

1. WHY DO WE WORK?

While waiting to begin please discuss some of the following questions.

How do you picture your personal paradise world? Would you want work to be there? Why/ Why not?

If you won £1million, what would you do? Would you stop working? Why?

What is work? How would you define it? What activities does/doesn't it include?

Why do people work? Make a list of reasons why people say they work.

Why do you work? What motivates you to work?

From what you know already, what do you think the Bible says about work

1. SETTING THE SCENE

- (a) Defining "work" (e.g. Ecclesiastes 2:18-23)
- (b) How the Christian church has thought about work:
- Before the Reformation
 - After the Reformation
 - Now?
- (c) Battles and opportunities at work

2. WORK IS GOOD! (IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED... WORK!)

Genesis 1:26-2:3

(a) Humans are made to work

- **Cultivation: filling and subduing the earth**

- **Service, love and competence**

(b) God works

(c) Work, not idleness, is commended

1 Thess. 4:11, “we urge you... to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may live properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”

1 Thess. 5:14, “we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle.”

2 Thess. 3:10-12, “For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their own work quietly and to earn their own living.”

1 Timothy 5:8, “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

3. IMPLICATIONS

(a) the pursuit of “permanent leisure” is out!

(b) no asceticism

(c) no elitism

Colossians 3:23, “whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.”

“Each man will bear and swallow the discomforts, vexations, weariness, and anxieties in his way of life, when he has been persuaded that the burden was laid upon him by God. From this will arise also a singular consolation: that no task will be so sordid and base, provided you obey your calling in it, that it will not shine and be reckoned very precious in God’s sight.” (Calvin, Institutes, III.XI.6).

4. HOMEWORK: THINKING IT THROUGH

- How do you feel about work being good, being part of God's perfect plan for his world?
- How is our view of work challenged...
 - a) When thinking that work is some kind of punishment?
 - b) When tempted to worship work?
- Picture what it was like for Adam and Eve to work in a perfect world. In your job, are there ever moments when work is really satisfying and enjoyable? What are they? Give thanks to God for them!
- Have you ever experienced not having work? What does it do to one's sense of worth and value? How can we understand this in light of what the Bible says about work?
- How can we help ourselves, and others, to go on being thankful to God for his good gift of work, for the privilege of sharing in God's rule of his world?
- Pray about what you've learned

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Every good endeavour, Tim Keller

Thank God it's Monday, Mark Greene

Jesus@work: being a disciple for Christ in the workplace

<http://www.gospelatwork.org.uk/> - Lunchtime meetings for workers in central London (at Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, Blackfriars, Canary Wharf, Covent Garden, Ealing, Euston, Farringdon, Fleet Street, Hammersmith, Kings Cross, London Bridge, Mayfair, Moorgate, Oxford Circus, Westminster)