

Still Working for God

September 11, 2022

We're talking about work, and most people who've ever lived in this world have worked, and God wants us to work. Of course, some people cannot work, and are unable to work, are disabled in some way or another - and God doesn't want them to work. Mephibosheth - Now God has lots to say about work, and last week, we looked at several truths and principles about work. We talked about how we're working for God, that all our work is to be spiritual work, and that when we work, we are helping fulfill God's purposes, whether that relates to you, your family, the church, or the world at large.

Well let's look at some other truths and principles about work:

1. God has work for you to do, and you need to ask God to show you what He wants you to do. Psalm 143:8, 10 - *"Teach me the way in which I should walk... Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; let your good Spirit lead me on level ground."* Pray every day that God specifically shows you what He wants you to do that day. And pray in general, that God leads you in His plans for the months and years ahead, and for your entire life. Ps. 25:4-5

2. Be excited, be glad that you can do God's work. You should get up in the morning and be looking forward to doing God's work, work that He has planned out for you. And think about how you are actually working for God, the God of the universe, and that He has things for you to do today, things that have lasting, eternal value.

3. Work with others. Now there are many things you do by yourself. But many times, you're working with others, and we are to do that in the church, for we are a team. For example, we have 4 elders here, and yes, there are specific things each of us do, but we also work as a team. Now the classic example of people working together is a married couple - they are a team, and they are to be working together for God. Eccl. 4:9 - *"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor."*

4. Be wise, think before you do something. Work hard and work smart. When you work, think about what you're doing. Use your head, use the brains God gave you, for you want to work in an efficient way, in an effective and productive way. Now some tasks are routine, repetitive. Doing dishes is a job like that. In jobs like that, you don't need to think that much, and so while you work, pray, sing, or meditate on a vs.

5. When working, get advice from others. Don't try to figure everything out yourself. Children need to learn from their parents - that's one reason they have parents, to learn from them. And as Christians, we need to be humble and learn from others, whether it relates to raising a family, sharing the gospel, making disciples, etc. Prov. 12:15

6. Prioritize. Do the critical, most important tasks first. My two main jobs are preaching and praying. And during the week, I focus on these two areas. For example, from Mon. - Fri., my first priority is working on messages, and that's what I work on when I first get to my desk in the morning, and I pray then too, and my other duties are usually done in the afternoon. So think about your life, the things you need to do, and prioritize. Do the most important things first. You may even want to write them down.

7. As a Christian, use your spiritual gift. Your effectiveness, your usefulness, your success as a Christian most always relates to using your spiritual gift. Think about Christians being used by God, and you about always see them using their spiritual gift. 1 Peter 4:10 says, "*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another.*" And that gift may be faith, mercy, leading, serving, leading, teaching, or exhortation.

8. God works through you. Ps. 127:1-2, Eph. 3:20. Builders are laboring and watchmen are guarding this city, but God is building and guarding through them. Any work we do must be seen as work that God, by His power, is doing through us. If we think the work is by our effort and for our glory, then it's worthless, it's in vain. If we are working on our own and by our power, then we're leaving God out of the picture, we're not trusting God, we're forgetting that God gives us the strength and ability to do anything at all. Col. 3:17, 22-24

I'm not saying we can't ever stay up late to get some work done, but if we stay up late because we think the work depends completely on us, then our thinking is wrong, we're looking to ourselves and not to God. 1 Cor. 3:6-7

- This also relates to sleep. God wants us to get to bed on time, to get enough sleep, and doing that shows we're trusting Him for the work we do. Work done apart from God is selfish work and is not God-glorifying. It's painful labor and has no eternal value.

9. God eternally rewards earthly work. When we do earthly work, we get earthly pay. But when we work by faith, when we work by God's power and for His glory, then our earthly work will be eternally rewarded. Col. 3:23-24, Matt. 6:4, Rev. 22:12

10. We are to work hard. 2 Tim. 2:6 – "*The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.*" This word, hard-working, means "*to toil intensely, to sweat and strain to the point of exhaustion.*" A hard-working farmer starts work early in the morning and goes until sundown. He has to work hard to get all his work done, whether it relates to feeding the animals or raising a crop. And at the end of the day, he's tired, worn out, sometimes exhausted. I saw this with my grandfather who was a farmer. But he always took a nap on Sunday afternoon.

A hardworking person is diligent. The word diligent means, "*constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken, persistent exertion of body and mind.*" A hard-working person is focused on his work, and works whether he feels like it or not. He's attentive, he doesn't get distracted or daydream. He's using his mind, soul, and body, and he gets the work done. He works wholeheartedly, with all his heart. Hard work then starts with the heart.

As Christians, we're working for God, and we want to please Him, we want to do what He wants us to do and we work hard and keep working until we finish what He wants us to do. At the end of the day, our mind & body will be tired, but it's worth it, for what we do for God is eternal work, and it pleases Him. Heb. 11:6

Sometimes our work is tedious, repetitious, and boring, but God wants us to keep working, to not give up, to not quit, to persevere until the job is completely done. I'm taking more time on this particular subject because it's a need in the lives of people. We live in a culture where people have lots of free time, where there are lots of distractions and things they can do, and nowadays, it's not real popular being a hard worker. As children of God, we need to be doing God's work, and be diligent in all the work He gives us to do. He doesn't want us to be lazy, or to be sluggards. He doesn't want us to do things that are sinful, that aren't productive. He wants us to be hard workers and righteous workers. Proverbs 10-12

11. We are to be faithful workers. God wants us to keep working, to continue working day after day, week after week, and year after year. We're to persevere in our work, to consistently be working whether we feel like it or not, even when the work is boring, even when we feel tired, even when we get older, even when we don't physically feel good, even when we may not like our employer or fellow employees, and even when there are difficult things taking place in our life.

Now one of the hardest things is to keep working through the years, when you're in your 50's or 60's or older, when you've already worked for 30 or 40 years at some job, especially living in this culture where there's all this talk about vacations and retirement. Luke 12:19 But here are some keys to being a faithful worker: 1) God's grace, 2) knowing you're working for God, and 3), knowing your work has eternal value, and results in eternal rewards, and 4) knowing that your work, your earthly work, will be done someday, completely finished.

12. We are to be honest workers. As a Christian, you are to put in a full days work. If you get paid for 40 hours of work, you should work a full 40 hours, and not be lazy, not be a slacker, not sit around when you should be working. You shouldn't use work time to text, talk on your phone, look at the internet, or daydream. And you should get to work on time, check out on time, and not extend your lunch hour or break time beyond what you are allowed.

13. We are to be cheerful workers. God wants us to be positive and upbeat, to be glad in our work, and not complaining or grumbling about our work, or about our employer or fellow employees. And the key to being a glad worker is knowing that you're working for God Himself. And if you're complaining, then you're really complaining against God Himself. Exodus 16:1-3, Phil. 2:15-16

14. The work you're doing for God is coming to an end. You only have so much work, and only so much time to do the work. John 9:4. Your life on this earth will end someday, and that's it. And both your time and your work will soon be all done. Acts 13:36
- And before God, you don't want any regrets. You want to look back with satisfaction on your life and on your work. You want to be able to say that you did what God wanted you to do, and that you brought glory to God by completing the work He gave you to do. And one day, you will give an account of how you lived your life for God, and that includes all the work you did for Him. Matt 25:21, 1 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 5:10, Romans 14:12

15. The Bible is filled with examples of people who worked for God. When you look at the people talked about in the Bible, they were all doing work for God.
- There's Noah who worked hard by building the ark that kept this world going.
- There's Abraham who believed God and traveled to the promised land. He faithfully did what God wanted him to do. And he raised up faithful servants too. Gen. 14:14-16
- There's Joseph who was 2nd in charge over the nation of Egypt, and was used by God to keep the Israelites alive during the famine.
- There's Moses, who led the Jews out of Egypt, through the desert, and to the promised land. That was hard work he did, and it was the last 40 yrs. of his life, from 80-120 yrs.
- There's Joshua, who led the Israelites in defeating all their enemies. Josh. 11:23 - 12
- There's Deborah, a judge, and she led the Israelites in defeating the enemy.

There's Jeremiah, a prophet to the Jews, and he warned them of the coming judgment.

- There's Nehemiah, and he led the Jews in building a wall around Jerusalem.

Neh. 4:6 - *"We built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."* Neh. 3

- There's Mary, who gave birth to Jesus, and along with Joseph, helped raise Him.

- There's Anna who worked hard by praying to God.

- There's Tabitha, who worked hard by sewing clothes for others.

- There's Epaphras, who also worked hard in prayer.

- There's Peter who worked hard by helping lead and build the early church.

- There's Paul, who also worked hard in helping lead and build the early church. Phil 2:17

- There's Paul's nephew, used by God to save Paul from being killed.

- Romans 16:3, 6, 9, 12, 21. We read about these godly people and what we learn is that they were working for God, just like Paul was. Might it be said of each one of us that we are workers for God. 1 Corinthians 15:57-58