



Week 1 – Reimagining Work

“All human work is not merely a job but a *calling*. Our work can be a calling only if it is reimagined as a mission of service to something beyond merely our own interests...thinking of work mainly as a means of self-fulfillment and self-realization slowly crushes a person and undermines society itself.” *Tim Keller – Every Good Endeavor*

1. Here are some questions about work we hope to answer during this study:
 - What is God’s original purpose for work?
 - Why does work so easily frustrate us?
 - How does the Gospel restore God’s intended purposes for work?
2. Work is a basic human need, but it is often a source of **frustration** for us. That frustration is rooted in a worldview disconnected from God’s truth about the purpose of life.
3. Our modern culture gives us a **confusing** vision for the purpose of work. It tells us:
 - Work is our identity
 - Work is our security
 - Work is our escape
 - Work is a necessary evil
 - Work is harmful
 - Work never ends
4. We need to replace the culture’s self-centered vision for work with God’s **other-centered** vision for work – to glorify him and to serve others. Only God’s design for work will truly **satisfy** us.
5. We are created in the **image** of our God who works. Throughout the Bible God demonstrates that work is **good** because he is always at work himself. In God’s work, we see that he:
 - Plans
 - Makes things/accomplishes his goals
 - Preserves what he has made/accomplished.

And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. Genesis 2:2

The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. Exodus 32:16

“As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand...” Isaiah 14:24

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” Acts 2:22-24

6. So, we must begin to shift our thinking about work. It is not a **necessary evil** that we do until we no longer have to work (because we become wealthy or too old). It also not disconnected from our faith. It is at the very center of what it means to bear the image of God.



Small Group Questions

1. Take some time to share with the group about your work. How long have you been in your current occupation? What do you find most enjoyable about it? The most challenging?
2. God made us to work, so it is a basic human need. Share about a time when this basic need was not being met (maybe because of unemployment or because you were in a job that you did not enjoy). How did that season affect you?
3. Our God affirms the value of work by being a worker himself. Do you typically think of God as a “worker”? Why or why not? How is this an encouragement to you in your work?
4. God “works” in his planning, in accomplishing his plans, and in maintaining what he accomplishes. In what ways does your work display God’s image by planning, accomplishing and maintaining your work?
5. How do you see work? As a necessary evil that you hope to escape from through wealth or retirement or as essential to being made in the image of God?

Homework

Our desire is for God to use this study to reshape how you think about your work. Let’s take the general principles we discuss each week and work them into our lives. So, over the next week, spend time reflecting on your calling. Remember, a calling is more than your job. (A job is simply a means of being paid to live out your calling.) We may have several jobs during our career, but calling tends to remain consistent over time (although it is possible for a calling to change as well). Write out a statement that describes your calling. (It may take a couple of sentences.) Your statement should include what work you enjoy doing and why, how that work benefits others, and how you bear the image of God in the doing of your work.

Don’t be discouraged if you are not yet clear about your calling. Many aren’t! Acknowledging that is a great place to begin.