardens and parks filled with all kinds of fruit trees (complete with irrigation system), servants for every need, accumulating vast amounts of wealth, surrounded by gorgeous young women—Solomon says he found great pleasure in hard work. However something was missing. He soon adds, “But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless” and admits, “I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned” (see Ecclesiastes 2:4-11,18).

3. How is work for you these days—is your current work situation meaningful or meaningless?

In the space below make two lists. On the left describe what is frustrating about your work right now, and on the right, name the things that are truly rewarding about your work right now. Be open to what the Lord wants you to see in this assessment.

Step back and take some ownership of your work frustrations. What could you do to improve the list on the left?

In what ways can you show more gratitude for the list on the right?

Just as the Lord *chose* David and *called* him from the sheep pens, God has a tailor-made assignment for you. Jesus said, “You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit” (John 15:16a). Understanding that you have been *called* by God to be where you are will begin to give you a confidence you may have never experienced. You will begin to see your workplace not as a mundane place of employment, but as a mission field where fields are white for harvest. Everyday, the Lord is placing people in your path to talk to, love on, and witness to.

God has given each of us skills to use in service to others. The more we understand His calling upon our lives, the more we’ll see how our God-given skills have been given to us, not for selfish gain, but to use for His glory in the workplace. The Lord expects His children to give their best at work, and out of a sense of gratitude, to see their employment as an opportunity to serve others. Like David, we must strive to lead with “integrity of heart” and be persons of highest character especially when no one is watching.

4. Read Ephesians 6:5-9. What useful instruction does the Apostle Paul give both employers and employees in these verses?

Envision how your workplace might be different if you carried the following tools to work with you:

- (1)skills (knowing they are God-given)
- (2)calling (understanding it is from heaven)
- (3)service (realizing you are ultimately serving the Lord)
- (4)character (trusting God is in control and honors your integrity)

Why are these tools—along with your faith—crucial for you to carry into the workplace?

Think about what would *really* make your work worthwhile and fulfilling. Are you honoring the Lord in the work you do? Are you serving others well? What selfish habits are you willing to sacrifice for an interim of time in order to allow these Biblical principles (put into practice) to start improving your attitude toward work? (write them in the space below)

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for work. Help us remember that our ability to do what we do is a gift from you—may we honor you in all we do. Help us to understand that work at its best can be a reflection of your love and mercy towards us. We pray for those among us who may be in need of a job, or perhaps a job change. Guide us, Lord. Help us trust you and put you at the center of all areas of our lives. Amen.

*So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable.
Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do
for the Lord is ever useless.
(1 Corinthians 15:58)*

One Year Bible Reading

Sept. 6: Song of Solomon 1:1-4:16, 2 Cor. 8:16-24, Psalm 50:1-23, Prov. 22:22-23
Sept. 7: Song of Solomon 5:1-8:14, 2 Cor. 9:1-15, Psalm 51:1-19, Prov. 22:24-25
Sept. 8: Isaiah 1:1-2:22, 2 Corinthians 10:1-18, Psalm 52:1-9, Proverbs 22:26-27
Sept. 9: Isaiah 3:1-5:30, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15, Psalm 53:1-6, Proverbs 22:28-29
Sept. 10: Isaiah 6:1-7:25, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Psalm 54:1-7, Proverbs 23:1-3
Sept. 11: Isaiah 8:1-9:21, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Psalm 55:1-23, Proverbs 23:4-5
Sept. 12: Isaiah 10:1-11:16, 2 Corinthians 12:11-21, Psalm 56:1-13, Prov. 23:6-8

Life@Work

Text: Psalm 78:70-72

The Plain Truth:

_____ and _____ are essential for
_____ using your service and skills
@work and life.

Four tools for Life@Work

1. Skill
2. _____
3. Service
4. _____