

The Good Life – Work
Discussion Notes
July 13, 2014

Last Sunday Doug spoke on “work”; the first topic in our series called the Good Life.

Statistics Canada reports in 2012 that out of all of their time – 10% was spent on paid work. That was a 1.3% increase since 1976. Bottom line is we spend a lot of time working.

Some may think humanity’s need to work began after the fall as part of mankind’s punishment (Genesis 3:17-19), however “work” was a part of creation before the fall and in fact creation came about through God’s own work. (Gen 2:1-3) Because we are created in His image then, it makes sense that we too have been created to work – it is a part of who we are and it is important to us accomplish it well. In fact Adam and Eve were both assigned work to care for the paradise God gave them to live in – well before they ever ate the fruit. (Gen 2:15)

Knowing work is a part of God’s design and that we work for a significant portion of our lives, it is good for us to look more deeply into our “assignment” and determine our view through the lens of our faith. In other words, see how our everyday work life is affected by our faith in Christ.

Doug provided 5 points of work for us to consider. He said these “Good Life” points came from many work related discussions he has had over the years in his capacity as a pastor.

The Big Purpose of Work – Proverbs 16:3

Just as the planet’s first inhabitants were given custodial responsibilities for their world – so too have we been given a responsibility to work in our world and have a positive influence upon it. We should not look at our work as independent of God or at any point of little or no consequence to the culture in which we live. Our work (no matter what it is) is important and particularly so as it is a reflection of the One whose image we carry.

Working Well - Matthew 5:16

No wonder God has given us work and more specifically the opportunity to work with others. It is here we choose to work it out well, to be a people of the deepest integrity, to live more mindful of others than ourselves, to find opportunities to encourage and call on, to recognize that these 8 hours ahead of us are about much more than a paycheck. Christians should be the best workers on the planet. The highest in integrity and effectiveness. Jesus comes to work with us.

Working in Balance – Hebrews 4:10

Of course there is always the need for balance. Working it out well also means understanding the place work has in the strata of our own lives. If anyone

understands balance it is God and if any culture has a problem with the balance of work it is ours. While we are built for work and we stand prepared to go above and beyond, we were never meant to be consumed by it. Learning to live the good life – means finding the wherewithal to redeem what has been lost in your workaholic world and set the priorities back in place.

Unhappy work – 1 Corinthians 15:58

If you are unhappy at work – the easy answer is to quit and find a new job. But is good to ask: have I done everything I can to make this work? Could it be that Jesus has me in this workplace for a reason? If after answering those questions – there is still unhappiness it may be time to move on. Find a new placement that can utilize your gifts, your talents and once that allows you to make the world of others better.

Life Learning at Work – 1 Peter 4:10-11

Of course when we work we learn – or maybe that's the other way around when we learn we work. Either way, one of the greatest benefits of our work is learning. It's great to learn about making widgets or developing spreadsheets, but the most important learning is about ourselves. Our work is one of the best places to discover and use the gifts God has given us – and they don't have to be directly related to your work. The gift of encouragement works as well at Home Depot as it does flying as an attendant with Air Canada. The gift discernment can find its place just as easily at a boardroom table as it can in a hospital room.

Questions to consider:

1. Do you see your work as somehow independent of God and of little importance to the transformation of our culture? How does being formed in the image of God change that thinking?
2. How important is “working well” in your life? Do you go above and beyond? Do your co-workers see the heart of Jesus in you?
3. Is your work in balance with the rest of your life? In the importance does it replace God or your family? Do you need to make changes in the strata of your life?
4. If you are unhappy at work – are you doing something to change it? Do you sense God calling you to stay or move on? What is His “best” purpose for you?
5. Do you exercise your spiritual gifts at work?