

MONDAY: Work with Purpose

When you think about life as an adult, what type of jobs do you think best fit your skills and what you enjoy doing?

Do you like the idea of having a company to work for or of going into business for yourself? Please explain.

Take a look at Genesis 1:15. What work did God give humans to do in the garden?

Work came before Adam and Eve chose to sin and before they experienced the consequences of thorns and trouble in their work. Work itself is not a curse. Work is a gift from God. Having a job that is interesting, that takes ongoing learning, and that we can do for God’s glory and for the good of others is a big part of what gives our lives purpose.

Why do you think people would rather not work sometimes? What are reasons you sometimes do not want to work?

TUESDAY: The Gift of Work

God has given all humans the great gift of work. What does Ephesians 2:10 tell us God prepared a long time ago for us to do?

Based on that verse, do you think the work you do now and the work you do later in your life matter to God? Please explain.

We can learn a great deal about work from Proverbs. Take a look at Proverbs 6:6–8. What can we learn about work from ants?

Take a look at Proverbs 6:9–11. In your own words, what advice are these verses giving to someone who is lazy?

In talking about Proverbs 6:9–11, Timothy and Kathy Keller write, “The wise are self-starters. . . . They are not impulsive. . . . In contrast the [lazy person] makes constant excuses for apparently small lapses (*a little . . . a little . . . a little*) but then is surprised when [he ends up with only a little money]. ‘[A lazy person] deceives himself by the smallness of his surrenders. So, by inches and minutes, his opportunity slips away.’ . . . Is there any area of your life that is ‘slipping away’ because you are not getting to work on it?”¹

¹ Timothy and Kathy Keller, *God’s Wisdom for Navigating Life* (New York: Viking, 2017), 12

WEDNESDAY: Understanding Work

Yesterday we looked at advice given to people who are not working hard. We ended with this question from Timothy and Kathy Keller: “Is there any area of your life that is ‘slipping away’ because you are not getting to work on it?” How would you answer this question?

When we started discussing work on Monday, we went all the way back to the work God gave humans to do in the garden. There was actually work going on before that. Genesis 1:1 tells us, “In the beginning God created.” The first thing we see God doing is making things. He is a maker God who made us to also make things. What things do you like to make?

In Proverbs 8 we find out that Wisdom was there when God created the World. This Wisdom is not just a concept, but a person: Jesus, the wisdom of God. Read Proverbs 8:27–29. What do you notice about the work going on in these verses?

Read John 5:17. What does Jesus say that God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) are doing?

THURSDAY: Wisdom in Work

Yesterday we discussed how God and Jesus were at work in Creation and how they continue their work to this day. We are made in the image of God. God is a worker. Logically, then, we are made to be workers. What is challenging for you about the work you have to do at school and at home?

How would those around you describe the way you work and your attitude towards work?

There are two dangers regarding work:

1. We work hard to gain the approval of others.
2. We slack off because we want the end result but don't want to do the hard work.

Jesus knew how to be the right kind of worker. He did His work to honor His Father, not to seek honor for himself. On the cross Jesus said, "It is finished." He completed the work God gave Him to do. If Jesus had not done His work, we would not have a way to connect with God.

Which one of the two dangers listed above regarding work is more of a danger to you? Please explain.

Read Proverbs 10:4. What does this verse tell us about work?

Color this in: **Proverbs are not Promises!** Proverbs gives us truth we can observe, but Proverbs is not promising that if we work hard we will always have wealth.

FRIDAY: Review

Read Proverbs 10:4–5.

Even if you don't have fields or trees that produce food you have to gather, you can imagine what this verse is talking about. If it is a child's job to pick apples from a tree and the child doesn't pick them when the apples are ripe (at harvest time), the apples are going to fall off and rot. The family will not be able to have apples to eat.

You've probably seen a connection between those who don't work and those who don't get the rewards of hard work. How have you seen this connection in school? in sports? on the job? Please explain.

There is not always a connection between hard work and good results. If you struggle in learning, you may know what it is like to work very hard and never see good grades. Take a look at the good news in Proverbs 14:23. Write out the line that uses the word *all*.

If you are working hard in your studies, you may not see a good grade, but the work you are putting in is profitable. It is building your character and helping you learn to do hard things even when you don't see the payoff in your grades.

Proverbs 10:22 is quite different. In your own words, what is the message of this verse?

The last part of verse 22 in the New Living Translation says, "He adds no sorrow with it." The normal path to riches is hard work but the riches and the ability to do hard work come from the Lord. It is only the Lord who can give us the ability to enjoy riches.

What have you learned about work this week?
