



Week 1: How God Can Make Your Work More Fulfilling

Sermon Notes

I. The Fabric of Work

II. The Frustration of Work

III. Fulfillment in Work

Week 1: Discussion Guide

- 1) What is the most fulfilling work you have ever done and what made it fulfilling?
Note: Ben defined work as anything to which we give a significant portion of our time, energy, and creativity. Your work may be paid or unpaid.
- 2) If you had an opportunity to hear the sermon, what were some of your biggest take-aways?

The Fabric of Work

God has woven work into the fabric of creation. In the beginning there was work. God worked and he designed humans to work as well.

Read Genesis 1:20-31

- 3) What work does God do in this passage? How does he seem to engage in and feel about his work?
- 4) When do you find yourself saying about your work, "It's good!"
- 5) If God works and Adam and Eve work in paradise, what are some basic conclusions you can draw about work? How do your conclusions differ from common held beliefs about work?

The Frustration of Work

Work is inherently good because God does it and God designed it. But that doesn't mean work is without frustration. The world is broken and disordered by sin, and therefore work is as well. We can expect that an ideal job will still involve frustration due to sin.

Ben defined sin as: Desires and decisions that go against God's perfect design

- 6) We all sin, and therefore we all contribute to problems at work. In the past couple of weeks of work, what is a desire you had or a decision you made that went against God's perfect design? What were the negative results?

Read Genesis 3:16-19

- 7) How was Adam and Eve's work frustrated by sin?

- 8) How have you experienced the following parallels to Adam and Eve's frustration due to sin? If possible, think of specific examples.
- Frustration at work in attempts to birth a new idea, product, or service (Gen. 3:16a)
 - Frustration at work due to broken relationships and power struggles (Gen. 3:16b)
 - Frustrations at work because tasks involve toil (Gen. 3:17b)
 - Frustrations at work due to "thorns and thistles" that get in the way of productivity (Gen. 3:18a)
- 9) What are helpful ways you have been able to engage God in the midst of frustrations at work, rather than just shake your fist at them or run from them?

Fulfillment in Work

One of the ways we can find greater fulfillment in the work we are already doing is to connect our work to God's work.

We see God doing three kinds of work in the bible:

Creative Work — bringing something new into existence

Providing Work — meeting needs and sustaining creation

Redemptive Work — restoring and healing what's broken

Your everyday work likely involves all three aspects of God's work and you don't even realize it.

- 10) As individuals, do the exercise *Connecting Your Work To God's Work*, then discuss the remaining questions.
- 11) What are new connections you made between your work and God's work as the result of this exercise?
- 12) What can you do practically (and as a community!) to reinforce these connections so that you can continue to find greater significance in your work?

Week 1 Exercise: Connecting Your Work to God's Work¹

When we can connect our work to God's work, our work takes on a richer meaning and significance.

Creative Work

Creative work involves envisioning, designing, or developing, a new product, service, or art form.

Examples:

"I construct new spaces or organizations." (e.g. contractor, electrician, entrepreneur, builder)

"I help give birth to ideas, beauty, or people." (e.g. parent, artist, musician, writer, poet, research and development team)

"I create new products, methods, services." (e.g. engineer, chemist, teacher, student, designer)

"I envision roles and possibilities for people that they themselves don't yet see." (manager, trainer, coach, educator, human resources)

Creative Aspects of My Work:

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Providing Work

Providing work involves meeting people's needs through goods and services

Examples:

"I assist people in meeting their basic needs for food and shelter." (e.g. market owner, check-out clerk, realtor, social worker)

¹ Adapted from *The Gospel Centered Life at Work* by World Harvest Mission

"I provide people with the use of utilities that help them flourish." (e.g. workers in the areas of gas, electric, water, phone, garbage)

"I educate people and provide a place for community and learning." (e.g. teacher, administrator, cafe owner, parent)

"I help others pursue rest and leisure." (e.g. musician, artist, chef, coach, recess monitor, beer club organizer)

Providing Aspects of My Work:

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Redemptive Work

Redemptive work fixes, heals or restores what is damaged.

Examples:

"I clean, fix, or repair things." (e.g. mechanic, house cleaner, handyman)

"I help heal people's bodies or the environment." (e.g. doctor, chiropractor, personal trainer, scientist, activist)

"I help reconcile broken relationships." (e.g. friend, counselor, neighbor)

"I fight criminal activity and promote ethical behavior." (judge, lawyer, policeman)

Redemptive Aspects of My Work:

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