



**MY WORK
GOD'S PLAN**

Loving Work!?

On average people spend one third of their life-time sleeping and one third at work. Not voluntarily, many of us might add. We often can't wait for each working day to finish, for our holidays to arrive, and many of us have been dreaming of retirement since our twenties! For others, work is their happy place where they change the world and live their dreams.

But what is the point of spending so much time at work when life is so short? Why do we work? Should we work? What is the Bible's view on work?

Below is a single Bible study in two parts. Very few groups will have time to do it all in one session, but if you're short for time you could pick out sections to focus on and skip other elements. Alternatively, Part A sets a helpful foundation to discuss together with Part B being completed individually, or it can be used over two group sessions.

God has been kind to give us a wealth of wisdom on work and there is far more than we could possibly cover off here. Amongst other great resources, consider the following:

- Engage Work Faith is an Adelaide ministry for workers. They run great events, help Christians connect with other workers to encourage each other in prayer, and provide a host of great resources: <https://engageworkfaith.org.au>
- City Bible Forum is a national organization with a great set of resources for both Christians (<https://citybibleforum.org>) and your non-Christian colleagues (<https://thirdspace.org.au>)
- The Centre for Public Christianity is a media organization with a host of excellent resources on topics related to work, besides a lot else. <https://www.publicchristianity.org>
- Ridley Centre for Leadership has recently launched a blog with some stimulating reading on leadership from a Christian perspective. <https://www.leadership.ridley.edu.au/resources>

Good books on the topic include:

William Taylor *Revolutionary Work*

Tim Keller *Every Good Endeavour*

Tim Chester *Gospel Centred Work*

Andrew Cameron *Joined-up Life* (this is an excellent book on Christian ethics and its chapter on work is outstanding. It's worth buying the book just for this chapter alone)

Loving Work!?

Part A.

1. What do you think we mean by the following words:
Work

Occupation

Career

Vocation

2. Why is work good?
Read Genesis 1:27-28, 2:15
What does this teach us about the dignity of work?

3. Why is work hard?

Read Genesis 3:1-19

What does this say about the difficulty of work?

Read Genesis 9:1-3

This sounds very similar to Gen 1:27-28. What does God say differently here and what has changed in the world since Genesis 1?

[Additional passage if you're interested: Ecc 2:11, 20-23. How does this describe the challenge of work?]

4. How does Jesus change things?

Read Hebrews 2:5-9

The writer to the Hebrews quotes from Psalm 8, which has a very positive view of the dignity of humanity. Hebrews 2 recognises that we still live in a Genesis 3 world. But Jesus is different. What perspective does this give us on the frustration of work in the present and for the future?

5. So why should we work?

Read Matthew 22:34-40

What does it mean to love your neighbour in the way you work?

What does it mean to love God in the way you work?

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Part B:

We wrapped up Part A looking at Matthew 22:34-40. What reflections do you have on the questions that prompts us to think about work: What does it mean to love your neighbour in the way you work? What does it mean to love God in the way you work?

1. Read the following passages that speak to various aspects of work (or a selection of them). What does each add to the picture:

2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Ephesians 4:28

1 Timothy 5:8

1 Timothy 6:17-18

Titus 3:1-2

Ephesians 6:5-9

James 5:1-11

2. How should we *not* work?

Read Matthew 6:19-34

What does this say to our anxious minds?

Read Titus 2:9-10

What does this say to our tendency to cut corners?

3. My work and God's work.

Read John 5:16-23.

Jesus has just healed a man on the Sabbath, upsetting the religious leaders, but it's his comments in verse 17 that really offend them. How does Jesus describe his work? From verse 21 and 22, what is Jesus saying about what people are like in the present and what lies ahead in the future? How does this impact the way we think about our work?

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12, 3:13-16

How does 2:9-12 shape our identity and our approach to our workplace? How might this challenge a career-driven mindset?

How does 3:13-16 encourage us to look for opportunities to share of the hope we have in Christ?

4. What is one way that your thinking about work has changed in light of what we've read from the Bible?

5. What is one action that you'd like to take in light of what we've read from the Bible?

