

*Men of God:
A Roadmap for Spiritual Growth*

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Session 7:
Work and Play

March 21, 2023

Our Purpose

“to equip Christian men in the greater Jackson area with sound biblical instruction so that they can fulfill their callings in the church, at home, at work, and in the community to the glory of God.”

Outline

Week 1: Men of God: Hindrances and Helps to Growth Part 1

Week 2: Men of God: Hindrances and Helps to Growth Part 2

Week 3: Men of God: Time and Priorities

Week 4: Men of God: Friendship and Community

Week 5: Men of God: Thoughts and Feelings

Week 6: Men of God: Singleness and Sex

Week 7: Men of God: Work and Play

Week 8: Men of God: Money and Stewardship

Work to Live or Live to Work?

“more than half of adults (53%) say that it’s essential to their happiness to have a job where they can make an impact, and that 46 percent of adults feel anxious about making the wrong career choice.”

<https://barna.gloo.us/reports/christians-at-work-chapter-1>

Work to Live or Live to Work?

David Murray articulates the experience of many of us:

“When you think about your job, you see a relentless enemy. When you think about those who work for you, those you work for, and those you work with, you are cynical and critical. When you think about your customers, patients, clients, members, etc., you are numb and negative. When you think about your family, all you can think about is what you’re not doing. When you think about serving the church. . . well, you try not to think about that. In fact, it’s almost impossible to separate work from home, work from church, work from hobbies, and work from vacations. Work invades everything until life is just a big blob of undifferentiated stress, exhaustion, alienation, frustration, and cynicism! It’s a miserable life, isn’t it?”

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/help-im-struggling-to-strike-a-worklife-balance/>

Work to Live or Live to Work?

According to Barna: “Research shows that heart attacks occur most often on Monday mornings, and least on Saturdays and during summer vacations in July.”

(<https://barna.gloo.us/reports/christians-at-work-chapter-1>)

The Dignity of Work

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26-28)

The Dignity of Work

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden...¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it... (Genesis 2:8-15)

The Dignity of Work

“[E]ven before the fall man was expected to work paradise was not a life of leisured unemployment. Both *Enuma elish* and the Atrahasis epic also speak of man being created to work to relieve the gods... But the biblical narrative gives no hint that the creator is shuffling off his load onto man: work is intrinsic to human life.” (Gordon J Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, [Waco, TX: Word, 1987] 67)

The Dignity of Work

“Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.” (1 Cor. 7:17)

The Drudgery of Work

“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.”

(Genesis 3:17-19)

The Drudgery of Work

Genesis 6:5 says that after the Fall, “the wickedness of man was great upon the earth and that every intention of the thought of his heart was only evil continually.”

The Drudgery of Work

“[T]hey said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” (Genesis 11:3-4)

The Drudgery of Work

“I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹ Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun... So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind. ¹⁸ I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun...”
(Ecclesiastes 2:9-19)

The Destiny of Work

“[T]he creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Romans 8:20-21)

The Destiny of Work

“If anyone is in Christ he is new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The Destiny of Work

“whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:17)

The Destiny of Work

“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.” (Ephesians 6:5-8)

The Destiny of Work

Paul teaches us to say, above all else, and giving value and deeper meaning to everything, first and supremely, I am doing this for Jesus Christ and the glory of God. I am doing my job even when no eyes are on me, even when no one will ever see this thing that I am doing, because I am under the gaze of God and I want him to be honored.

The Destiny of Work

David Murray summarizes six points from this passage that are well worth reflecting on...

- God has called us to work.
- God has called us to serve him in our work.
- God has called us to serve him from and with the heart.
- God has called us to do our work with excellence.
- God has called us to love our neighbor in our work.
- God sees, appreciates, and will reward our work.

(<https://www.crossway.org/articles/help-im-struggling-to-strike-a-worklife-balance/>)

Link to Men of God Series

<https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/series-index/men-of-god/>