

The Rhythm of Life



Finding Deep

Rest in Our Labor

Lesson 1: Labor and Love

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Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
(Matthew 11:28-30)

I. We labor and are heavy laden _____

Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)

II. We labor: A brief theology of work.

A. God created us to work and created work for us.
Work is not the result of _____.

Genesis 2:5-8, 15, 18

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. (John 17:4)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

1. A godly life is a _____ life.
I Thess. 4:9-12, I Tim. 2:9-10
2. God intends us to _____ our work
and the wealth and possessions our work can
bring. Eccl. 5:18-20, Is. 65:17, 21, 22
3. God intends for us to work with all our
_____, _____, abounding in
our work.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going. (Eccl. 9:10)

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Col. 3:23-24)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (II Cor. 9:8)

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (I Cor. 15:58)

4. _____ is to be to the Lord.
God is always to be for whom we work. We work
to _____ God. We work to
_____ God.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Col. 3:23-24)

For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. (I Tim. 4:10)

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16)

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (I Cor. 10:31)

5. God _____ our work. God gives
_____ to our work.

For this I toil [that I may present everyone mature in Christ], struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. (Col. 1:29)

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. (II Cor. 9:8)

By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. (I Cor. 15:10)

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (I Cor. 15:58)

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:36)

Our work is _____ God,
_____ God, _____ God, and
ultimately for _____.

God is to be the _____ of our work;
God is to be the _____ of our work.

B. The specifics of our work.

1. _____ labor: Feeding and clothing and housing ourselves and others is our God-given labor.
2. _____ labor: We are to labor for others in need.

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. (Titus 3:14)

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so they may take hold of that which is truly life. (I Tim. 6:17-19)

3. _____ labor: God designed humans to share His creative impulses.

4. _____ labor: Labor for the kingdom is another God-designed part of the life of every believer, now and eternally.

We work for more than physical food because we are more than physical bodies.

My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. (John 4:34)

Do not labor for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. (John 6:27)

○ There is a spiritual _____ we are to labor for and to pray for laborers for. Matt. 9:35-38

○ We work to _____ the church. Eph. 4:11-16

○ We engage in this work _____. Work for the kingdom is primarily _____ work.

Greet Mary who has worked hard for you.

Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ.

Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. (Rom. 16:6, 9, 12)

Yes, I ask you, true companion [yoke fellow], help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel. (Phil 4:3)

- C. Sin can mar our work, our relationship to work, and our enjoyment of our work. The nature of sin is to take God's good gifts and _____ them.
1. Sin made labor more _____.
Gen. 3:16,19
 2. Sin produced _____ labor – slavery.
Deut. 26:6, 28:33, I Peter 2:18
 3. Sin can corrupt our _____ to work.
 - We are _____ and do not labor.
If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.
For we hear that some of you walk in idleness,
not busy at work, but busybodies.
(II Thess. 3:10-12)
 - We _____ instead of labor.
Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him
labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so
that he may have something to share with
anyone in need. (Eph. 4:28)

4. Sin can corrupt our relationship to work.

- We work with wrong motives

- _____ and _____

I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. . . I gathered for myself silver and gold. (Eccl. 2:4, 8)

Is this not great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power . . . and for the glory of my majesty? (Daniel 4:30)

- _____

Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work comes from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and striving after wind. (Eccl. 4:4)

- _____ God's favor

Let me ask you this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? . . . All who rely on works of the law are under a curse. (Gal. 3:2, 10)

- We _____

It is vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. (Psalm 127:2)

Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. (Prov. 23:4)

- We _____ in our work instead of in God.

For, because you also trusted in your works and your treasures, you also shall be taken and go into exile. (Jer. 48:7)

- We seek _____ in work instead of in God.

For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cistern that cannot hold water. (Jer. 2:13)

There is a satisfaction in work and in the fruit of our work that is holy and good, leading us to thank and praise God. There is also a satisfaction in work that leads me to worship and praise myself.

III. The proper motivation of our work.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you. (I Thess. 1:2-4)

A. Our work is to be fueled by _____.
Faith trusts that our labors are _____
by God, that they are His _____ for
us, that He will _____ us to work for
His _____, and that He will make our
work _____
so our labor is not in vain.

B. Our work is to be motivated by _____.
Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to
goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control;
and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance,
godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to
mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities
in increasing measure, *they will keep you from being
ineffective and unproductive* in your knowledge of our
Lord Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:5-8)

I may measure effectiveness and productivity by what I have _____.

God measures it by what I have _____.

C. Our work is to be sustained by _____.

We hope in God's ability to make the least outwardly important work have _____
_____.

We hope in the promise of God: all things are working for our _____.

Even unpleasant work is making me more like Jesus.
Especially unpleasant work is making me more like Jesus.

Of the many books I read in preparation for this study, the most beneficial was *Tranquility* by David W. Henderson.

Application Questions

1. Consider your work. List the specific work you do each week that falls into each category of work:

Necessary labor

Generous labor

Creative labor

Kingdom labor

2. Consider what you believe about work. Briefly summarize the truths about work, given as subpoints 1-5 under point IIA in this lesson.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Which of these truths do you struggle to believe or to apply in your daily work? _____

Choose one or two verses from this lesson that most clearly teach one of the truths you struggle to believe.

What can you practically do to begin changing your wrong thinking about work? _____

3. Consider how sin affects your work.

Do you tend to sin in the area of working too much or working too little? _____

Which of the items in the following list do you believe most often motivate your work?

- Finding pleasure in work itself
- Not disappointing others
- Paying the bills
- Satisfaction in the end results of the work
- Acquiring wealth or stuff
- Impressing others
- Escaping from personal problems
- Love for the people I'm working for
- Hoping God will accept/love me
- Receiving the applause of others
- Relieving boredom or keeping myself out of trouble
- Proving myself to myself or others

5. In what ways are you your own slave driver? What things do you do, not because God wants you doing them, but because you drive yourself to do them?

6. What is the heart behind your self-imposed slavery? What motivates you to drive yourself?

7. Regardless of your current work situation (employed outside home, stay-at-home wife/mom, retired, etc.)

a. How can your specific work be fueled by faith?

b. How can your specific work be motivated by love?

c. How can your specific work be sustained by hope?
