

SESSION 4



THE PRIVILEGE OF WORK

1. Work Is a Privilege Because Work Is God-Ordained

A. All well-done work that serves the good of humanity pleases God.

“All work done well and for God’s glory is Christian work.” - Dorothy Sayers

“God doesn’t need your good works, but your neighbor does...” - Martin Luther

- All work, even the most menial tasks, has great dignity.
*“The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is.”
- Hugh Latimer*

*“There is no work, however vile or sordid, that does not glisten before God.”
- John Calvin*

B. The Reformation of the 16th Century sought to tear down the sacred/secular divide.

- The sacred/secular divide makes a distinction between the spiritual parts of our lives (e.g., praying, fasting, Bible reading, going to church) and the rest of our lives (e.g., work, chores, rest, fun, etc...).
- Too many of us have bought into the idea of compartmentalization—we disconnect our faith from our work.

Self Evaluation:

- Do you believe that Sunday is more significant than Monday through Saturday?
- Do you think the only work worth doing happens in a church or ministry setting?
- Do you see a contrast in your life between the things you do for God and the things you do everywhere else?
- Answering yes to any of these questions likely means you’ve bought into the sacred/secular divide.

*“What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. We should accustom ourselves to think of our position and work as sacred and well-pleasing to God, not on account of the position and work, but on account of the word and faith from which the obedience and the work flow.”
- Martin Luther*

C. In our work, we are God’s managers, sustaining and carrying out His plan for the world.

Ephesians 2:10:

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

*“Work is a blessing. God has so arranged the world that work is necessary, and He gives us hands and strength to do it. The enjoyment of leisure would be nothing if we had only leisure. It is the joy of work well done that enables us to enjoy rest, just as it is the experiences of hunger and thirst that make food and drink such pleasures.”
- Elisabeth Elliot*

- The garden needed someone to work it. You are that “someone.”

2. All Good Work Is Meaningful...

A. Meaningful work is something we all want.

- Research has shown meaningfulness to be more important than any other aspect of work, including pay, opportunities for promotion, and working conditions.
- Meaningful work can be highly motivational, leading to improved performance, commitment, and satisfaction.
"Deprived of meaningful work, men and women lose their reason for existence; they go stark, raving mad." - Fyodor Dostoevsky
- How do we find meaning in our work?

B. Work is meaningful because God says it is.

- God says our work is important, and God desires our best in all of life, that we would present everything to Him in order to serve Him.
- In Colossians 3:23 Paul says, *"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men..."*
- When we work we are serving the Lord. Because we are serving the Lord, our work has value—it doesn't need some other means outside itself. God's Word gives our work value.

C. Our work is meaningful because we are to offer it to the Lord.

- All work is holy work that is offered to the Lord.
- Whether you are running a business or leading a mega-church, you are to honor God in what you do.
- It's not the job itself that is holy; it is offering it to God as service that makes it holy.

3. All Good Work Is for the Benefit of God's Creation

A. God created and uses your work to sustain His creation and participate in His purposes.

- We were designed to participate in God's work of developing, maintaining, and enhancing our culture and communities.
- Our work is to benefit the society in which we live and work.
"The business of business is to serve the world." - Jeff VanDuzer

B. God also calls us to be creative.

- In our lives and work, we are called to use our gifts and create new things to enhance others' lives.
- Made in God's image, we use our creativity—our gifts and abilities—to develop the potential of God's creation.
- God will not discard creation; he will restore it. Al Wolters writes, *"God does not make junk, and he does not junk what he has made."*
- God will use you and your work as a means of life change and community restoration.
"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet..." - Frederick Buechner

C. Many in the church today have lost influence in the world because they've lost interest in the world that God created.

- As Christians we should not only be interested in Christianity. We should be interested in everything!

"As image-bearer of God, man possesses the possibility both to create something beautiful and to delight in it. ... The world of sounds, the world of forms, the world of tints, and the world of poetic ideas, can have no other source than God; and it is our privilege as bearers of his image, to have a perception of this beautiful world, artistically to reproduce, and humanly to enjoy it." - Abraham Kuyper; Calvinism, 142, 156-157

- God gives us all creative gifts, far beyond what you normally think of as creative: painting, sculpture, singing, drawing, writing, music, dance, design, photography, and so on.
- All human endeavor involves creative gifts and abilities, from pouring concrete to performing open heart surgery; from the simple setting of the dinner table to the building of a downtown skyscraper.

D. Every person created in the image of God is a creative person. Anytime you apply the knowledge, ability, and skill that God has given you, you are being creative.

"Passing a construction site, a pedestrian asked three bricklayers what they were doing. The first said that he was earning a living to feed and clothe his family. The second said, 'I'm throwing these bricks together to build a wall.' The third responded, 'I am helping create a cathedral for the glory and worship of God.'"

- What a difference your perspective makes in giving meaning to your work!

Your Table Discussion Questions

1. The sacred/secular divide is a real thing. How has this divide affected the way you look at your work? How will learning that *all good work is holy* affect your work moving forward? Explain.
2. What is meaningful work? What makes work meaningful? Do you find meaning in your work? Why or why not?
3. It was said, "*God will use you and your work as a means of life change and community restoration.*" How is God using you and your work to impact your community? Explain.

Your "BetterMan" Reflection:

Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes, and then answer the following question: Where have you seen the secular/sacred divide play out in your work? In your life? What steps can you take to break down those barriers? Write your answers in the space below!