

An Honest Day's Work

Establishing a Biblical View of Work and Ministry in the Marketplace

1. Common Misconceptions about Work

- a. Work is a curse
- b. Work is something we have to do, simply to pay the bills in order to be able to do the real work of the kingdom
- c. Some work is more "sanctified" than other work
- d. Some callings are more "sanctified" than other callings

2. Group Discussion

Read Genesis 1 and 2:1,15, 18 – 20 and 3:17-23 in groups of 4 or 5

Make observations you have about work from these two chapters and then discuss your observations, questions and insights. Appoint a discussion leader who will report your conclusions.

Be sure to observe what the nature of work was from the beginning, who was doing it, whose idea it was, when man starting working, what the nature of the work was, if work was a negative or positive concept.

How does the concept of work presented in these chapters differ from the perspective of work often shared by Christians?

Have you been in jobs/occupations/careers where you have experience a feeling of "goodness" for what you have accomplished or been involved in?

What effect did sin have on work; how does it correlate with the effect of sin on all attributes of life? (Relationships, sex, health, diet, environment, etc.) Did work become "evil"? Did sex become "evil"? Did diet become "evil"? Discuss the general ideas. Also reflect on how you may have sometimes "experienced the curse" in the workplace.

In your groups, identify as many "occupations and careers" that you can, citing the roles of God fearing men and women throughout the scripture. (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, etc.). List them and report out.

Question – which of these were more sanctified? Was Jesus more in God's will when he was a prophet or teacher or priest than he was when he was a carpenter?

3. God has gifted and designed you for a purpose

- a. God has uniquely designed you and given you specific strengths and weaknesses which He will use for His Glory (Psalm 139:13-16)
- b. God has designed you for good works (Ephesians 2:10)
- c. God is sovereign and his plan is perfect, including the occupations where he has placed us. He provides us with an opportunity to participate in His greater story. Our response should be like that of Esther (Esther 4:14)
- d. God uses our work, workplace and careers to refine us (Prov 17:3)

4. How do we honor God in the workplace

- a. By the manner in which we work
 - i. We work heartily and give our best in all things (Col 3:23-24)
 - ii. Daniel/Shadrach/Meshach/Abednego – Daniel 1:20
- b. By sharing Christ with and loving our coworkers - Col 4:3-6
 - i. Pray for open doors
 - ii. Be wise in the way we act
 - iii. Make the most of every opportunity
- c. By holding fast to a worldview grounded in the Word of God
 - i. Our culture and workplaces are growing rapidly hostile toward a Biblical worldview
 - ii. Example of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
 - 1. Daniel and his friends refused to be defiled by the king's food (Dan 1:8)

2. They found favor in a hostile culture by, with God's gifting (Dan 1:17) being 10X better in every manner of wisdom and understanding (Dan 1:20)
 3. They lived and functioned within a hostile culture but refused to be defiled by it or disobey God
 - a. Each refused to bow to anyone but God
 - b. God saved them and used them to turn the hearts of kings (Daniel 3:28 and 6:26)
- iii. 1 Cor 16:13 – Be watchful, stand firm in the faith; act like men; be strong

5. Group Discussion

In your groups, share examples of people you have seen who "work heartily" as for the Lord in their workplace. How are they viewed by their employers? Have you observed a believer in Christ exhibit laziness in the workplace? How is the person viewed by his or her employer?

List some of areas in which your workplace or corporate culture is add odds with a Biblical worldview. Share thoughts with your group on how we can live and function within such a culture without being defiled by it. When and how should we speak out against it? Are there areas where God may be calling you to "refuse to bow" or consume the king's food and wine like Daniel ... or to approach the king as Esther did? How might your answers to the first part of this section impact your employer's response?

As a group, come up with several practical suggestions for things you can do to serve or love your coworkers.

Write down the name of a coworker who you will commit to praying for an open door to share Christ with. Ask that God would help you "make the most of every opportunity."

Continued Bible Study on Work – For Home Study After Workshop

The book of Proverbs has much to say about practical aspects of work. What are your thoughts on the teachings in the following passages?

Verse

Thought

10:4,5

12:11

12:24

13:4

13:11

14:4

14:23

16:26

20:13

21:5

22:9

28:19

Plus Eccl 5:12

Briefly make a list of different occupations of god fearing people in the Scriptures (as you did at the KMI workshop). Examine your list. Are some of these occupations more honorable than others? How many in your list were "full time Christian workers?" At what age did Jesus start his "Messianic ministry?" What had he been doing previous to this? In which activity was he in God's plan and will?

Who should work? 2 Thess 3:10

When should we work? Exodus 23:12

What are the Scriptural motives for work? Col 3:22, 23; Eph 4:28

What are some responsibilities?

I Thess 4:11,12

I Tim 5:8

Is work only for men?

Prov 31:10 - 31

Read through Ecclesiastes and take notes on any references toward labor or work. Write one or two sentences in summary of this book's teachings on the topic.