

WORK AS WORSHIP
Don't Worship Work
Exodus 20:1-2

Are you a WORKAHOLIC? Has anyone ever CALLED YOU a workaholic? Do you know how to SHUT WORK OFF when you leave the office? It can be so hard to find BALANCE in our work life! Work can be a fulfilling and joyful TASK, but it is an AWFUL TASKMASTER! Some of you have bodies that are tired and bent and minds that are weary and worn because of the WORK that you do day after day and year after year. **But some of you are EXHAUSTED and BURNED OUT because of your PERSPECTIVE on work that causes you to TIRELESSLY TOIL at work no what matter the cost!** When work becomes an unhealthy DRIVING FOCUS of your life, then you wind up SACRIFICING your life for it. Now, there are MANY REASONS why people become workaholics. We will look at some of them today. But the truth is that NO ONE is FORCED to BECOME a workaholic. That is a CHOICE that you make. I want to help you THINK about what DEFINES a workaholic in order to see that is NEVER a WISE or HEALTHY choice.

In this series so far, we have seen that God designed work for our good, and that it is a reflection of the image of God within each of us. Because of this, God loves to BLESS us as we work hard during the days of our lives. In fact, we have seen that work can be an ACT OF WORSHIP when we learn to do it for the GLORY of GOD and the GOOD of OTHERS. God is pleased with this kind of work.

God wants you to enjoy your work and the blessings that come with it!

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 5:19 NLT

24 So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God. 25 For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? **5:19** And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life--this is indeed a gift from God.

*God grants you the WEALTH that comes from work.

*God gives you the HEALTH to do your work.

*God created the PLEASURES that come from that wealth and that health.

All of this comes from God. But God is NOT pleased when we turn work into an IDOL and begin to view it as our SOURCE of provision, power, and pleasure. God does not bless those who WORSHIP WORK. **Exodus 20:2-3 NLT**

2 "I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. 3 "You must not have any other god but me.

When you choose to be a SLAVE of your work rather than a SERVANT of the Most High God, then you have turned work into an idol. Today, I want each of us to review what the Word of God has to say about worshipping work so that we can AVOID turning it into a false god in our lives.

Fear and worry can turn work into an idol.

-You don't have to LIKE a "god" in order for it to be an idol!

[Fear and worry work as well as trust and love when it comes to idols!]

***Fear and worry take your eyes off of JESUS as your Primary Provider!**

Matthew 6:31-34 NIV

31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

-Your Father wants you to TRUST that He will PROVIDE for you!

*His promise to provide continues even when you LOSE your job!

*His FAITHFULNESS is like a FLOWING RIVER around you!

[Mention story of couple that had \$8000 put in their account!]

***Fear and worry cause you to REFUSE to SET BOUNDARIES (Ethical, Moral, or Practical) for yourself at work.**

-You WILL likely compromise your standards in order to keep your job.

*Your fear of job loss will become greater than your FEAR of GOD!

-You will be too fearful to set or ask for LIMITS in your work SCHEDULE.

-You may choose to accept a job that DISHONORS God just to have work.

[ASK: Can I truly GLORIFY GOD doing this particular job?]

Obsession over money and possessions can turn work into an idol.

***This is a sign that your TRUST is in your TREASURES, and your JOB is the "god" you serve to make sure you have PLENTY of it. Matthew 6:24 NLT**

24 "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

-Money is a CRUEL TASKMASTER! It demands more than it gives!

-You will NEVER have ENOUGH money if money is your god!

Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 NLT

10 Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! 11 The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth--except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!

***This creates a spirit that is UNWILLING to GIVE GENEROUSLY to others!**

-Your job SCHEDULE is DRIVEN by your DISCONTENT.

[In other words, you could work fewer hours and live on less money, but . . .]

-Your pennies are all SPOKEN FOR by YOUR STUFF and your DEBT.

-Your FOCUS is NOT on ETERNITY!

[You are NOT working for the KINGDOM of God but for the kingdom of self.]

-You will GO OUT just like you CAME IN! **Ecclesiastes 5:15-16 NLT**
 15 We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us. 16 And this, too, is a very serious problem. People leave this world no better off than when they came. All their hard work is for nothing--like working for the wind.

The pursuit of promotions and positions can turn work into an idol.

(Boss, President, Person in charge of pencils, etc.)

*This can happen SUBTLETY over a period of TIME.

This is a sign that your PROFESSION has become your IDENTITY and your SUCCESS at work is the SOURCE of your SIGNIFICANCE.

*Are you more concerned over WHAT you DO, or over WHO you ARE?

*What is driving your AMBITION to climb the ladder?

*You will SACRIFICE any and everything else in order to achieve this success.

*You stay EXHAUSTED and SPIRITUALLY DEPLETED from the constant chase.

VIDEO TESTIMONY: Randal and Linda Barnes

Practices that Prevent the Worship of Work:

***SABBATH REST: Deuteronomy 5:12-15 NLT**

12 "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. 13 You have six days each week for your ordinary work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys and other livestock, and any foreigners living among you. All your male and female servants must rest as you do. 15 Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, but the LORD your God brought you out with his strong hand and powerful arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to rest on the Sabbath day.

[Quote about Sabbath: P. 244 – Every Good Work, Timothy Keller]

-Rest is a REMINDER: WORK is a SUPPLY-LINE, but GOD is my SOURCE!

-Rest is RE-CREATION: INTIMACY with God and others is found in times of REST.

***INTENTIONAL COMMITMENTS**

-Make a commitment to a RHYTHM of FAITH.

-Deliberately set aside TIME for PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY that does NOT revolve around your WORK.

***GENEROSITY**

-Develop a RHYTHM of GIVING.

-LOOK for evidence of God's ONGOING FAITHFULNESS to you.

[God's faithfulness is like a RIVER that is CONSTANTLY flowing around you!]

God desires for you to find JOY in the work that you do for his glory and the good of others. Don't let the enemy (or your own heart) turn work into something that God never meant it to be!

Let's pray.