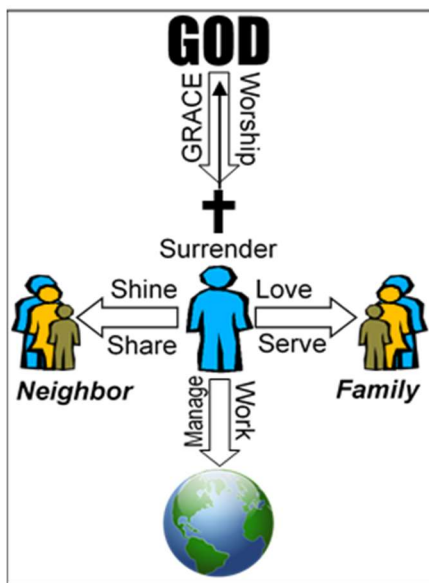




Lesson 12

# VOCATION: KNOWING ONE'S CALLING

The Puritan doctrine of vocation integrated life in the world with the spiritual life. The spiritual life was no longer limited to some "sacred" space, nor was it reserved for monks and nuns who had retired from the world. Instead, it is "in your shops where you may most confidently expect the presence and blessing of God" (Richard Steele). This view of work as vocation offers more than simply the possibility of serving God in one's daily work. It offers the possibility of serving God through or by means of that work. To work is to serve God... "The main end of our lives is to serve God in the serving of men in the works of our callings" (William Perkins). —Leland Ryken (Christian History, 2006)



God created us as physical beings in a physical world. Thus, loving Him and loving others is not just a spiritual or mystical thing. We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God and to use our bodies as instruments of righteousness to do His will (Rom. 6:13, 12:1). And as God's workmanship, we are designed and called by God for good works, using our abilities and resources to bless others (Eph. 2:10).

**Work.** Hebrew, *avad*, "to serve, work, worship." Used 290x in OT. Greek, *ergon*, "anything accomplished by hand, art, industry, or mind." Used 215x in NT.

*Every creature is God's servant and each has his work to do in which to glorify God, some in one calling, some in another.*

—Thomas Manton (1620-77)

*Be laborious and diligent in your callings...and if you cheerfully serve God in the labor of your hands...it will be as acceptable to Him as if you had spent all that time in more spiritual exercises.*

—Richard Baxter (1615-91)

*We miss part of our humanity when we do nothing. We were made to find fulfillment in our calling, whatever that might be.*

—Greg Johnson

*At the core, our identity as humans is now frustrated. Our work is now futile. Our relationships with God, our own selves, others, and our environment are now disrupted and even destructive. Created to live in a garden, we now are forced to live in a ghetto. This world that we now inhabit is not our natural habitat.*

—Dennis Bakke

## THE PRINCIPLE OF WORK

- God is a \_\_\_\_\_ (John 5:17; Psalm 145:4-6).
- We are designed to be \_\_\_\_\_, created in God's image to display His glory on the earth (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15).

## THE PROBLEM OF WORK

- Sin has brought \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to our work (Genesis 3:17-19).
- Our work now has a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ (Eccl. 2:18-23).

## THE PURPOSE OF WORK

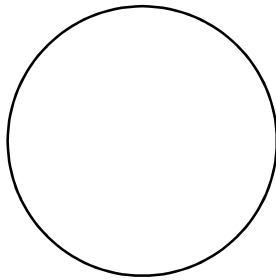
### For my own benefit.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Ecclesiastes 5:18-20)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Proverbs 10:4; 13:4; 28:19)

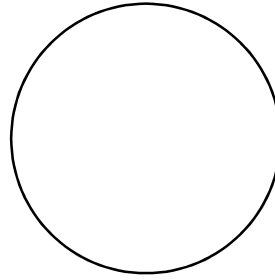
### For the benefit of others.

- Provide for \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Timothy 5:8).
- Provide for \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 4:28).
- Provide for \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Corinthians 9:11-12).
- Improve \_\_\_\_\_ on earth (Genesis 1:28).

### For the glory of God! (1 Corinthians 10:31)



Greek Dualism



Biblical Worldview

## THE PRACTICE OF WORK

- Work \_\_\_\_\_ (Colossians 3:22).
- Work \_\_\_\_\_ (Colossians 3:23).
- Work \_\_\_\_\_ (Colossians 3:25).
- Work \_\_\_\_\_ (Col. 3:24; Eccl. 5:18-20).

### Walking the God-Centered Path This Week

- Evaluate your work ethic based on Colossians 3:22-25. In what area(s) do you need to change or improve?
- Write out a vision statement for your life. How has God gifted you? What do you want to accomplish for His glory?

*Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.*

—John Wesley

*Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.*

—Thomas Edison

*Business for the Christian is a form of neighbor-love, a way to fulfill the Great Commandment.*

—David Neff

*The works of monks and priests, however holy and arduous they may be, do not differ one whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks, but that all works are measured before God by faith alone.* —Martin Luther

*If thou compare deed to deed, there is difference betwixt washing of dishes and preaching of the word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all.*

—William Tyndale (1494-1536)

*Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to wherever he may apply his hand...he is constantly standing before the face of God (coram deo), he is employed in the service of God.*

—Abraham Kuyper

*I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.* —Helen Keller

*Take pleasure in your work and then you will not be slothful in it.*

—Richard Baxter (1615-91)