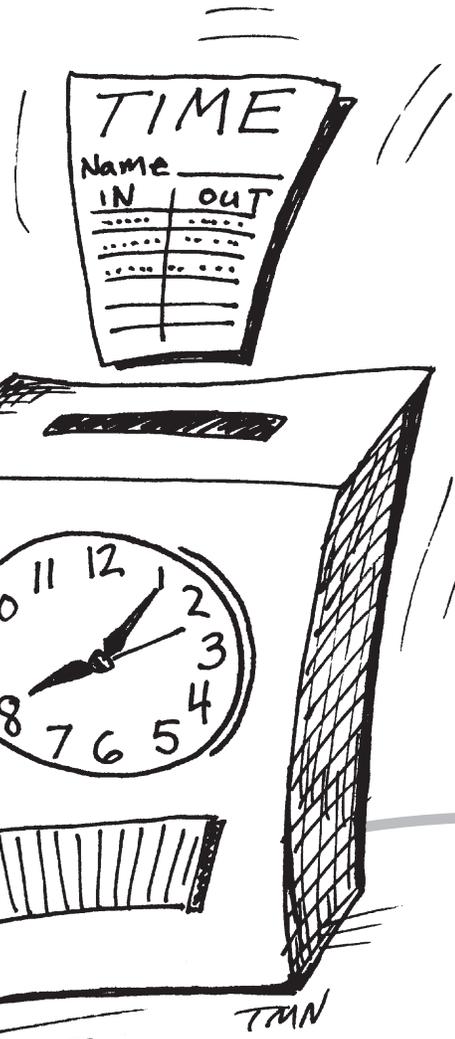


Work Ethic

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working IN THE GARDEN

From Significance and Perfection to Futility and Redemption

•➔ **Read Genesis 2:15.** *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

Working was a part of the human experience before sin entered the world. What does this fact say about what God thinks about work?

How should the significance God gives to work affect **your** attitude toward work?

Are you willing to give work (both employment and daily chores) the same value as God does? If so, what changes in **how** you work would you need to make?

•➔ **Read Genesis 3:17-19, 23.**

What effect did the entrance of sin into the world have on work?

What words describe the frustration and futility sin caused?

•➔ **Now, read Colossians 3:22-4:1.** (Verses about slaves and masters should be directly applied to employer/employee relationships.)

What concept in this passage shows how the sense of futility in work can be redeemed?



Whether you are working in a secular job or washing your dishes, your boss is really Christ; you are to work in such a way as to please Him. All your work is to be viewed by you as an offering to Him. Then, for you, there will be nothing “secular,” which means “without God.” He will redeem your work and make it a sacred offering to Him. Working with God as your employer grants significance to all that you do and gives purpose for doing it well.

Therefore, work with reverence for the Lord, as working for the Lord, not for men. You will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. You know that you also have a Master in heaven. Excerpts from Colossians 3:22-4:1.

How will this reality change the way you work? What specifically will you do differently?

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

As you do this study, mark the box by each passage that reveals a needed change in your actions or attitudes. When you are finished, ask God to forgive you for each issue and to help you change.

Read Proverbs 10:4.

Lazy is defined as not willing to work, moving slowly, idle.

Diligent is defined as hard-working, industrious, careful, steady.

How will each quality, laziness and diligence, affect your future?

Read Proverbs 10:26.

Why is this comparison used to describe the effect of a lazy person on an employer?

A lazy person does his job halfway or not at all. An employer has to take the time to check on the job and redo it or find someone else to do it. A lazy person is a financial and emotional drain on others.

Read Proverbs 21:25-26.

By what emotional state is the lazy person's life marked?

Why can the righteous person give without sparing?

What is the significance of comparing laziness to righteousness?

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

What is the rule stated here?

Are you willing to live by this command?

Read Proverbs 18:9.

How is being slack, or not thorough, in your work like someone who destroys?

Read Proverbs 25:13, 19.

Can you be depended upon to follow through on an assigned task, accomplishing it conscientiously and thoroughly?

Can you be depended upon to do what you say you'll do in a timely manner?

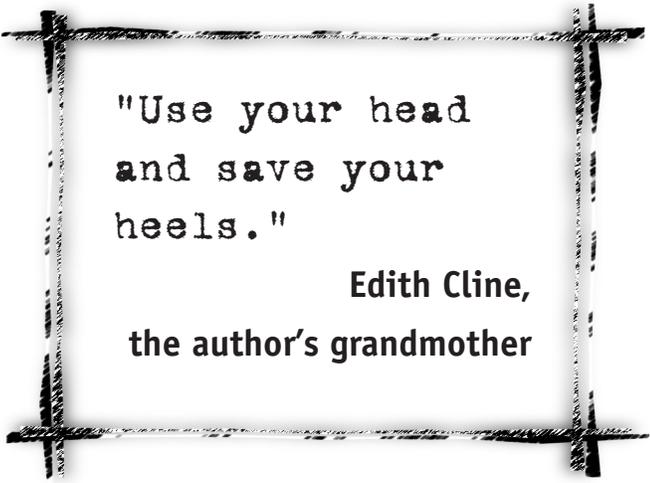
Read Proverbs 24:27.

What is the advantage of planting the fields before building the house?

This proverb speaks of working smarter, not harder. By planting the fields first, the food can be growing while the house is being built. Two areas of work can be happening at the same time.

Do you think about how to work more efficiently?





"Use your head
and save your
heels."

**Edith Cline,
the author's grandmother**

□ **Read Philippians 2:14-15.**

Do you complain about anything at all, like the weather, the food, or the boss? If you are not sure, ask a co-worker.

One of the reasons the Israelites did not enter the promised land was because they complained. If you have complained, ask God to forgive you and help you to speak encouraging and grateful words.



Take time now to pray. If there are attitudes or actions you marked that need to change, ask God to forgive you for each one.



Make a plan for change with your small group leader and pray together about any changes that need to take place. Ask him/her to check with you next time you're together and see what changes you have made.

Yield to God working in your life to change your attitudes and actions. The secret is to cooperate with, obey, God's gentle nudging each time during your day. That's how the changing will come about.

Good advice about HOW TO WORK

From Pastor David Delgatty, Christian Center Church, Bozeman, Montana. Used with permission.

- ✓ When people come to visit you or the boss, keep working. Don't stop to listen to their conversation.
- ✓ Work as if you were worth more than you're being paid.
- ✓ By your effort and thoughtfulness, work harder than the workers around you.
- ✓ Never say, "This work is hard!" or "I'm tired!" Those are the complaints of the lazy person. Just do your job. *The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside!"*
or, *"I will be murdered in the streets!"* (excuses for laziness) *Proverbs 22:13*
- ✓ Work as hard when you're alone as when you're being watched.
- ✓ Do more than your share.
- ✓ Be thankful for your work; never complain about a job. If you aren't thankful, quit, or change your attitude!
- ✓ Never ask, "How much longer?" or "When are we finished?" or "What time is it?"
- ✓ Never complain about another person's work. Pay attention to your own work and its quality. *Do not slander a servant to his master, or he will curse you, and you will pay for it. Proverbs 30:10*
- ✓ Listen and do what you're told -- the way you're told. Assume your boss knows best.

how do you really rate WITH THE BOSS?

Rate yourself in each of the following areas. 1 = Never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = At least half the time; 4 = Most of the time; 5 = Always.

- ___ I am on time with my work and my projects.
- ___ I am clean, neat, and organized.
- ___ I am a peacemaker.
- ___ When I'm working, I give it all I've got.
- ___ I am in good health and physical condition.
- ___ I am honest.
- ___ I am a team person.
- ___ My criticisms are polite and constructive.
- ___ I refrain from second-guessing the boss.
- ___ I don't carry nuisance habits to work with me.
(gum chewing, smoking, nonstop coffee or cola sipping, etc.)
- ___ I am ambitious and eager.
- ___ I am flexible and adaptable to change.
- ___ I am courteous to customers and co-workers.
- ___ My language is free of profanity and vulgarity.
- ___ I practice and study to improve my work skills.
- ___ I volunteer.
- ___ I control my mood swings.
- ___ I am loyal to my boss and the company.

___ TOTAL SCORE

- 18-36—Pardon me, but your pink slip is showing.
- 37-54—You're nearing the danger zone.
- 55-72—Things are probably okay for now.
- 73-90—You must be on the boss's "Most Wanted" list.

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are You STEALING?



This study is based on Ephesians 4:28. *He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*

If you come late to work or take extra time at lunch, you are stealing from your boss. You are not giving him/her a full day's work.

If you stay up late the night before so that you come to work tired, you are stealing from your boss. You are stealing quality and quantity of work from him/her.

Are there other ways that you are stealing?



Take time now to ask God's forgiveness.



Is there restitution that needs to be made to make up for your wrong actions? If so, make a specific plan of action to make things right. Ask God to help you align your actions with the Scripture's teachings.

What purpose does this verse (Ephesians 4:28) give for useful work?

How would this affect a motive for becoming wealthy?

How can you incorporate this mindset into your spending plan now?

a day OF REST



•➔ **Read Genesis 2:2-3.**

After God created the beautiful world, how do you think He spent His day of rest? (By the way, God was not tired.)

Maybe He spent the day enjoying the beautiful world He had created.

•➔ **Read Exodus 20:8-11.**

What do you think God's purpose was in putting the observation of the Sabbath as a commandment?

What does a day of rest look like for you? A nap? A change of activity from a normal day?

What activities rest you?

How can the Sabbath become a blessing to you?

•➔ **Read Leviticus 23:3.**

Although you are to worship and acknowledge God every day, the Sabbath is a day to give Him special honor and attention, a Sabbath to the Lord and a day of sacred assembly with other Christians, if possible.

thoughtful questions

ABOUT WORK

After you have studied this section, discuss these questions in your small group or with your small group leader. Use your notes from the Bible studies and the List of Scriptures at the end of this section.

Who is an example to you of having a good work ethic? What attitudes and actions make you think so?

Who is an example to you of having a poor work ethic? What attitudes and actions make you think so?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being perfect) rate yourself on your work ethic. Why did you give yourself that score?

Workaholicism is as destructive as laziness. They are cousins. Explain your understanding of 'lazy.'

Explain your understanding of 'workaholicism.'

In what ways could they both be considered destructive?

What is your view of leisure and recreation?

Where do you place more value - work or free time? How does your life demonstrate this?

Does God value one over the other? What makes you think so?

Sources

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Eugene Peterson, "The Good for Nothing Sabbath," *Christianity Today*, April 4, 1994.

Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987.

Richard Taylor Shelley, *The Disciplined Life*, Dimension Books, 1962.

list of SCRIPTURES

➔ The Sabbath

Genesis 2:2, 3	God rested on 7th, made holy
Exodus 20:9-11, 23:12, 31:14-17, 35:2	rest on 7th day
Leviticus 23:3	day of rest and sacred assembly
Deuteronomy 5:13-14	no work for servants, animals, etc.
Jeremiah 17:22, 24	carry no load, no work on Sabbath
Hebrews 4:4, 9-11	God rested, enter into Sabbath rest

➔ Work's Reward, Blessing, Result

Exodus 18:18	Moses: delegate some of the work
Deuteronomy 2:7	God supplied for 40 years and blessed their work
Deuteronomy 15:10	give generously and God will bless work
Deuteronomy 24:19	leave sheaves for widows, etc. Lord will bless work
Deuteronomy 28:12	with God's provision you can lend and not borrow
Deuteronomy 33:11	Moses blesses tribes' skills and work
2 Chronicles 15:7	your work will be rewarded
Psalms 90:17	Moses prayed: establish the work of our hands
Proverbs 12:14	work of his hands reward him
Proverbs 14:23	all hard work brings a profit
Proverbs 22:29	skilled man will serve before kings and not be obscure
Ecclesiastes 2:24-25, 3:22, 8:15	enjoy your work
Ecclesiastes 4:9	two have better return for their work than one
Ecclesiastes 5:12, 18-20	wealth and possessions are a gift of God
Jeremiah 31:16	your work will be rewarded
Matthew 25:16	five talents put to work
John 4:38	you have reaped the benefits of others' labor
Ephesians 4:28	work so can have something to share
2 Thessalonians 3:10-12	if won't work, shall not eat

➔ Complaining

Numbers 14:26-39

1 Corinthians 10:7-12

James 5:9

Matthew 20:12-13

Philippians 2:14-15

Israelites grumbling because of discouraging report from spies

don't grumble like Israelites

don't grumble against each other, be judged

workers grumbling because long and short days got same pay

don't complain

➔ Diligence

Nehemiah 2:16-18, 3:1-5,

4:11-21, 5:16, 6:3-16

Proverbs 10:4-5

Proverbs 12:24

Proverbs 14:23

Proverbs 24:27

Proverbs 27:23-24

Proverbs 28:19-20

Proverbs 31:10-31

Luke 19:11-27

1 Corinthians 4:12

2 Corinthians 6:5

Colossians 3:23-24

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

rebuilding wall of Jerusalem – a good Bible study on diligence

lazy is poor, diligent is wealthy

diligent rule, lazy ends in slavery

hard work brings profit, mere talk brings poverty

get fields ready before build house

pay attention to your flocks

work vs. chasing fantasies

diligent wife

king gives money to invest wisely

we work hard with our hands

Paul's work and hardships

work as to the Lord who rewards

work so not dependent

➔ Laziness

Proverbs 6:6-11

Proverbs 10:26

Proverbs 13:4

Proverbs 18:9

Proverbs 20:4

Proverbs 20:13

Proverbs 21:25-26

Proverbs 24:30-34

Proverbs 26:13-16

consider the ant

as vinegar to teeth is sluggard

sluggard craves, gets nothing, diligent satisfied

slack in work is brother to destroyer

sluggard doesn't plow in season, no harvest

love sleep, will be poor

sluggard craves, hands refuse to work, righteous give

sluggard's field a lesson, sleep brings poverty

sluggard's excuses for not working

1 Thessalonians 5:14 warn idle
2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 don't work, don't eat

➔ **Relationship to Employer**

Proverbs 25:13,19 faithfulness
Proverbs 26:10 hires a fool
Proverbs 27:18 look after master
Proverbs 30:10 don't slander servant to master
Matthew 21:28-32 parable of 2 sons: one said he'd work, one said he wouldn't
Ephesians 6:5-9 slaves work as to Lord, masters same
Colossians 3:22-4:1 slaves work as to Lord, masters same
1 Timothy 6:1-2 slaves with believing masters