



Wisdom Talks About

Work

Finding God's Purpose
in Our Everyday Lives

A FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

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Wisdom Talks About Work: Finding God's Purpose in Our Everyday Lives

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Lesson 1

Why is Work so Hard?

When you think about work, what is the first thing that you think of?

Do you think of work as being a good thing or a bad thing?

In today's Bible reading, we are going to learn that work is a really good thing. But, you probably already know that work can be really hard, too. Why is work good and hard at the same time? Let's find out!

Read Genesis 2:8-9 and 2:15-18

Read Genesis 2:15 again. Why did God put Adam (the first man) into the Garden of Eden?

God put Adam into the Garden of Eden to work in it and to take care of it. In other words, God created Adam to do a job - to work! The work that God gave Adam to do was good work. There were no weeds for him to pull. There were no thorns to scratch Adam's arms and legs. The sun was never too hot when Adam was working. Adam could work hard and never get tired.

Read Genesis 2:18 again. Why did God create Eve? Do you think that God created Eve to work, too? Why?

Work is a good thing because God created us to work!
But, unfortunately, that's not the end of the story.

Do you remember God's command to Adam in verses 16-17?
What was it?

Adam and Eve did not obey God's command. They disobeyed God and ate the fruit that God had told them not to eat. When Adam and Eve disobeyed, sin came into the world and changed everything.

Did you know that sin really changed work?

Read Genesis 3:17-19

What changes happened to work because of sin?

Because of sin, Adam would have to work really hard to grow food for his family to eat. Thorns and thistles would grow up in Adam's garden, making his work difficult and painful. Adam would get tired and sweaty trying to grow food.

But, even though Adam's work was now hard, God did not tell him to stop working. God created Adam to work. Sin made Adam's work hard.

What can we learn from this passage? Work is good because God made us to work. Work is hard because we are sinners living in a sin sick world.

Some Questions:

1. What kind of work do you do? (encourage your kids to identify the work that they do - jobs, chores, school. Make sure you answer the question yourself, too!)
2. Why is work good? Do you think that you would be happy if you had absolutely no work to do? Why or why not?
3. Why is work hard? What are some parts of your work that are hard?

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Lesson 2

Work: God's Path of Blessing

Do you like to eat good food? Do you enjoy having a home to live in and a bed to sleep in? Do you like it when your family has extra money to buy Christmas presents? Do you appreciate it when your family has enough money to share with other people who have needs?

These are all really good things, aren't they?
God has made a special way for us to get these things. Do you know what it is?
In the last lesson, we learned that God created Adam to work. Today, we will see some of the good things that happen when we work.

Pick two people who can read well. Choose one person to read **God's Path: Work** on the following page, and the other person to read **Man's Path: Laziness**. Then, read **Proverbs 10:1-5**, one verse at a time, stopping to hear God's Path and Man's Path contrasted from each verse.

Here's what we need to remember: Work is God's Path to bless our parents, avoid judgment, satisfy our desires, make money, and gain respect. We can't do these things unless we are willing to work hard.

Question:

Proverbs 10:2 talks about "ill gotten gains" or "treasures of wickedness" that do not bring wealth, but instead bring judgement and death. Can you think of an example of this?
(For example, a robber who steals from a bank, etc.)

God's Path: Work

1. The wise child listens to his parents and makes them glad.
2. The wise person does not run after "ill-gotten" gains. Because he is doing what is right, he does not have to fear judgment and death.
3. Because the wise person seeks God first, God supplies his needs.
4. The wise person works hard and makes money.
5. The wise person is respected because he works hard when it is time to work. He is not lazy.

Man's Path: Laziness

1. A foolish child doesn't care what his parents think.
2. The foolish person decides to get rich fast without working for it - but instead finds trouble, judgment, and death.
3. The foolish person wants good things, but he doesn't care about God. He is never content, no matter what he does.
4. The foolish person puts in the least amount of work possible and becomes poor.
5. The foolish person is lazy when it is time to work. People lose respect for him and he brings shame to his family.

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Lesson 3

Why Should I Work Hard?

Trent was so mad! His brother Josh had just reminded him that their Mom had told them to pick up their rooms.

"Who is HE to think HE can boss ME around?" Trent thought angrily. "And why does my mom even care what MY bedroom looks like? This is SO DUMB!" Trent grabbed a pile of dirty clothes off the floor and shoved them into his drawer, then slammed it shut. He threw his toys against the back wall of his closet, then slammed his closet door shut. He kicked his legos under his bed. There! He'd picked up his "dumb old room!"

Do you ever feel like Trent? Have you ever become angry when someone has asked you to work?

Paul, the writer of Colossians, gives us a big secret about our work:

God sees our work and He cares about it. When we work, we need to be working for God.

Read Colossians 3:23-24

These verses tell us to work hard, because our work is not for other people but for God.

"But, wait a minute," you may be thinking, "Aren't these verses written just for adults? Mom and Dad need to work hard, but not me. I'm just a kid."

Let's back up a bit and find out who Paul is talking to in these verses.

Read Colossians 3:18-24

Who are these verses written for? If you are a wife, raise your hand. You need to be working as to the Lord and not just to please people. If you are a husband, raise your hand. You need to be working as to the Lord, and not just to please man. If you are a child, raise your hand. You need to be working hard, knowing that God is watching your work. If you are serving an earthly master (boss, teacher, etc.), raise your hand. You need to be working hard, trying to please not just your earthly master, but God as well.

Do you remember Trent and his work to clean up his bedroom? When Trent's mom looked into Trent's room later in the day and saw his floor cleared, his dirty clothes picked up, and his toys put away, do you think that she might have been happy with his work? Why?

Do you think that God was happy with Trent's work? Why or why not?

Trent was not working for God. He was working with a bad attitude just to please the people around him. The verses we have read hold an amazing promise for us and a scary warning.

Read Colossians 3:23-25 one more time.

When we work for God, Who will reward us?

If we don't work for God, but do wrong, what will happen?

Just for fun: Imagine that, while Trent was cleaning up his room, Jesus suddenly appeared in his room. After Trent got over his shock, how do you think that he might have started cleaning his room? Do you think that Jesus' physical presence would have changed the way that Trent was working? If we truly believe that God is always with us, should that change the way that we work?

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Lesson 4 Are You Complaining? Read Colossians 3:23-24

In the last lesson, we learned that God SEES our work and CARES about it. We need to be doing our best work because, as Christians, we are working for God, not for man.

But, you may be wondering, what does working for God really look like?

Do you remember our story about Trent picking up his room? What do you think are some ways that Trent could have picked up his room "for God"?

Trent definitely could have worked harder and done a better job, couldn't he? (Remember those dirty clothes he stuffed back in his drawer? Ewww.)

Do you know what else Trent could have done to make his work "for the Lord"? He could have worked with a different attitude.

Read Colossians 3:17

What attitude does God want us to have in our work?

Now let's read the rest of our Bible passage. God is going to be telling us about some attitudes that He wants Christians to have. This list is pretty hard. But, can you imagine what the world would be like if we were all working hard with these beautiful attitudes?

Read Colossians 3:12-17

I told you these were some pretty hard attitudes to have! When someone bosses me around, I don't feel like forgiving them. I am not always kind, gentle, and patient with the people around me. And, I am not always thankful, especially when I am doing a job that I don't really like. How about you?

But, here's something really cool: Do you know why we should be thankful, even when we are doing work that we don't like to do? The reason that we should have hearts that are thankful (and kind, patient, gentle) is right in the beginning of verse 12.

Can you see it?

We can work with attitudes of humble thankfulness because God has chosen to LOVE us! He loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place for our sins. If we believe this and choose to make Jesus the Lord of our lives, we can go to heaven when we die. Now, that's something to be thankful for!

Let's go back to Trent picking up his room. What are some things that Trent could have been thankful for as he picked up? Do you think that Trent could have changed his attitude from complaining to thankfulness? What might have helped Trent to change his attitude? (Don't forget prayer! We need God's help and strength to do something as hard as changing bad attitudes!)

How are you doing in your work? Whether you are doing school work, picking up toys, washing dishes, or designing complex electrical circuits, are you doing your best work for God with a humble and thankful attitude?

If you are struggling with your attitude about work, will you spend some time in prayer today asking God to change your heart to want to serve Him with thankfulness?