LIVING THE GOOD LIFE: Work as Worship

August 5th

Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: **Genesis 2:15, 20**

REFLECT: What jobs did God give Adam? nWhat thoughts do you have when you hear that the majority of our adult lives will be spent at work? How has your relationship with Jesus affected you at work?

PRACTICE: When your struggling with a project or with co-workers at work today, stop and ask God for insight. When we depend on him for help we worship our all-knowing God.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Romans 12:1-2** and read <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/worship-in-the-workplace>

REFLECT: How does your mind need transformed regarding how you think about your work?

PRACTICE: Thank God for your job and praise Him for the opportunity to work and worship Him through your work.

Day 2-

READ: **Genesis 11:4** and **Galatians 2:20**

REFLECT: If you’re working to make a name for yourself you will find that work will enslave you. How have you seen this to be true?

PRACTICE: Do your best at work today with the desire to reflect the creativity and care of our God who works in our life and in creation.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “Work as Worship” an article from WorkLife.org- <http://worklife.org/work-as-worship#.W1nZRtJKiJB>

REFLECT: Erick Liddell in Chariots of Fire said, “when I run, I feel God’s pleasure.” Think about how great it is to know God is pleased as you go about your day in worship of Him.

PRACTICE: Thank God for the abilities he has given you to do your job.

Day 3-

READ: **Exodus 31:1-6**

REFLECT: Where did their skill come from and what sort of abilities were given? The Christian approach to work is that all work has dignity and all work has value. Think about some jobs and chores you have done in your life and how this way of thinking would have changed how you approached them.

PRACTICE: Think of one way you can approach your job today so that you specifically contribute to God’s mission in the world.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “Your Work Matters to God” from Bible.org- <https://bible.org/article/your-work-matters-god>

REFLECT: List some of the faulty views you may have had about your work in the past.

PRACTICE: When you finish a task at work today thank God for leading you through it.

Day 4-

READ: **Colossians 3:23**

REFLECT: Who are we working for? When you do your job you are not just working for a paycheck or company but for the Lord. How does that affect the way you view your job? Does it make things easier, harder, or just different?

PRACTICE: Do the people in your life know that you are working for the Lord? In what ways can your attitude toward work reflect your desire to work for God?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “Work With Your Hands Not With Your Worship” from DesiringGod.org- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/work-with-your-hands-not-with-your-worship>

REFLECT: Review the three ways that the article says we may find ourselves worshipping our work and examine your thoughts to see which one you are most likely to struggle with.

PRACTICE: Use some of your pay-check to bless others in ways you don’t normally do.

Day 5-

READ: **Read Ecclesiastes 2:24, 3:12-13, 5:18**

REFLECT: Scripture rebukes idleness and sloth and affirms that work has genuine value. Reflect on your work week to examine how diligent you have been at work.

PRACTICE: Confess to God those areas and seek his guidance and strength to make changes.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: “All of Life As Worship” from DesiringGod.org- <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/all-of-life-as-worship>

REFLECT: Think of ways you cherish God in his works and ways.

PRACTICE: Pray this prayer, “Lord take me, body and soul, and make me the instrument of your glory in the world.”

LIVING THE GOOD LIFE: Faith on Monday

August 12

Reading Plan

Day 1-

READ: **John 15:1-5**

REFLECT: Jesus is THE true vine. According to John 15:5 why is it so important to abide (continue in relationship) with Him? What does Jesus mean when He says, “apart from me you can do nothing?”

PRACTICE: List some ways you TRY to do good apart from Jesus, then pray and ask Him to show you how to depend completely on Him to produce fruit in you.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: *“A soul filled with large thoughts of the Vine will be a strong branch, and will abide confidently in Him. Be much occupied with Jesus, and believe much in Him, as the True Vine.”*
― [Andrew Murray](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/13326.Andrew_Murray), [Abide in Christ](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2560998)

REFLECT: Meditate on the unique qualities of Jesus and thank Him for being your true vine.

PRACTICE: Watch this short YouTube video from Francis Chan about what it means to abide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ea8yYulD2U>

Day 2-

READ: **John 15:6-11**

REFLECT: What are the negative consequences if you don’t abide in Jesus? What are the amazing positive consequences when you do abide in Jesus?

PRACTICE: Take some time to think about how you can make abiding in Jesus your regular practice. Decide on one thing you can do this week to put you in the right environment to grow closer to Him, then pray and ask Jesus to do that good thing in you.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **John 15:8, Matthew 5:16, Isaiah 61:3**

REFLECT: How does our fruit (good works) glorify God? How is God glorified in you?

PRACTICE: Listen to John Piper’s explanation of what it means to abide in Jesus on this short YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11FTk05nWhE>

Day 3-

READ: **1 John 2:3-6; Philippians 1:6**

REFLECT: How can we (and others) tell if we are abiding in Jesus? In what ways are you seeing yourself become more like Jesus?

PRACTICE: Spend some time in prayer thanking Jesus for the work He is doing and promises to continue to do in your life.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Philippians 1:9-11**

REFLECT: In these verses how does Paul pray for the believers? How do love, knowledge, and discernment (wisdom) lead to the fruit of righteousness THROUGH JESUS?

PRACTICE: Pray this prayer of Paul’s over yourself, your family members, your Life Group members.

Day 4-

READ: **Matthew 7:15-20; John 15:2**

REFLECT: What is the difference between bad fruit and good fruit? How does pruning help produce more/better fruit? What could God’s pruning work look like in our lives?

PRACTICE: Reflect on some ways you’ve seen God prune you and thank Him for doing that hard but necessary work in your life.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: *“The vinedresser is never nearer the plants than when He is pruning them.”*—David Jeremiah

REFLECT: How does God’s pruning show His love for us? What are some things you might need to prune from your own life so you can abide in Jesus?

PRACTICE: Listen to this song by Michael Card and ask God to point out any things you might need to leave behind: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHsMKgdIryk>

Day 5-

READ: **Romans 6:5-11**

REFLECT: What does it mean to “consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God?” How can you practice being “alive to God in Christ Jesus” during your regular daily life?

PRACTICE: Watch this short video about “Practicing the Presence of God” and consider ways you could intentionally do this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2P0hh6YVUw>

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: **Colossians 3:1-3; Ephesians 3:14-21**

REFLECT: *“Follow me." When about to leave for heaven, He gave them a new word, in which their more intimate and spiritual union with Himself in glory should be expressed. That chosen word was: "Abide in me."*  ― [Andrew Murray](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/13326.Andrew_Murray), [Abide in Christ](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2560998)

Is there a subtle difference between following Jesus and abiding in Jesus? How would each of these look in your life?

PRACTICE: As a symbol of openness to all Jesus wants to do in your life, pray with your hands open and upturned. Confess that you are unable to even abide in your own power and read Ephesians 3:14-21 aloud as your prayer for yourself.

Living the Good Life

Marriage and Family

August 26

Reading Plan

\*We realize that there of many of you that “Married with Children” label does not currently apply to you. You might be a youth, someone who is single, of a single parent. In the Take It Further box this week we will have a link to a helpful article about these area’s as well. They also have ways to reflect right in the article, which we encourage you to do.

Day 1-

READ: **Ephesians 5:1-2, 22-33; 6:4**

REFLECT:

* This passage is loaded with helpful information and instructions of how to do family the right way. As we read it we recognize how extremely different it is from the world’s view.
* As you read through this portion of scripture, what does it point out as how God’s view of a family that is operating well? Where does this differ from the worlds view of family?

PRACTICE:

* It would get easy to look at this and feel overwhelmed at all the things you could do better. Choose one, and only one, thing that you want to make an effort to change today. Keep that as the one change you try to make in the foreseeable future.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ:

* A message for Youth: <https://www.truthfulwords.org/articles/lead.html>

Day 2-

READ: **Ephesians 5:1-2; Matthew 19:4-6**

REFLECT:

* Christian marriage challenges the worldview of marriage as a contract “What do I get out of this?” This is not how God views marriage at all, it is actually the opposite.
* Nothing uncovers selfishness and immaturity like marriage and family life. Every family is a mini-gospel story needing a Savior to lead them not into the “good life” but a godly one.

PRACTICE:

* Where has immaturity in your life been revealed as you are a spouse and parent?

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ:

* For Singles: <https://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/how-to-embrace-your-single-season.html>

Day 3-

READ: **Ephesians 5:25-29; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7**

REFLECT:

* Husbands, here are three examples of scripture of how God instructs us to treat our wives. There are a number of additional verses throughout the Bible that are also on this matter, which lets us know how important it is in God’s eyes.
* What are three ways these verses say husbands should treat their wives?

PRACTICE:

* Husbands, what is the one way these verses say to treat you wife that could use “the most work?”
* Wives, what is an area that your husband does a good job at? Make it a point to let him know that today and compliment him!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ:

* For Singles: <https://www.purelifeministries.org/blog/why-its-not-impossible-to-be-single-and-pure>

Day 4-

READ: **Ephesians 5:22-24; Proverbs 31:10-31**

REFLECT:

* Proverbs 31 is one of the best listings in scripture of any kind, and it is stating what it looks like to be a godly wife. For all the women out there, it is really quite frankly intimidating at times. It can almost feel like an impossible list to live up to.
* Nobody, outside of the Trinity, is called to perfection. We often believe that lie, and need to guard our hearts and minds against that lie from the enemy.

PRACTICE:

* Wives, what is the one way these verses say to treat your husband that could use some improvement?”
* Husbands, what is an area that your wife does a good job at? Make it a point to let her know that today and compliment her!

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ:

* For Single Parents: <https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/raising-a-godly-family-as-a-single-mom>

Day 5-

READ: **Ephesians 6:4; Psalm 103:13; Proverbs 22:6**

REFLECT/PRACTICE:

* Parents must proactively and regularly ask their kids what questions they have about faith
	+ In a secular world, where kids are constantly hearing competing worldviews, questions are guaranteed to continually arise. Regular natural conversations normalize faith as an important part of daily living.
* Good parenting pays a bit more attention to motives than just behaviors
	+ It’s important for parents to know their kids well enough to understand what’s behind their actions and reactions. If we gauge our effectiveness as parents strictly on how well our kids keep the rules, we may miss what’s actually going on in their hearts
* Outsourcing our kids spiritual formation.
	+ This can’t be explained enough…the church, youth group or Christian school are not the primary driver for your children’s spiritual development. These are support mechanisms. PARENTS are the ones called by God to model, mentor and encourage children toward Christ.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ:

* For Co-parenting: <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/single-blended-family-parenting/custody-issues/the-coparenting-relationship>