



Week 2: How God Can Give Your Work a Higher Purpose

Sermon Notes

The Purpose of Work

Gen. 1:28, Rev. 21:22-36

The purpose of work is to develop cultures that result in human flourishing and the glory of God.

I. A Christian's work is often outside the church

1 Corinthians 7:17

II. A Christian's work is characterized by love

1 Jn 4:7-12

III. A Christian's work is offered as worship

Rom. 12:1, Col. 3:23

Week 2: Discussion Guide

- 1) Take a minute to get to know what the other people in the group do for a living. What is the purpose of your work and the most important aspects of your job description?
- 2) If you had an opportunity to hear the sermon, what were some of your biggest take-aways?

The purpose of work

The purpose of work is to develop cultures that result in human flourishing and the glory of God.

Read Genesis 1:28

- 3) This verse is called the “cultural mandate.” As it relates to the development of culture, what might it mean to ‘be fruitful’, ‘multiply’, ‘fill the earth’, and ‘subdue it’? Give examples.

Read Rev. 21:10-11, 22-36

- 4) Where does creation begin and where is it headed? What are the nations to bring into the city?
- 5) What are some products or qualities of different cultures that you believe are truly glorious and honorable? (e.g. democracy and the balance of governmental power in the United States)
 - How do they contribute to human flourishing?
 - How do they reflect the values and character of God?

I. A Christian’s work is often outside the church

- 6) Imagine that every person in the occupations represented in your group suddenly quite. How would society be affected?

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17

- 7) How does this verse validate work in disciplines outside of the church?
- 8) In whatever work God assigns a person, it is important to ask, “How can I embody God’s characteristics and values in my work so that greater flourishing will result?” Think about your work place. What is needed? How could you help shape the culture there to embody important characteristics and values of God like truth, justice, grace, beauty, rest, joy, healthy families etc.?

II. A Christian's work is characterized by love

Read 1 John 4:7-12

- 9) Discuss the following questions:
- What is the primary characteristic of God?
 - How does God demonstrate this characteristic?
 - How will people in our workplace see this characteristic of God?
- 10) Based on this passage, what should every Christian add to their job description?
- 11) Do the exercise *Going Beyond Your Job Description* and then discuss it.

III. A Christian's work is offered as worship

Read Romans 12:1

- 12) How does this verse challenge our conventional understanding of what worship is?
- 13) According to this passage, what turns our work into worship?

Read Colossians 3:23-24

- 14) Some non-Christians may embody the character and values of God better than Christians due to personality, upbringing, and the fact that they were created in the image of God. So, according to this passage, what, besides the nature of our work, turns it into worship?
- 15) What are some practical ways that viewing God as your boss and doing your work for Him will help you at work and even make you a better worker? Consider issues such as persevering in mundane tasks, dealing with a difficult boss, facing injustice, etc.
- 16) Take time to pray for the work you all do. Ask God for the help you love others through your work and offer your work to him as worship.

Week 2 Exercise: Going Beyond Job Expectations¹

We all have basic requirements and expectations at our jobs. Returning customer emails within 24 hours, getting the kids to school on time, not texting during meetings, staying within budget for the good of the company . . . these are all examples of standards at work. But God calls us to a higher standard: the standard of love. Specifically, the love Jesus showed us by seeking our good all the way to the cross. One way we contribute to the flourishing of our society and the glory of God is by sacrificially serving others at work and through our work.

In the chart below describe a couple of familiar scenarios at work, preferably ones you are likely to face this week. Identify what the expectations of your job require, then describe what it would look like for you to model Christ-like love.

Work Situation	Job Expectation	Christ-like Love
Sample: A coworker on my team makes a costly mistake	Sample: I work with my coworker to fix the mistake, but I also give her the cold-shoulder and make it clear to superiors I had nothing to do with it so my reputation isn't damaged	Sample: I work with my coworker to fix the mistake, showing solidarity and compassion because I know that I am prone to sin and mistakes. Rather than blame my coworker when talking to superiors I shoulder responsibility as a team member, knowing that Christ took my sin on his shoulders. I seek to trust that my reputation is secure with Christ.

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