

THE L.I.F.E. PLAN

WORK

BLOCK 1

THEME 6 - PEOPLE PROFILES
LESSON 4 (24 of 216)

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THEME 6: PEOPLE PROFILES

LESSON 4 (24 OF 216): WORK

LESSON AIM: Show that it is a good and honorable thing to work.

SCRIPTURE: (Genesis 4:17-22)

Genesis 1:31

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

To many people in the day in which we live, work is a four-letter word. The national disdain for work is reflected in statistics which say that as many as 53% of the country receive some form of government assistance. Many people have learned that they can receive an income from the government while they sit at home and do nothing. Government assistance has replaced working for a living for many of our fellow-citizens. Not only is this eroding the stability of our nation, but it also contributes to the destruction of the dignity and worth of the individual.

Work is a good thing. Before man was created, God was demonstrating a strong work ethic. Genesis chapters one and two record the work of God in creation. For six days, he worked and on the seventh day, he rested. This is the example and pattern God set for man.

As we look at the work of God in these chapters, we see that God worked in a logical, systematic way. The things he did started in a logical starting place and developed to a desired end. A house builder would not build a house by beginning with the construction of the roof system. He first has to lay the foundation, frame and sheet the building so it can support the roof when it comes time to install it. God began his work in the right place to start, and he systematically progressed until he was finally able to create man and place him in the earth he had made as a suitable environment for the man to live and flourish. There is little more that brings frustration to a work project than starting in the wrong place.

We also see that God worked consistently and correctly. We follow his work from the first day, into the second day, and the third day, and so on. He did not lose time by skipping the first and second day and beginning on the third day. He did not work a day or two and lay out a day or two. He worked every day and he accomplished the work he had planned for the day. He did the work the right way the first time around. We do not read that he did something on one day and had to rework it on another day. For man, this concept shows pride in our work, and that we seek to do the best job we can do, and that we do it right the first time. In the world of business and employment, rework is the most costly of all mistakes. Not only does it lose profit for the contractor, but it causes the customer to lose confidence in the contractor. The next time the customer needs to hire out a job, this contractor may not be considered. It is important to work both consistently and correctly. God demonstrated this principle in his work of creation.

God also worked constructively. As he looked over the work he had done on a given day, he said that the work he had done was good. He was on schedule. The work was being done according to plan. He was making progress each day. In this way he could finish the project on time. Then, when the work was finished, he could rest. Notice the ratio of rest to work. He worked six times more than he rested. He

rested only one day out of seven days. Today, even for those who are still working, everybody seems to be working for the weekend. And the weekend keeps getting longer and longer; three days, four days, and five days. This is fine if the motive is good. If we can do our work and make a living in fewer days, that's wonderful. However, the question becomes, "What are we going to do with the days of the week we have gained?" If we waste them on leisure and pleasure every week, we are diminishing our own potential to produce. Ideally, those days gained from our job could be used for more work for the Lord, the church, and in our personal ministries. This would help us work more constructively on our job and in our ministry.

Throughout the Bible, God continues to demonstrate his work ethic. He did not do the work of creation and sit down to do nothing else forever. He has worked and he continues to work. We see that each person of the godhead works. The Father has work that he does; the Son has work that he does; and the Holy Spirit has work that he does. Neither is dead weight or a weak link. They work and continue to work. Man should follow this example, seeking to be a strong part of the team, whether that team is the family, the company for which he works, or the church.

God is our example in what it is to work and how it is to work. Man was expected to follow in these footsteps of God. God works and man is to work. The very first man on earth was expected to work. He was created and placed in the garden to till the ground, to dress it and to keep it. The idea that all Adam had to do was to walk around with the woman in the garden and do nothing is preposterous. He was expected to work. The fact that he was not working when Eve was beguiled by the serpent could have been a contributing factor to the fall.

After the fall, man's work was surely affected. In pronouncement of the consequences of man's disobedience, God said that the man would now eat his bread in the sweat of his face. In other words, the work that he was expected to do when he was created would now be a burden rather than the natural expression of who and what man was created to be and do. Work would now be something the man would be tempted to avoid instead of something he was created to do. Work would now be plagued with frustrations, disappointments, and in some cases, used as a detriment to the man and his family by the adversary. Like everything else, man's work was tainted by the fall.

The frustration of man's work, however, did not lower God's expectations of the man concerning his work. Man was still expected to work. He was still expected to follow the example set by God. He was still to have a strong work ethic. And, the principle was established that now, "If you do not work, you do not eat". This is God's standard for man. Man has usurped God's authority, giving over to laziness, and paying people so they can eat without working. This is a tragedy to man and a tragedy to our country today.

From the very first offspring on Adam and Eve, we see that man employed himself in the field. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. Cain also was a city planner and builder, something of a civil engineer. Cain's descendants also were employed in various occupations which are mentioned in the fourth chapter of the Bible. Jabal was a nomadic shepherd. Jubal was a musician of the string and wind instruments. Tubalcain was an instructor of metal fabricators, operating some kind of on the job training or vocational school. From the beginning, man worked as was expected of him. God still expects man to work today.

Many and various occupations are mentioned in the Bible, some of them specifically, others implied. These occupations appear in two categories: respectable and non-respectable. Non-respectable jobs are engaged in by those who rebel against working for an honest living. Of the respectable jobs named in the Bible, we find those

in almost every discipline. The Bible names jobs in engineering, fabrication, carpentry, smithing, masonry, medicine, education, embalming, religion, craftsmanship, food services, the service industry, hospitality, clothing, cleaning, farming, agriculture, fishing, sailing, security, arms manufacturing, politics, law, government, music, singing, military, cosmetology, astronomy, processing, supervision, finance, recording, writing, and history. At least 70 jobs appear in these categories in the Word of God.

As we know people do not always get by with respectable employment. They find other means of income, often from non-respectable sources. In this category of occupations, in the Bible we find those who make a living from criminal or occult practices. The Bible tells us of those who work as robbers, thugs, and prostitutes as well as diviners, magicians, seers, sorcerers, wizards, and observers of times.

Honest work brings with it many benefits to the worker. To some degree, our work is a part of our identity. It was said of Cain that he was a farmer. It was said of Abel that he was a shepherd. This can be good or bad for us. If we have truly found God's specific purpose for our life, we may speak of ourselves after our occupation: I am a farmer, etc. It is bad in that we are called by an occupation if this occupation is only a job and not a part of whom we really are.

Work brings with it the benefit of a feeling of accomplishment and contribution. The person who does not pull some of the weight of the load is a taker and a consumer. If this person cannot bear the load because of some handicap or disability, this is a different story. When a person who is able to work but doesn't, he is a burden to those who have to pull their weight and his as well.

Working is beneficial because it combats laziness and poverty. Because of the fall, people have to fight against the pull of laziness. It's easier to stay in bed or to sit idly by while someone else does the work. Many families are suffering from this situation. The man of the house loafes while the wife struggles to keep the family afloat. Or, the wife refuses to help while the husband works himself to death. Or, parents and grandparents are giving all they have to support sons and daughters and grandchildren who are fully capable of working but are too lazy to get a job and go to work. Or, a dead-beat parent stops working mooches off of the income of a son or daughter. Laziness can creep up on anyone who has a pension for not working. Poverty from laziness is the next monster to overtake a person who will not work. All of this can be avoided simply by working and holding down a job.

Working provides the benefit of earning a living and financing your way through life. Income makes it possible to have things and to do things. When we work we can buy clothes, food, cars, property, houses and other things we enjoy, need, or want. Because we work, we can have electricity and running water in our homes. We can have other luxuries that are available for the person who is willing to work for them. We can afford to have children and raise them and send them to school. We can go on vacations. And, we can save and invest for the future of our family. These are all wonderful things and they are not free. Even if the government provides them to free-loaders and lazy citizens, they still have to be paid for by the working class.

The final benefits of working we mention are the abilities our income gives us to support the church and to help those in need. These are important things God would have us do as faithful stewards of the blessings he has entrusted to us.

All of these wonderful things are out of reach for the person who will not work. Take a look at your life and the goals you have. Now, examine your work ethic. Will you be able to achieve your goals based on your present willingness to work? Will you need to work more or smarter to reach your goals? Make the necessary adjustments and do the work it takes to be successful and prosperous. Don't sell yourself short.

LESSON OUTLINE

BLOCK 1

THEME 6: PEOPLE PROFILES

LESSON 4 (24 OF 216): WORK

I WORK IS A GOOD THING

- A. Exemplified by God
 - 1. Father
 - 2. Son
 - 3. Holy Spirit
- B. Expected of man
 - 1. Adam was meant to work
 - 2. Work after the fall
 - 3. No work - no eat

II OCCUPATIONS IN THE BIBLE

III BENEFITS OF WORK

- A. Something of our identity
- B. Feeling of accomplishment and contribution
- C. Combats poverty and laziness
- D. Earn a living
- E. Support the church
- F. Help others

SCRIPTURES TO BROADEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1. Work
 - Proverbs 12:9, 11, 14, 20
 - Proverbs 20:4, 13
 - Proverbs 22:29
- 2. Laziness
 - Proverbs 6:6-11
 - Proverbs 10:4, 26
 - Proverbs 26:13-16
- 3. Poverty
 - Proverbs 20:13
 - Proverbs 21:5

4. Success
Proverbs 16:3

5. Prosperity
Proverbs 12:11
Proverbs 13:4
Proverbs 21:5

LINES OF THEOLOGICAL CONNECTION

1. ANTHROPOLOGY

Work ethic
Stewardship
Financial management
Giving
Poverty

2. ECCLESIOLOGY

Financial support of the church
Tithing

QUESTIONS ANSWER KEY

1. What do we learn from Adam, Cain, and Abel about working?
That man was intended to work
2. Who gives us our greatest example of a work ethic?
God
3. How would you describe your attitude toward work at this time in your life?
Student response
4. Have you ever had a poor work ethic?
Student response
5. Who is a good example in your life of a good worker?
Student response
6. Can you think of other enemies of stable finances in a person's life?
Answers include: not making enough money, overspending, debt, poor financial

Management

7. Do you presently have a job?

Student response

8. If you have a job, do you have a budget?

Student response

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QUESTIONS TO INSPIRE THOUGHT

1. What do we learn from Adam, Cain, and Abel about working?
2. Who gives us our greatest example of a work ethic?
3. How would you describe your attitude toward work at this time in your life?
4. Have you ever had a poor work ethic?
5. Who is a good example in your life of a good worker?
6. Can you think of other enemies of stable finances in a person's life?
7. Do you presently have a job?
8. If you have a job, do you have a budget?