

## SESSION 2



## GOSPEL-DRIVEN WORK

# 1. Gospel Work

## A. As Christians, Jesus' work greatly impacts our work.

- Jesus' work was a perfect work.
- In what theologians call His *active obedience*, Jesus lived a perfect life, fulfilling the law of God by perfectly obeying God and doing all that God called Him to do. His *active obedience* made Jesus the only worthy substitute.

### 1 John 3:5:

“... in Him there is no sin.”

- Jesus' *active obedience* is met by what theologians call His *passive obedience*: Jesus' work on the cross. On the cross Jesus died, suffering the penalty that our sin deserved so that we could be made right with God.

### 1 Peter 3:18:

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...”

## B. Jesus' work was to live a righteous life and die a sinner's death, so that we wouldn't have to.

### 2 Corinthians 5:21:

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

- If we trust in Jesus' work, we are saved by His work, not by our work.  
“*The grounds of your justification are the perfect works of Jesus Christ. We're saved by works, but they're not our own.*” – RC Sproul

*“My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood.  
When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh may I then in Him be found.  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.”*  
– The Solid Rock

## C. There are two potentially destructive forces behind our work:

1. Idolatry—the process of over-identifying with our work.
2. Idleness—the process of under-identifying with our work.
  - These forces manifest themselves in three ways: success, failure, and boredom.
  - Absent the gospel, success at work can go to our head, filling us with pride and a false sense of security.

### Obadiah 3:

“The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’”

*“A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.” – C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity*

*“Idols of comfort and pleasure can make it impossible for a person to work hard as is necessary to have a faithful and fruitful career. Idols of power and approval, on the other hand, can lead us to overwork or to be ruthless and imbalanced in our work practices.” – Tim Keller*

- Absent the gospel, failure at work can go to our hearts, leading to frustration, discouragement, and **resignation**.
- Absent the gospel, boredom at work can make us productive at all the **wrong** things.

#### **2 Thessalonians 3:11:**

“For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.”

#### **D. Missing the gospel, our work can become our identity.**

- What we do, and how well we do it, becomes who we are. This is called the *work-as-identity syndrome*.
- The **gospel** frees us from the work-as-identity syndrome.
- The gospel reminds us that God is less concerned with what we are **doing**, and more concerned with who we are **becoming**.
- Those that have trusted in the Gospel work **from** their identity, not **for** their identity.

*“When I made writing who I was, it was warping. It was conducive to depravity, and I mean the old Calvinist kind. When good writing was my only goal, I made the quality of my work the measure of my work... I couldn’t tell whether something I wrote was good or bad because I needed it to be good to be sane.” – New York Times writer Benjamin Nugent*

*“The gospel frees us from the relentless pressure of having to prove ourselves and secure our identity through work, for we are already proven and secure.” – Tim Keller*

## **2. Gospel’s Impact On Work**

**The Gospel greatly impacts our work in three ways:**

1. We have a new boss.
2. Our work has a new bent.
3. We have new benefits.

#### **A. Trusting in King Jesus, we have a new boss.**

##### **Ephesians 1:20-21:**

“...that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power

and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”

- The Bible is clear; Jesus is **Savior** and **Lord** of our lives...

**Philippians 2:9-11:**

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**Romans 14:8-9:**

“For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.”

- This means that Jesus is the ruler, the boss, and the master of your whole life. He is not Lord of some of your life; He is Lord of all of your life, whether you acknowledge Him or not.  
*“If Jesus is not Lord of all, then He is not Lord at all.” – S. M. Zwemer*

**B. All areas of your life must come under Jesus’ lordship; this includes your work.**

- On average, you will spend **90,000** hours of your life at work [more than 1/3 of your life].
- Your work is no longer your own, for your **glory**. Your work is His work, for His **glory**. Your work has a new direction.

### 3. New Bent

**A. Because we are working for the Lord, our work has a new bent.**

- Like an employee relying on a manager to train you well for the job, you need to rely on God’s teaching [His Word] for your success.

**B. Commit your work to God, and depend on Him.**

- Part of how God wants us to work is by depending on Him for help.
- The **first** and **foremost** way we can work for the Lord, is to commit our work to Him, and depend on Him throughout the process!

**Psalms 37:5-6:**

“Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.”

- You commit your work to the Lord by...
  1. **Praying** continually.
  2. **Entrusting** your plans to Him.
  3. **Daily** seeking His guidance through His Word.
- Working in a way that honors God is not always easy for us in our human weakness. But the more we depend on God, on His Word and prayer, the better workers we become.

**C. Work with love.**

- Love leads us to be **kind** to our co-workers.
- Love helps us to be patient with others and to treat everyone with respect.
- Even things like producing a quality product and giving great customer service are an act of **love**.

**1 Corinthians 13:13:**

“... faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

**D. Work with joy on your face and peace in your heart.**

- When we work **cheerfully**, without **complaining**, we give glory to God and spread joy to those around us.

*“I just like to smile! Smiling’s my favorite.” – Buddy the Elf*

**Psalms 118:24:**

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

- Striving to be a **peacemaker** in the workplace—slow to anger, quick to listen—is a great way to work with joy on your face and peace in your heart.
- Strive to maintain agreeable **relationships** with managers, coworkers, and customers.
- What does a joyful, peaceful worker look like?
  1. Sometimes, it means keeping our opinions to ourselves and responding with kindness even when others are unkind.
  2. Sometimes, it looks like avoiding controversial topics that could lead to an argument.
  3. Sometimes, it means being flexible and pragmatic in order to reach a solution that benefits everyone involved.

**Matthew 5:9:**

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

**Romans 12:18:**

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

## **4. New Benefits**

**A. God doesn’t need any of us to do anything for Him. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient.**

- God grants us the **privilege** of joining Him in the work of building up His Kingdom. In doing so we become more like Him.

**1 Corinthians 3:9:**

“For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building.”

- As we strive to work for God, we reap certain **benefits**.

**B. Our faith increases.**

- Working for the Lord is not easy. Sooner or later, you'll experience hardships and trials.
- The trials you face are an opportunity to draw closer to God and **increase** your faith.

**1 Peter 1:6-7:**

"In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

*"Tough times don't last... but tough folks do..." – BJ Barham*

**C. We cultivate the fruit of the Spirit.**

**Galatians 5:22-23:**

"As Christians, we are to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control..."

- As we work for the Lord, the Holy Spirit works in us to exhibit the fruit of His **spirit**.

*"The fruit of the Spirit is not push, drive, climb, grasp and trample. Life is more than a climb to the top of the heap." – Richard J. Foster*

**D. We learn perseverance.**

- We are repeatedly told in the Bible that the one who endures to the end will be **saved**. (Matthew 24:13).
- Working for the Lord teaches us endurance which helps us to develop our **character** and endure to the end.

*"Every strike brings me closer to the next home run." - Babe Ruth*

*"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." - Michael Scott*

*"You, me, or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward." - Rocky Balboa*

## **Your Table Discussion Questions**

1. Which danger are you most prone to in your work: *Idolatry* or *Idleness*? Why do you think that is? Explain.
2. Tell the men at your table 2-3 ways in which Jesus' work has impacted/influenced your work.

3. Because of Jesus' work in life and death, salvation is possible for all who call upon His name. Have you experienced the benefits of Jesus' Gospel work? If so, in what ways?

### **Your “BetterMan” Reflection:**

Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes, and then answer the following question: What has been your main idol(s) concerning your work? Why is this dangerous and how does the gospel destroy your idol(s)? Write your answer in the space below!