

Working for the Lord

September 4, 2022

As you know, tomorrow is Labor Day, and so I thought it would be good to talk about working for God, laboring for God. It's a very important subject, for God wants each of us to be working. And I'm not just talking about working at a secular job, but how as a Christian, we are to always be working for God.

Today, I want to share a number of principles about work that need to be understood and applied to your life, ones that will help you be a successful and fruitful worker for God.

1. You are to work for God. Now you may have a job where you have an earthly employer, but it's important that you see God as your heavenly employer, that ultimately and most importantly, you're working for Him, you're serving Him.

- Col. 3:24 - *"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord, rather than men... It is the Lord Christ you serve."* Eph. 6:6-7 says you are slaves of Christ, and you're to *"render service to the Lord, and not to man."* God sees you all the time, and He wants you to see Him as your Lord, and that first and foremost you're to be working for Him.

2. You want to please God by your work. Knowing that God is your Lord, your Master, you should please Him and honor Him by doing what He wants you to do, by living in the way He wants you to live. If you work at a secular job, you want to please your earthly employer, but your primary objective is to please God. Eph. 5:10, Col 3:22

3. God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are always working. John 5:17. And as a Christian you're not working separately from them, you're working with them, and in effect, are joining, are sharing in their work. And what a blessing it is to work with God and share in their work, and help them accomplish their work. Matt. 11:28-29

4. Working for God relates directly to worshiping God, to your relationship with God.

- Matt. 4:10 - *"Worship the Lord and serve Him only."* Worshiping God comes before serving God. That is, worshiping God must always come first, before serving God. Worshiping God first means God is first, and this is necessary to spiritually orient your life in the right way. When you worship God, you are loving God, and if you love God, then you'll want to work for God, and in fact, you'll love to work for God.

Worshiping God motivates you to work for God, to serve Him, and it gives you a godly attitude as you work for Him, and for your earthly employer too.

- Psalm 90:14, 92:2. These are examples of how it's good to start the day with worshiping God. Worship God before you work for Him, before you go to work. 2 Chron. 20:21-22 There's no doubt that having a close walk with God helps you to be a good worker for God. Enoch walked with God, and he was a preacher of righteousness. Jude 14-15

5. The work God wants you to do is work He planned out for you back in eternity past. Eph. 2:10. Long before you were ever born, God knew the work He wanted you to do. - Jer. 1:4, Ps. 139:13-16. The truth is that God made you the way you are, your body, mind and soul, so you could do all the work He wanted you to do. God planned out all the work He ever wanted you do. This may be work around the house, the work you do at some job, or the work you do here in the church.

6. God trains you to do the work He wants you to do. Eph. 2:10 says you're God's workmanship, which means God is working in your life, and is teaching you, training you to do the work He wants you to do. The things you go through in life are part of God's training process, helping you become a good and effective worker for Him. Joseph. David - 1 Sam. 17

- And God continues to train you throughout your life - He keeps working in you, making you a better and more effective worker than ever before.

7. The work God wants you to do is good work. Eph. 2:10. The work you are to do on this earth is to be a blessing and a benefit to your life, your family, the church, and for society and the world at large. Titus 1:16, 2:14, 3:8, 3:14, 2:6

8. Your work is spiritual work. God doesn't want you to think of work as being either secular or spiritual. Oftentimes we separate our secular job from church work, and think that only our church work is spiritual work, and only this has eternal value, but that our other work isn't spiritual, and doesn't have eternal value. But that's the wrong way to think, for all the work God wants you to do is spiritual work, whether that's working at some job, cooking a meal, or serving in the church. God wants you to see that all the work He wants you to do is good work and needed work and is to be done for God and His glory, and will be eternally rewarded. Col. 3:24

9. God gives you talents that you are to use in working for Him, whether it's at a place of work, at home, or in the church. And you all have different abilities, and you are to faithfully use the abilities and talents God gives you. Matt. 25
God also gives you a spiritual gift that you're to use in serving Him and the church - and the way you serve is usually related to the spiritual gift you have. 1 Pet. 4:10

10. God wants people to work at a job so they can meet their physical needs. If a person is physically and mentally able to work, then he is to work. In fact, God says that people who do not work should not eat. 1 Th. 4:11-23, 2 Th. 4:6-12
- God does not want a person who is able to work to be dependent on others. He wants people to meet their own needs and not expect others to take care of them. And people who can work and who do not work are lazy, are sluggards, and God has strong things to say about them. Proverbs

11. You are to work for God one day at a time. Sometimes you are thinking about the things you need to do tomorrow, and the next day, and the next week, and you may get overwhelmed, and you may worry. And yes, God wants you to plan ahead, but remember, God gives you a 24-hour day, and you're to focus on the work for that one day, and do the work for that one day, and not be distracted by what you need to do in the future. Ps. 118:24, Matt. 6:34

12. Proverbs 16:9 says, "*Man plans his way, and the Lord directs his steps.*" You should plan your day, you should plan out the work you believe God wants you to do. But remember, God is sovereign, and He often redirects your steps and changes your plans - He often changes the work He wants you to do on any given day. And so be sensitive to the Spirit, be flexible, and always be ready and willing to do what God wants you to do, whatever that might be. Num. 9; Ps. 143:8, 10

13. You're to never stop working for God. That is, you're to never stop doing the work of God. Most people work for 40 years or so, and then retire, usually anywhere from 62-70. And it's perfectly fine to retire from a job or from jobs you have done for many years. A person who's worked for many years usually has Social Security and his retirement, and he doesn't need to work at a job anymore to make money to provide for his needs.

But one vs. sums up the attitude of many people. Luke 12:19 says, "*Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take it easy, eat, drink, and be merry.*" And they think, "*Hey, I am done working - I can just take it easy and enjoy life.*" But Christians can be wrongly affected by this worldly mentality, and think that we too should stop working. Of course, we can retire from our job, our line of work, but we should never quit working. We're to keep working for God, keep doing His work until the day we die or are raptured. Then we are retired. Moses, Paul - 2 Tim. 4:7-8

14. The Christian who has just retired from his job is to keep working for God. But what does that work look like? He may work part time at some job. He may be more involved serving in the church. He may spend more time with other Christians, having fellowship with them. He may spend time in personal Bible study, and then share with others what he has learned. She may spend more time in prayer, like we read about with Anna in Luke 2. She may spend time using her skills to help people, whether it's believers or unbelievers, like we see with Tabitha in Acts 9, who was busy making clothes for other people. And as Christians, we are to keep loving the Lord and keep loving His people, and God will keep leading you as to how you can serve Him by serving them. Mark 1:29-31

15. God wants people to work with a good attitude, and with godly character. God wants people to work hard, to work diligently, to work cheerfully, to not complain, to work wholeheartedly, to persevere at their work, and to be a steady worker. And we'll look at this more next week. Prov. 12:5, 12:4, 12:11, 12:24, 12:27

16. God wants you to be satisfied by the work you do. God wants you to finish your work, to complete your work, and then be fulfilled, be satisfied, be pleased by the results of your work. Whether you are a teacher, a cabinet maker, a mother, a nurse, a retail worker, or a server in a restaurant, God wants you to be satisfied by the work that you do. Proverbs 12:14, 13:2, 15:23, 18:20

17. Col. 3:24 says, "*from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.*" This is an absolutely amazing truth. Now you all get paid for your earthly job, but more importantly, God pays you for your earthly work, and He's extremely generous, and His pay is eternal pay, eternal rewards, literally out of this world. Matt. 6:2-4

18. John 17:4. "*I brought you glory by completing the work you gave me to do.*" This verse is speaking of Jesus, but we can apply it too. And the point is simple, that you bring glory to God when you complete the work God wants you to do. As a Christian, you're to do the work God gives you to do and you're to complete that work. Of course, God gives you different tasks and assignments throughout life. - And doing and completing each one of them brings glory to God. Now we don't perfectly do the work God wants us to do, but as we look back at our life, we should, in general, be able to say that we did the work God wanted us to do, and by doing that, we brought glory to Him. And Christ will personally commend you for the work you did for Him. Matt. 25:21

As you can see there's a lot to be said about work. It's what God wants you to do, it's what is needed to make money to meet your needs, it's what's needed for the church, and for all of society, it's what can bring satisfaction, and it's what brings glory to God. And next week, we will look at some more keys to being a successful worker, as well as Biblical examples of good workers. John 17:4