



## Discipleship Course

# Honouring God at work

*Love your neighbour as yourself- session 8*

### Intro: Putting work in its place

- How positive do you feel about work? (1-10)
- For what reasons do people work?

### 1. God's plans for work (Genesis 1-2, p. 4)

*a. Why do we work?*

*b. What is work?*

“Work is cultivating the world God has given us for the good of others, and for the glory of God”

## 2. Our problems with work (Gen. 3:17-19)

“what does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labours under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest.” **Ecclesiastes 2:22-23**

## 3. Being a Christian at work (Colossians 3:22-4:1, p. 1184)

**If you're a Christian, you have a new boss!**

a. *This changes my attitude at work*

→ Consistent (v22)

→ Conscientious (v23)

→ Considerate (4:1)

b. *This changes my motivation to work*

“You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to *give* than to *receive*.’”

**Acts 20:34-35**

# Seminar Groups

## Topic 1: Dealing with conflict at work

What can cause conflict in the work place?

→ Read Matthew 7:1-5 (p. 971)

- How can these verses help us when we're critical of others?
- How can they help us when others are critical of us?

→ Read Titus 3:1-5 (p. 1199)

- What principles do v1-2 give us for how to conduct ourselves in difficult relationships at work?
- How should v3 set realistic expectations for relationships at work?
- How should v3-5 stop us being judgemental?

## Topic 2: Being a witness at work

What do you think it means to 'be a witness for Jesus' at work?  
What are the challenges to being his witness?

→ Read Titus 2:9-10 (p. 1199)

- How can Christians employees make Christian truth 'attractive'?
- If this is going to happen, why is it important that colleagues know we are a Christian?
- How can we let people know that we are?

→ Read Colossians 4:5-6 (p. 1184)

*'Outsiders' are just people who aren't Christians.*

- How do these verses encourage us to relate to non-Christian colleagues?
- What opportunities might there be through work to be a witness?
- How can you 'make the most' of these opportunities?
- Conversation is about how we interact and relate with people- how should we be doing this?

### Topic 3: How to stop work taking over

- What are the signs that work is beginning to ‘take over’?
- What are some of the negative effects of our over-work? On us? On others?
- We are usually quick to point the finger elsewhere when we over-work, but what are some of the reasons *in our own hearts* that we can over-work?

#### God wants us to rest

→ Read Exodus 20:8-11 (p. 78)

- What rationale does God give for taking rest?

→ Read Psalm 127:1-2(p. 624)

- How does God warn us against over-work here?

#### God wants us to find our significance in Him, not in our work

In Chariots of fire, shortly before the 100m race one of the runners, Harold Abrahams says, “*And now in one hour's time I will be out there again. I will raise my eyes and look down that corridor; 4 feet wide, with 10 lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But WILL I?!*”

He looked to his vocation as an athlete to justify his whole existence. It’s easy to do the same with our work. But how might this kind of thinking lead us to over-work?

→ Read Colossians 3:1-4 (p. 1184)

- How has Jesus changed what life is all about for a Christian?
- How can that free us to work hard, but to stop at the end of the day?

Is there any practical help you can offer each other on creating good boundaries for work and the rest of life?

## Topic 4: Working for the Lord when I'm not working

- What view does the world have of 'retirement'?
- What view does the world have those before retirement who don't 'work for a salary'?

*Although we might retire from paid employment, the Bible contains no concept of retiring from 'work'. God has made us as workers not just for the first 65 years, but always! Although the opportunities for 'work' will be different in retirement, we are still called to work for the glory of God and the good of others.*

- If work is "contributing to the world for the good of others", how might we 'work for the Lord' even when we're not working for a salary?

*For Retired folk...*

→ **Read Psalm 71:14-18 (p. 584)**

- What is the Psalmist's great desire as he gets older?
- How can we use retirement to this end ourselves?

→ **Read Philippians 3:12-14 (p. 1180)**

- What was Paul's great goal in life?
- How might we use retirement to 'strain forwards' and 'press on' in serving God and serving others?
- How might we use retirement to indulge ourselves instead?

*For others who don't work*

→ **Read Colossians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:58**

- All too often the world either makes us feel useless for not working, or encourages to be indulgent because we don't have to work! But how do these verses shape our attitudes differently?
- What opportunities do you have to 'give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord'?

## Why not pick up some summer reading?

<i>Relationships- a mess worth making</i>	Timothy S. Lane & Paul David Tripp	An introduction to what the Bible teaches about our relationships in life
<i>The Living Church</i>	John Stott	A wonderful introduction to God's vision for his church
<i>True Friendship</i>	Vaughan Roberts	How we can be grow in our friendships as Christians
<i>Serving without sinking</i>	John Hindley	A great book thinking through our motivations and priorities in serving others
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Julia Marsden	Very short, but very helpful book on growing in forgiveness
<i>Married for God</i>	Christopher Ash	How to live out God's purposes in marriage
<i>The meaning of marriage</i>	Tim Keller	Slightly longer than Married for God, but very thoughtful and well applied.
<i>The single issue</i>	Al Hsu	What does the Bible say about being single?
<i>The heart of Singleness</i>	Andrea Trevenna	A book particularly for women who are struggling with singleness
<i>Counterfeit Gods</i>	Tim Keller	How money, love and power can become 'gods' in our lives
<i>The grace of giving</i>	John Stott	A clear booklet helping us to get our heads around what God says about giving.
<i>Gospel Centred Work</i>	Tim Chester	A book introducing God's plan for work and how we fit in with it
<i>Honest Evangelism</i>	Rico Tice	A short book helping us to see why telling others about Jesus is hard, but still worth doing!

## Next Term:

# Philippians and the joy of following Jesus

**Next term** we're going to be working through the book of Philippians. It's a sparkling letter, full of joy, which is written to a group of group of people who had probably only recently become Christians. It will help us to see what following Jesus should look like in our lives, and also what it should feel like in our hearts.

Please put the dates in your diary!

<b>17th Sep</b>	The joy of gospel partnership (Phil. 1:1-11)
<b>24th Sep</b>	The joy of living for Christ (Phil 1:12-26)
<b>1st Oct</b>	The joy of sharing the attitude of Christ (Phil. 1:27-2:11)
<b>8th Oct</b>	<b>St Mary's Evening</b>
<b>15th Oct</b>	The joy of shining like stars (Phil. 2:12-18)
<b>22nd Oct</b>	The joy of being a gospel servant (Phil. 2:19-29)
<b>29th Oct</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
<b>5th Nov</b>	The joy of having a relationship with Jesus (Phil. 3:1-11)
<b>12th Nov</b>	<b>St Mary's Evening- with group socials beforehand</b>
<b>19th Nov</b>	The joy of knowing we belong in heaven (Phil. 3:12-4:1)
<b>26th Nov</b>	The joy we are commanded to have (Phil. 4:2-9)
<b>3rd Dec</b>	The joy of knowing complete contentment (Phil. 4:10-23)
<b>10th Dec</b>	<b>St Mary's evening</b>
<b>17th Dec</b>	<b>Christmas party!</b>

# Prayer Points