

# SESSION 1&2 – OUR WORK FOR GOD | 3/9/14

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- Introduction
  - We are going to talk about “good work” today.
  - We are going to look at it from the perspective of our profession as well as our ministry.
  - We will see that we all have God given abilities that we are to use in this world.
  - We use them in a profession to help others and we also use them in our ministry to spread the Gospel.
- God has given us 2 types of “work” to do.
  - As we study this lesson we will look at the good work that we are called to do.
  - There are really 2 types of work 1 being your profession and the other being your ministry.
  - Sometimes these are separate or they could be one and the same. But they should always overlap.
  - We can see an example of this in our Lord Jesus.
    - The profession of Jesus
      - While we don’t have much in the 18 years between when Jesus was in the temple teaching as a child and when the Gospels pick up on his life at his baptism with John the Baptist.
      - We do know that he was known to his hometown as a carpenter and the son of a carpenter.
        - Mark 6:3
          - **“Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t His sisters here with us? So they were offended by him.”**
        - Matthew 13:55
          - **“Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t His mother called Mary, and His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?”**
      - But what is interesting to note about this is that Jesus had a job, he had a profession.
      - Jesus was a carpenter and likely worked directly for his earthly father Joseph.
      - One might think OK Jesus being the Son of God he had no reason to work other than to fulfill his ministry, but before he did this he had a normal profession that was passed down to him by his earthly father.
      - Jesus coming in the likeness of men choosing to live in the manner of men likely worked in the carpenter profession with Joseph for those many years.
      - If Jesus wasn’t too good to work and be productive neither should we.
      - Like Jesus we all have a profession to fulfill.
    - The ministry of Jesus
      - So the work that we are of course more much more acquainted with Jesus beyond his profession as a carpenter was his ministry.
      - This was the real reason that Jesus came, which was to testify to the truth, to die on the cross for our sins, to proclaim forgiveness to those who repent of their sins.
      - While our ministry isn’t going to be the same as it was for Jesus we certainly are ALL called to ministry of some nature.
      - We are all called to teach and to share the Gospel.
      - Like Jesus we all have a ministry to fulfill.
- Work is a divinely appointed profession.

- We are going to look in Genesis and see that work or a profession was divinely appointed by God in very beginning.
- Verses
  - Genesis 1:28
    - “God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and **subdue it**. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”
  - Genesis 2:15
    - “The LORD God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden **to work it and watch over it.**”
- God commanded Adam and Eve to subdue the Earth and to work in the Garden.
  - As we can see that idea of a job or work was a divinely appointed profession that God gave to man.
  - God desired that man should have work to do on the earth while he lived there.
  - God did not create us simply to sit and do nothing.
  - God told Adam and Eve that they needed to subdue the Earth, which is to bring under control.
  - And they quite clearly stated that man was intended to work the land and to watch over it.
  - We are all called to work as it was God’s intention, he wanted us to work the soil, to build and to provide.
  - In fact man seemed to be a necessary piece to take care of the land.
    - Genesis 2:5
      - “No shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and **there was no man to work the ground.**”
    - God created man as an intended cultivator, to till the soil and to spread the seed.
    - So we see that a “farmer” was the first divinely appointed job.
      - (Props to Shane ☺)
  - This task was given before the fall.
    - Which is interesting as some might think well we work only because of the fall and because of sin.
    - This wouldn’t be true because God had tasked Adam with the garden prior to sin.
    - However we do see that sin made work painful.
    - This work though is very hard and difficult as we can see from Genesis 3:17b
      - Genesis 3:17b-19
        - “...The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.”
      - So sin had taken the duty of work and made it difficult.
      - We can only imagine what being a farmer was like before this. I would assume that it was much easier and likely even more enjoyable.
  - Regardless of the “painful labor” that might be involved our work, our profession it is something that we are divinely appointed to.
  - We cannot neglect the fact that we are all called to work in some capacity.

- **God gives us specific abilities for work. We each have different God given abilities that allow us to perform some function.**
  - Work is actually a gift from God.
    - Not everyone may agree with this that work or the ability to work is a gift.
    - Because not everyone may enjoy his or her vocation or the work that they are doing.
    - But what we cannot deny is that God wants us to be productive in whatever we do.
    - Our creator did not intend for us to simply sit and do nothing, to contribute nothing to society.
      - 1 Peter 4:10
        - “Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God.”
        - We have received a gift and we are to use the gifts that God has given us in our profession and our ministry, to serve others.
    - As Adam was appointed to take care of the Garden to work the soil to cultivate the ground to grow food.
      - He worked the ground to put food on the table.
      - You can’t eat if you don’t work.
      - Today you cannot eat if you do not have any money, so you must work for it.
    - We likewise have a similar job, which have of course expanded over time.
    - Some of us are farmers like Adam, some are teachers, and some are parents others build or help those that are sick.
    - God has given each of us a gift. We all have God given abilities to be productive to contribute in some God pleasing way.
      - **So lets be clear that not all professions are “God pleasing”**
    - We use these God given abilities to help our world, with medicine, transportation and of course one of the most important abilities “culinary”. Especially when it comes to no bake cookies!
    - God also gifts us for our ministry.
      - So not only does goes gift us with abilities for our profession but he also gives us spiritual gifts that are used for our ministry.
      - Those gifts could be
        - Prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading and mercy.
      - We will look closer at this later.
    - Our gifts for our profession, was given to us for a purpose.
      - Some of us may wonder at times, why am I doing what I do what is the purpose.
      - I can tell you that God had a purpose and he will use you in everything that you do even if you cannot see it.
      - The closer your walk and relationship to God is the better you will be able to see this more clearly.
- **Question #4 “How is your work a part of God’s overall design?”**
- **Do you see the purpose in your work?**
- There is joy in our work
  - There is joy when you see the results of your labors weather they are from something you have built, or the stay at home mom who invested her time into her children, or someone who used their God given intellect to make life easier for all of us.
  - Some could argue that they have no joy in their work, because it perhaps seems to give them no joy in what they do.

- Some of us have a job that doesn't seem like work where you look forward to it everyday.
- Others have a job that is only viewed as a paycheck and a means for survival.
- But we all can find joy in our work if we treat everything we do as if we are doing it for the Lord.
  - Colossians 3:23
    - "Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men,"
- If you treat everything that you do with the attitude that you are doing it for the Lord, you WILL have joy in everything that you do.
- Because it is impossible to do something for the Lord and to NOT feel joy.
- Ecclesiastes 3:13
  - "It is also the gift of God whenever anyone eats, drinks, and **enjoys his efforts.**"
  - There is joy in our efforts weather we have joy in the outcome of the work we have done, or if this work has provided us the income we need to feed our families or to help those that cannot help themselves.
- Regardless of what you do in your profession you can find joy in it, if you only look to the Lord.
  - Even if the joy doesn't come in the way that you might expect.
- This also reflects on the overall attitude and worldview of a Christian.
  - A Christian having the Holy Spirit living within them should have an attitude that is different, because the Christian knows the truth
  - **A Christian must realize that the abilities they have are God given. The Christian is to use those abilities to glorify God.**
  - 1 Peter 4:11
    - "If anyone **speaks**, it should be as **one who speaks God's words**; if anyone **serves**, it should be **from the strength God provides**, so that **God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything**. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever amen."
    - In absolutely everything we do we should do it as for the Lord.
    - How we speak to others, how we serve should be to glorify God, even if it may not seem like it wouldn't matter. It does.
- If we seek to glorify God in all that we do, then we must treat others as we would treat Christ. Because we work FOR Christ.
  - If we act out 1 Peter 4:11 and we seek to glorify God in all that we do then we can fulfill Ephesians 6:5-6.
    - Ephesians 6:5-6
      - "Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ. Don't work only while being watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart."
  - A Christian is to seek God's will from their heart and to glorify God in all that we do.
  - In the big picture we work for Christ and not man, but we are called to treat others and to work for others as we would for Christ.
  - By doing this we will treat our employer and those in charge of us with the respect that is deserved.
  - We will be faithful in our profession to not be lazy and just do enough to get by but to work hard and to serve God in our profession.

- Jesus’s attitude while he worked as a carpenter.
    - While it is not recorded, but as we looked earlier Jesus was a carpenter and likely worked in the profession for many years.
    - What do you think his attitude was in that profession?
    - Did he drag his feet and hate his job because it was so much work?
    - No of course not Jesus would have treated that profession as something done for the Lord.
    - Jesus did not sin nor did anything wrong, he would have been the perfect model employee.
    - Likewise so should we.
  - **Question#3 “How can you keep your heart engaged in work you don’t particularly like?”**
  - **Question#4 “What does it look like practically to work for the Lord and not for people?”**
  - Enjoy the rewards of your work
    - Not only do we have joy in our work because we serve the Lord, but we also should have joy in the rewards of our work.
    - Ecclesiastes 5:18-20
      - “Here is what I have seen to be good: it is appropriate to eat, drink, and experience good in all the labor one does under the sun during the few days of his life God has given him, because that is his reward. Furthermore, every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, he has also allowed him to enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. This is a gift of God, for he does not often consider the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with the joy of his heart.”
      - **While it is a reward to enjoy our rewards it must also be made clear that they are not to be abused, your rewards should never take priority in your life.**
    - Everything that God provides to you, because it is a gift and a reward for your work.
      - This is not necessarily monetary either.
      - Your reward may simply be that you have helped others.
        - Your job may be very difficult and stressful, but if you are helping others and being a benefit to them, that is what is important.
      - Perhaps your work is voluntary and it doesn’t come with a paycheck.
      - You certainly are not doing this to get paid, as your reward is simply knowing that you have helped others in some God pleasing way.
        - It could be in the church or to the poor and the helpless.
      - But we can certainly take joy in the rewards and the gifts that God gives us.
      - Because God will repay us for our works even if that is not seen until we get to Heaven.
        - Ephesians 6:7-8
          - **“Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord”**
- Enjoy work, but also enjoy our “rest”
  - While we are called to work we are also supposed to strike a balance.
  - Just because God has given you a gift and a profession does not mean that it should consume your life.
  - As God rested so should we.
    - Genesis 2:3

- “God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it He rested from His work of creation.”
  - God worked for 6 days to create the world and he rested on the 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - Likewise we should do the same to strive to achieve balance in our profession, especially if our profession gets in the way of our ministry or our family.
  - When we look back to Adam and Eve we say that the first profession was a farmer, but before that they were given another responsibility.
  - And that was to be parents.
    - Genesis 1:28a
      - “God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, **multiply, fill the earth**, and subdue it...”
    - If they are going to multiply and fill the earth they have to be parents. They cannot simply work 24/7 and never put any effort into their family.
    - The children must be raised and taken care of if they are to be fruitful and multiply.
    - So while we should enjoy our work and our profession we must not let that take priority over our family.
    - Our rest that we take can be used to spend time with the family that God wants us to raise.
- We are called to work in ministry
  - So we know that God has designed us and given us abilities for a profession, to be productive in this world.
  - It is also clear that as a Christian that God has also given each of us abilities for our ministry.
  - This ministry is the work that Jesus performed.
    - John 4:34
      - “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work, Jesus told them”
    - When Jesus began his big push he was doing God’s work.
    - This applies to each and every Christian; we all have work of God that we need to finish.
  - It is a command of Jesus for each of us to in some way to share the Gospel with others.
    - Matthew 28:18-20
      - “Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
      - This command of Jesus is not simply just for preachers it is for all Christians.
      - **What is different for each of us is the way in which we fulfill this command.**
  - God has given us spiritual gifts that are used to fulfill our ministry.
    - The Holy Spirit has given each of us different gifts that God has chosen for us.
      - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6
        - “Now there are **different gifts**, but the **same Spirit**. There are **different ministries**, but the **same Lord**. And there are **different activities**, but the **same God activates each gift in each person.**”
      - The important thing to remember from this is that we all have different gifts and ministries but they all come from the same Lord
      - We may look at these gifts and some being better than others, but in reality God has chosen them for each of us and they are all important for God’s work.

- **It doesn't matter if you are a preacher or the bus driver in church. Each roll has a divine purpose.**
- God has given his children the gifts necessary to fulfill their work for him.
- Biblical examples of spiritual gifts
  - Romans 12:6-8
    - "According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: If prophecy, use it according to the standard of one's faith; if service, in service; if teaching, in teaching; if exhorting, in exhortation; giving, with generosity; leading, with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness."
  - Each of us has a spiritual gift that God has given us. Some of us know what that gift is, and some do not.
  - Paul lists several here in Romans 12
    - Prophecy
      - This is not to tell the future, but to speak the truth of God to others.
      - To encourage and strengthen others.
      - Public proclamation of the Word of God.
    - Service/ Ministry
      - This is a very broad category and can include every time of ministry to further God's kingdom and to spread the Gospel.
    - Teaching
      - The ability to interpret and explain God's truth clearly.
      - This doesn't have to be formal like in a SS setting, but it could be teaching to your children to help them better understand God's truths.
    - Exhortation
      - To strongly urge others and to effectively call others to obey and follow God's truth.
      - This can come in many roles and flavors.
      - Are you on fire for God, to point others to his truth?
    - Giving
      - Tithing is a gift, to use the profession that God has given you the abilities to perform.
      - We use the God-given gifts to provide monetarily.
      - This is not limited to money or stuff but also our time.
    - Leading
      - The gift to lead others whether this is at home to be a spiritual leader of your family or in the church to lead the congregation to follow God's commands and to hear his truths.
    - Mercy
      - One who has the gift to show sympathy and be sensitive to those in suffering and sorrow.
      - Is willing and wants to lessen their pain and suffering by helping in any way they can.
    - **What ministry has God given you to do? What spiritual gifts has he given you to accomplish this?**
- Closing
  - God has blessed each and every single one of us with gifts and abilities that we are to use in a profession and also our ministry.

- We must use these gifts to further God's kingdom and to share the Gospel.
- We must finish God's work as Jesus did.
  - John 17:4
    - "I have **glorified You** on the earth by **completing the work** You gave Me to do."