

# Following Jesus Requires Work Ethic

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, we began this series in Mark chapter 1, and that is where Peter, Andrew, John, and James were fishing when Jesus approaches them and says, follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. They were simply working their day jobs when Jesus approached. They were fishermen by trade, but Jesus called them out of that life, and we're told immediately they left their nets and they followed him. They walked away from their jobs. For the most part, they left their homes. Jesus was essentially calling them out of what we might consider their ordinary occupation into a much greater vocation. Now, maybe we should ask, is that true?

Is fishing for men a greater vocation, a higher calling, if you will, than fishing for fish? I believe the answer is yes. Jesus was, after all, calling these men to become apostles.

Paul said the entire church throughout history is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. He also told the church to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly because of their work. Paul tells the church to esteem pastors and ministers of the word very highly, specifically because of the work they do. He tells Timothy, let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. Last week, I talked about making disciples, and I tried to stress how important that work is. I mean, can there be anything more important than leading people to Christ for the salvation of their eternal souls to the glory of God? I don't think fishing compares with that, does it? Yes, fishing provided Peter and the others a livelihood. It probably fed a lot of people. There are many occupations that do a tremendous amount of good in this world, but fishing, of course, will not save sinners.

I don't think it's a stretch to say that Peter and the others were given a greater vocation. They had a higher calling, if you will. But what about us? If what I said was true for those first disciples, what about us? I mean, we read about these men walking away from their ordinary lives to become preachers and evangelists and evangelists and missionaries, and we may think to ourselves, what am I doing with my life?

[ 3 : 0 2 ] Or maybe occasionally we hear the testimonies of missionaries in other parts of the world today, and we think to ourselves, you know, this person left home and country for the sake of God's kingdom. They're maybe preaching the gospel in a dangerous place, risking their life, and what exactly am I doing? I'm an accountant.

I'm a barista at Starbucks. I sell insurance. I teach algebra to high school kids. I'm a stay-at-home mom. You know, I work my nine to five, and then I spend my evenings, what, watching TV, maybe some golf on Saturdays. What am I really doing with my life? Have you ever felt that way? Now, I suspect that some of us are very thankful God has not called us into the missionary life or into the ministry in some sense, but there are probably several of us who have felt just a little bit guilty about not doing more to advance the kingdom. Maybe we've thought, why would I spend every day fishing for fish when I know how important it is to fish for men? My job seems so trivial compared to the work that others are doing.

By the way, you can be doing some of this other work, ministry work, that is, and still feel that way. Soon after I was ordained for the ministry, I remember reading *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson. I don't know if you're familiar with David Wilkerson or that book, but Wilkerson was a simple country preacher who felt called to minister among the gangs and the prostitutes in New York City.

And I remember thinking to myself, reading this, what am I doing? I don't feel like I'm trusting the Lord like this guy. I'm certainly not risking my life like this guy. I'm not laboring quite like him. I'm not evangelizing the lost like him. So even someone who is actually working in the ministry may feel the same way. For all we know, Peter felt that way toward Paul, or vice versa. We don't know.

[ 5 : 16 ] Grass usually seems greener on the other side, doesn't it? So how are we supposed to feel about our occupations? Are we supposed to feel a measure of dissatisfaction, longing for something that seems more meaningful? Maybe we should quit our jobs tomorrow and head to the inner city, or maybe to a foreign country to begin missionary work?

I wouldn't necessarily advise it. First of all, let's just consider the practical implications. Someone has to keep fishing to support the work of the ministry, right? When Jesus sent out his 12 apostles in Matthew 10, he told them, acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

In other words, he told them to go without first securing some sort of financial stability. Well, obviously, they needed food and clothing, so where would they get it?

Presumably, it would be provided for them, and specifically, there would be people to support them along the way. But if everyone were involved in the work of ministry to the same degree that they were, there would be no one to provide. You see, someone has to keep fishing.

Second, the kind of calling the apostles received, or even the kind of calling today's ministers and missionaries receive, is not a calling that everyone receives. In fact, listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 7. You may even want to turn there.

[ 7 : 02 ] Now, this is a section of the Bible we typically think of as a section about marriage, because that is evidently Paul's primary concern here. But as he's addressing whether believers should remain married to unbelievers, he kind of interrupts himself to say this. This is 1 Corinthians 7, starting at verse 17. He says, only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.

This is my rule in all the churches. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.

For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise, he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price.

Do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, let him remain with God. So, Paul recognizes that people are in all kinds of positions and circumstances when they're saved.

[ 8 : 44 ] Some people are free. Some people are slaves. Some people are Jews. Some people are Gentiles. Some people are married. Some are unmarried. Some are married to an unbeliever.

And Paul says, in whatever condition each was called, let him remain with God. I think verse 17 is even stronger. He says, let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him and to which God has called him.

It's not an accident. You are where you are. It's not an accident you were saved when you were saved. Now, of course, Paul is not suggesting that you're forever stuck in your current job or position in life.

In fact, he tells the slaves among them, verse 21, if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. But what he is saying is that you don't have to make some radical change now that you're a Christian.

You don't have to get circumcised. You don't have to divorce your unbelieving spouse. You don't have to sell everything you have so you can move to Africa or Asia or the Middle East to begin missionary work.

[ 9 : 59 ] Remain where you are, he says. Let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him and to which God has called him. So what can we learn from this?

Well, first of all, we learn that people, not all people, I should say, most people are not led into a formal ministry position. In Ephesians 4, Paul says God gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

So every saint has ministry work to do, but not every saint is led into a formal ministry position. And I have to choose my words carefully because there's a sense in which we are all evangelists, we are all teachers, but we're not all in a formal role of evangelist or teacher.

And the second thing we can learn from Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 here is that we all, in fact, have a calling. But that calling doesn't necessarily require that we leave our current positions. So we might say to the young, zealous Christian who became a believer just yesterday, and as soon as tomorrow wants to set out on missionary work, we might say to that person, okay, slow down.

[ 11 : 24 ] God is not necessarily telling you to abandon your fishing nets just yet. You certainly have work to do. We all do. But you can do that work right where you are.

You see, following Jesus does not mean we have to make a dramatic change in our lives. And again, I have to be careful about how I word this because salvation necessitates a dramatic change. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. That change will take place on the inside primarily and certainly work its way out in our devotion and our obedience over time.

But if there's nothing sinful about being a salesman or a teacher or a student or a stay-at-home mom or a barista at the coffee shop, then the Lord is not necessarily calling you out of that position. Instead, he's calling you to serve him in that position. If you want to follow along, turn with me in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 6.

[ 12 : 36 ] Ephesians chapter 6. I'll read verses 5 through 9. Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6.

Bondservants. Obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ, not by the way of eye service as people pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Masters, do the same to them. And stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

At some point in the series, I knew we had to talk about our work lives, right? We had to talk about our jobs, because that is where we spend many, if not most, of our waking hours.

If we are going to follow Jesus, it stands to reason that we should know how to follow him at work. But I also want you to know that these principles related to work are true for positions that aren't necessarily paid positions.

[ 14 : 03 ] Maybe you're a stay-at-home mom, maybe you're retired. We're not merely considering how to follow Jesus in a paid occupation. No, how do we follow Jesus in whatever we do? And here's the first thing I really want to stress.

We'll come back to this in a moment, but I would love for us to stop thinking of our jobs as secular. When we use that word, we're generally trying to make a distinction between a ministry role in the church, perhaps, versus what we might call an ordinary occupation outside of the church. But unfortunately, we're also suggesting, by calling our jobs secular, we're suggesting that there is no spiritual component to what we're doing.

We're saying it's worldly. It's altogether non-religious. There's nothing sacred about it. But I hope to show you that that's not the case. Now, looking at this passage in Ephesians 6, I suppose the first thing to do is address the elephant in the text.

Clearly, Paul is not writing to professionals in the workplace. The first word of verse 5 in the Greek is *doulos*, which is translated in your Bible either into bondservant or slave.

[ 15 : 29 ] Yes, the Apostle Paul is writing here to slaves. Slavery was prominent within the first century Roman Empire. And this passage, among many others, has become a sticky point for Christians trying to defend the Bible.

I think one of the most common accusations hurled at the Bible these days is that it condones slavery. Well, to that I say, look again.

Slavery existed well before the Bible ever addressed it. It's not as though God intervened in human history and said, Thou shalt have slaves. That didn't happen.

No, human beings developed the practice of slavery, and it was God who came along and gave us rules to govern that behavior. Of course, there are different kinds of slavery as well, and that's a very important distinction to make.

Not all forms of slavery are the result of forced kidnapping. And to that, the Bible explicitly says, Whoever steals a man and sells him, or whoever is found in possession of him, shall be put to

death.

[ 16 : 43 ] Does that sound like the Bible condones slavery? So, we often hear people making accusations about the Bible that are completely inaccurate. These people are actually ignorant of what the Bible says, and they also fail to acknowledge a vital and relevant piece of history.

It wasn't the atheists who fought to end chattel slavery in Europe, in America. It was Christians. With strong, biblical convictions.

So, these accusations are shallow. They're woefully uninformed. But another point that people often make about slavery in the Bible, they will say, Maybe the Bible doesn't condone slavery, but why doesn't it direct Christians to put an end to it?

Here in Ephesians 6, for example, Paul doesn't go on a rant about the evils of slavery. He doesn't tell Christian masters to let their slaves go free. But why not?

Well, let's not forget that Paul does see freedom as the ideal. That's what he said in 1 Corinthians 7. If you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.

[ 17 : 58 ] Take advantage of it. Yes, go free. Obviously, freedom would be better than slavery. And, as you know, that's a very significant theme throughout the Bible.

But at the same time, neither Jesus nor his apostles ever engaged in any kind of cultural or political social justice.

In fact, one of the apostles was a former political zealot, but Jesus called him out of that. Now, I know this can be a very hard balance for us to find, but the reason Jesus and his apostles were not engaged in social justice movements is because they had more important things to do.

Paul says, set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth. Christ was more concerned about redeeming slaves of sin than slaves of human masters.

But see, that's the challenge for us, because we should care about people, especially oppressed people. But at the same time, there are more important things than transforming society.

[ 19 : 13 ] So, Paul's primary mission is to win people to Christ. We talked about this last week, which is undeniably more important than temporal freedom in this life.

Now, I have no doubt that Paul would have loved to see Rome become a thoroughly Christian nation and abolish all slavery, but that's not the world in which he lived.

And as a pilgrim, merely passing through this fading world, he went about the business of preaching the gospel and leading people to eternal life, rather than taking up the mantle of a social cause that would have likely impeded his much more important mission.

I need to move on. I'm not really here to talk about slavery, but this has become very relevant in our age. So, let me add one more thing. Jesus died. He suffered and died for the mission of saving souls.

Most of the apostles were beaten and killed. Paul was imprisoned more than once and executed. These men who show us and teach us how to live, they didn't reside themselves up in ivory towers, far removed from all trials of this life.

[ 20 : 30 ] If Paul, for instance, if he seems callous in the way that he speaks about slavery because he treats it as such an ordinary thing, well, let's not forget who Paul is. Paul subjected himself to violent beatings on multiple occasions, and he eventually died as a prisoner for the sake of the gospel.

He may not have been a slave, but he speaks as one who suffered greatly for the cause of Christ. He's not riding from an ivory tower. He's not telling slaves how to be good slaves while he sips his champagne and, you know, eats caviar.

He understands that we all live in a broken world. And the point is, only Christ can redeem this place. So, preaching Christ is the priority.

God willing, Christians can have an influence in matters of social justice and society and culture and all of that, but that simply can't be our priority. Tim Chester, author of a book called Total Church, says, if we do not keep people's eternal plight in mind, then immediate needs will force their way to the top of our agenda, and we will betray the gospel and the people we profess to love.

The most loving thing we can do for the poor is to proclaim the good news of eternal salvation through Christ. Now, I probably spent too much time on that, so let's move on.

[ 22 : 04 ] I think before all else, any discussion about work needs to begin with a recognition that work is a good thing. It's not a punishment.

It's not the result of man's fall into sin. It is a blessing. It's a gift. God gave us work before sin ever entered the world. On the sixth day of creation, he created Adam, and Genesis 2 says the Lord God took the man, put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Now, here's where we can get confused, because we all know that work can be very hard. It can be very stressful. For some of us, it's physically demanding.

For others, it's mentally demanding. For stay-at-home moms, it's both. God bless you, mothers. I pray for you.

But if work is a precursor blessing, then why is it so hard? Well, that's the consequence of sin. Once Adam sinned against God, God said, Cursed is the ground because of you.

[ 23 : 11 ] In pain, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles, it shall bring forth for you. And you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread.

From this day forward, God says, life will not be easy for you, Adam. It will not be easy for your descendants. Your work will be hard. It will be stressful. It will be demanding.

It will still be good. It will still be rewarding. But it will be hard. Andrew Randall says, The result is a strange mixture of great fulfillment and great frustration.

There are still traces of the goodness of work's original design, but it has been badly spoiled and no longer perfectly fulfills the purposes which God intended for it.

So work began as a good and perfectly satisfying thing. Then sin entered and made it very difficult. But of course, we're talking about what it means to follow Jesus, specifically in the workplace.

[ 24 : 16 ] So how do Jesus and the gospel shape our perspective and shape our approach to work? I'll give you four points to consider.

First, the gospel shows us that work is not everything. Work is not everything. I've mentioned before that I'm a member of the Rotary Club in Elkhart, and we meet for lunch once a week.

And inevitably, there's a lot of people in this club, and I'm introduced to people I've never met.

Seems like every week. And the typical introduction goes something like this. Hi, I'm Jeremy.

I'm chaplain and pre-need advisor at Billings Funeral Home. You know, I tell them my name, my occupation. But recently, I thought I'd try something a little different. So I was introduced to this gentleman, and he asked who I was, and I said, I'm Jeremy.

I'm a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. And unsurprisingly, this gentleman was taken a little aback.

He didn't know quite what to say at first. So he finally said, oh, well, that's good.

[ 25 : 23 ] But he couldn't help himself. He had to ask, and what do you do? I said the gospel shows us that work is not everything.

And it shows us this in a couple of ways. Number one, it shows us that this world, including our occupations, is transient.

It's temporary. It can't last. Eventually, Christ is coming to make all things new. And number two, it shows us, and I mean specifically believers united to Christ, we are much more than our occupations.

In fact, our occupations cease when we leave this world to be with the Lord. We won't cease to be the redeemed people of God. But our jobs will cease.

I won't be a chaplain any longer. I'll be thankful for it. So why do we talk about ourselves as though our occupations are the sum total of who we are?

[ 26 : 27 ] Our jobs certainly matter, but we are more than our jobs. Furthermore, why are we so often tempted to make idols of our jobs? A good work ethic is great, and we'll talk about that, but our jobs are not the most important things.

And the gospel frees us from that way of thinking. Second, the gospel shows us that our work is not meaningless.

You see, we want to avoid both extremes. We don't want to make work everything, and we don't want to treat it as utterly futile.

Our work matters. The very first command of the Bible is found in Genesis 1. It says, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over it.

This is all part of working and keeping the garden, you see. This is God giving the earth to humanity to be faithful stewards of it. And by fulfilling this command, we are doing meaningful work.

[ 27 : 35 ] We are using God's creation to further create. We are supplying our needs. We are making ways for ourselves not only to survive, but to thrive.

And this is all to God's glory, not to mention our good. Third, the gospel shows us that work is not or should not be self-serving.

It reorients the way we think about work and the way we do our work. Consider what Paul says here in Ephesians 6. Bond servants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ.

Not by the way of eye service as people pleasers, but as bond servants of Christ. Doing the will of God from the heart. Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.

Paul tells slaves that they should do their work sincerely as though they are working for Christ himself. And he essentially says the same to masters. Masters, do the same to them.

[ 28 : 43 ] Do your work sincerely. Don't do it for attention. Certainly don't pretend to do it. Do it sincerely with good will.

Following Christ is always a life of humble service, right? So, of course, we're expected to live that way at work, where we spend so much of our waking time.

And this brings up a great point. You see, we often have a bad habit of compartmentalizing our discipleship. We have the Christian religious areas of our lives, right?

Then we have the secular parts of our lives. But that's not the way it's supposed to be. If we're called to be honest, we're called to be honest everywhere.

If we're called to do good for others, we're called to do good everywhere. If we're called to serve, we're called to serve everywhere. You don't wake up on Sunday morning a Christian and then wake up on Monday morning something else.

[ 29 : 50 ] You see what I mean? More to the point, Paul says we are to treat our jobs as though we are working for the Lord Himself. Now, think about the implications of that.

Think about all of those times we rolled our eyes or we grumbled at the boss. Think about those times we've been late to work or we called off sick when we really weren't sick.

Think about all of those times we slacked off when we should have been working. Those times we walked around the office on Monday morning all mopey like Eeyore. Those times that we sat around gossiping about our colleagues and on and on it goes.

I could go on, but you get the idea that the Gospel changes our perspective on work. Believe it or not, we are not primarily working for ourselves.

In fact, we are not primarily working for our paychecks. I don't know whether Paul is writing here to paid servants or unpaid servants. I think it's the latter, but if they are Christians, that's a moot point.

[ 30 : 59 ] It doesn't matter. What may seem like a purely secular obligation to an earthly master is actually, according to Paul, a spiritual obligation to God Himself.

And that leads me to the fourth and final point. The Gospel shows us that work is for the glory of God. This is why we do it.

Again, Paul says, actually, let me read the parallel passage in Colossians 3. Colossians 3.23 says, Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. Now, to be clear, this is not figurative language. This is not Paul saying, well, when you work heartily for your employer, it's kind of like working for the Lord.

It's not the same, but you might as well think of it that way. No, he says very plainly, you are serving the Lord Christ. There's nothing figurative about this.

[ 32 : 19 ] If we want to gauge how well we are serving the Lord, we can judge ourselves in part by how well we are serving our employers or doing the jobs that are required of us.

Andrew Randall says, Christian discipleship is about following Jesus every day, everywhere, in everything. That means that our work will always be a central part of our Christian life and never separate it off as if God doesn't reign there.

You know, sometimes we make reference to the Protestant work ethic. This is one of those precious gifts that the Reformation gave to us that we don't often think about.

There was a sociologist back in the early 20th century by the name of Max Weber, and he was probably the first to really identify and articulate this phenomenon that emerged from the Reformation.

He published a little book called *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. And this was back in 1904, wherein he talks about a very robust and productive work ethic coming out of the Reformation.

[ 33 : 40 ] In fact, he goes as far as to credit the Reformers with the rise of capitalism. Now, Weber gets a number of things wrong as he analyzes what happened during the Reformation.

He seems to think the Reformers were motivated to do good works in all areas of life to, I don't know, improve their standing before God. That seems to be the sense he got.

But obviously, he did not understand their theology at all. That's precisely the kind of thing they were protesting against. But he was right about the Reformers' beliefs regarding vocation.

In medieval Catholicism, very few people were believed to have a true vocation. That is, a position they were called into by God. Political rulers qualified, popes and priests qualified, but according to tradition, your average person working a nine-to-five job did not have a true calling.

They had occupations, not vocations. The Reformers, on the other hand, believed everyone had a vocation. In fact, they believed everyone had multiple vocations.

[ 34 : 54 ] If you're married, that's a vocation. That's a calling. If you're a parent, that's a vocation. If you have a job, it doesn't matter what job that is. You've been called into that work.

You have cultural vocations as a citizen of a particular city or nation. You have spiritual callings in the church. In short, no one escapes having a calling, having a vocation of some kind.

And isn't that what Paul said? Let each person lead the life the Lord has assigned to him and to which God has called him. As I argued in the beginning, there's a sense in which some people may have a higher calling, a calling that is distinctly kingdom-oriented, if you will.

But everyone, everyone has a calling. Here's what one author says about it. I believe I originally copied this years ago from an issue of Table Talk magazine, but he says, the doctrine of vocation charges our everyday lives and our mundane activities with spiritual significance.

And it is indeed a powerful motivator to perform them with excellence. But there is another dimension to vocation, one that is often left out. Yes, we fulfill our callings to the glory of God, but how exactly do we glorify God?

[ 36 : 20 ] That is to say, how does God command us to glorify Him? And that's precisely what we have in Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3. Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that the Lord will, that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. Or, as Paul says in Ephesians, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye service as people pleasers, but as bond servants or slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man.

Obey your earthly masters, be sincere, don't be people pleasers, do the will of God from the heart, serve, and do it all with good will. Work heartily, he says, in your so-called secular jobs.

And that's how we glorify God in our work. And that's what the reformers taught, which led to very productive, thriving communities of people.

I mean, John Calvin's Geneva was a bright spot of prosperity in a dark, impoverished world. You see, the medieval church taught that poverty was essentially a virtue.

[ 37 : 47 ] Jesus was poor, the apostles were poor, poverty is good, poverty is godly. And as a consequence, work ethic, none.

It was lost. People didn't see themselves as called by God, they were merely working secular jobs that didn't have any meaning or any kind of spiritual significance.

Plus, they thought it was more godly to be poor, so what incentive was there to work for the glory of God in their day jobs. The reformers, however, they came along, they opened up the scriptures, they read Ephesians 6, they read Colossians 3, and they said, yes, you can glorify God in poverty, but God does not mandate that you be poor.

He doesn't mandate that you be rich either, but He does mandate that we recognize our divine calling and do our so-called secular work as though we are working for Him.

And this teaching, this thing we call the Protestant work ethic, produced prosperity wherever it spread. Now, to be clear, gaining more prosperity, gaining more wealth, that's not our goal.

[ 38 : 59 ] Let me rephrase that. That's not our primary goal. But it is a goal. This is what Paul says in Ephesians 4, 28. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he might have something to share with someone in need.

We don't strive to enrich ourselves, but we do strive for more wealth whenever possible, so that we have more resources to help others, to support the work of the ministry, to help those without food and clothing and so on.

And this takes us all the way back to what I was saying in the beginning. We are not all called to be professional fishers of men. You know, most of us are called into other roles.

We've got our nets to drag day after day after day, but that should not make you feel dissatisfied. you have as much of a calling as anyone else.

Furthermore, pastors and evangelists and missionaries, they can't do their work without our work. They will always need help.

[ 40 : 20 ] They will always need support. So I say rejoice and be thankful. Tomorrow morning when you get up, that alarm goes off and you climb out of bed to go to that work that you may not love.

I say rejoice and be thankful. And whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Let's pray.

Heavenly and gracious Father, we recognize that life in this world can be very difficult. It can be very challenging. It can be very hard.

It can be very stressful the day in and day out of what we call the daily grind. It certainly leaves us depleted in many respects, but I pray we all recognize that there is satisfaction to be found in our labors.

I pray that we recognize that we do have a divine calling to serve you in whatever we do and to glorify you in whatever we do.

[ 41 : 26 ] May you re-energize us. may you shape our perspectives so that when we get up tomorrow morning and we go back to work, we'll feel good about it and we'll seek to honor you in all that we do.

And Lord, may we find joy and satisfaction in that work as we work as though we are laboring for you. but also, Lord, I pray that you would give us opportunities even in the workplace to be fishers of men.

They're not mutually exclusive. Sometimes we have opportunities to make disciples even though that's not our professional role, Lord. And I pray that you would open up those opportunities, many of those opportunities.

Give us wisdom, give us words to speak. We thank you, Lord, and we pray that you would bless our worship that is to come after this Sunday school. May we glorify you.

May we be edified. May it all be done in your name. Amen.