

Session 9 – A Real Man Excels at God's Work

1. Work is Big for Every Man

A. It can be deeply satisfying.

- You love what you do.
- You work with a great team.
- You feel your skills and capacity are being utilized with good results.

B. It can also be empty and exasperating.

- Your boss doesn't have a clue what you're capable of or even care.
- You hate your work, but you're also scared to seek out something new.
- You wonder why you're not more appreciated or noticed.
- You're succeeding, so why aren't you happy?

2. Quick Facts About Men and Work

A. Most men define themselves by what they do.

B. Men spend more time in the workplace than anywhere else.

- 60 - 65% of our time is spent at work.
- 30 - 35% of our time is spent with family and personal interests.
- 0 - 10% of our time is spent in church and community activities.

C. According to a Gallup Survey, a majority of men feel miscast in the work they do.

- 50% of all workers are not "personally engaged" in their jobs. This means they have little to no passion for what they do.
- Another 22% are "actively disengaged." Work to these men is nothing more than giving the least effort possible to get a paycheck.

D. Men today increasingly want real purpose in their work.

The good news is millennials want more than a job. They want meaning in their work. They want to make a difference!

- In many instances, the workplace has shifted to be more than the pursuit of profit and self interest.
- A growing number of companies give away a portion of what they do and produce to better the lives of others both in their community and around the world.

E. The future is setting up to be a difficult time for men in the workplace.

- By 2050, 33% of all working age men could be unemployed.
- Three reasons will be behind men losing out on the future labor market.
 - Robotics. The brawn of men will increasingly be replaced by machines.
 - Education. Women are being educated at a far higher rate than men and education is the key to jobs of the future.
 - Marriage. As marriage rates continue to fall in America, so will the number of working men. That's because marriage and working men go hand in hand.

3. Work is a Major Topic of the Bible

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

WHAT THIS PASSAGE DECLARES:

A. All work is important to God.

B. All work is working for God.

C. All work should get my best as a man.

D. All work, done rightly, will be rewarded by God.

4. How a Man Finds the Right Job

A. Know who you are and how you're wired for work.

- Look over your past and current work experiences. Ask yourself the following questions: What kinds of things bring me alive in the workplace? What specific activities do I love? With whom? Where?
- Seek out wise, objective counselors who can size you up and offer helpful feedback.

Proverbs 11:14

Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in an abundance of counselors there is victory.

- Use selective personality and aptitude testing. Feedback from these tools can be invaluable for identifying good and satisfying job fits. Some good testing possibilities are:
 - *StrengthFinder 2.0*— developed by the George Gallup Organization for discovering your job strengths. (see gallup.com)
 - *AIMS* — aptitude testing for identifying your likes and skills and matching them with careers you would be good at and enjoy. (see aimstesting.org)

B. Know who you're not and adjust away from that in your work.

- Some men spend a good portion of their working lives in a job they're not a match with or cut out for.
- It takes real courage to come to terms with who you're not and seek better career options.

C. Never say, "I'm trapped in my job." No man is trapped except in his own mind.

5. How a Man Excels at Work

A. Don't just work; work to be "really good" at something.

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings, he will not stand before obscure men.

- In any work, there is someone out there who is "The Man." He is the guy whose work is admired and sought because of his outstanding work skills.
- Since you're going to work, why not be one of the best in your field?

B. Be responsive to those above you and earn their trust.

- Few things are more exhausting to an employer than an employee who does his work grudgingly, overlooks details, makes excuses, and generally fails to follow through on his job responsibilities as asked.
- On the other hand, every employer highly values the employee who can be trusted to faithfully and exactly execute the job he has been hired to do.

Proverbs 25:13

A faithful employee is as invigorating as a cool day in the hot summertime. He refreshes the soul of his boss.

- Faithfully responding to those over you establishes your name in the workplace.

Proverbs 22:1

A good name is to be more desired than great wealth.

C. Overdeliver in your work.

Proverbs 10:4

Poor is he who works with lazy hands, but hard working hands get rich.

- The general work standard is good enough.
- The Christian work standard is excellence in serving the Lord. This is the motivation behind going beyond what's expected, doing more than asked, paying attention to the details, and overdelivering.

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men... it is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

D. Be an encourager and team-builder.

- Make it your goal to always be an encourager at work.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Encourage one another and build up one another just as you are doing.

- Your words at work can be a force for tremendous good or they can create a negative atmosphere, problems, and divisions.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for the building up of one another...

E. Keep your word.

- When applied to work, this means:
 - When you say you'll be there, you show up on time.
 - When you say you'll pay it, you pay.
 - When you make a commitment, you follow through.
 - When you say it will be done, you make sure it gets done.
- At work, your word and your reputation travel together.
- The Scripture commends the man who keeps his promise and follows through even when it is hard to do.

Psalm 15:4

He swears to his own hurt, yet he does not change.

6. A Man and His Work in Summary

A. You need right input. Wise friends, professional counselors, and objective feedback testing is critical to discovering who you are and who you're not, and what kind of work careers will best fit you.

- Don't be content to "just work."
- Know your "work fit."

B. You need to get the best education and training possible to pursue the work career that best syncs with your passions and talents. Good preparation, especially on the front end of life, always pays off in the long run.

C. You need to let the wisdom of the Bible "coach you up" in how you work.

- Work to be really good at something.
- Be responsive to those over you.
- Over-deliver.
- Be an encourager and team-builder.
- Keep your word.

D. The above will lead a man to excel at his work, enjoy it, and bless those around him.

Your Table Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about your work right now? Does it fit who you are? In what ways? If not, where is your job missing you?

2. Which of the five “excelling at work” principles that were covered in this session have prospered you in your work? Explain.

3. Which of the five “excelling at work” principles in this session do you feel the most challenged by? Why?

Your “BetterMan” Question

Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes, and then answer the following question: What possible action step could I take from this session that could make me a better man? Write your answer down in the space below.