



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

Week Commencing 22 July 2024

Introductory Session

The aim of this week is to begin the conversation about how Christians ought to think about work.

1. Fun intro question (this may or may not be applicable, depending on who is in your group): Explain your work without telling us what it is (i.e. I spend all day explaining things and writing on a whiteboard - teacher)
2. How would you define 'work'?
3. What do you think is the point of work?
4. Does being a Christian change your approach to your work? If so, how?
5. Mark your thoughts (circle appropriate view) regarding the following statements and discuss your answers.

"work is a product of the fall – a necessary evil to endure"

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Probably disagree	Probably Agree	Strongly Agree

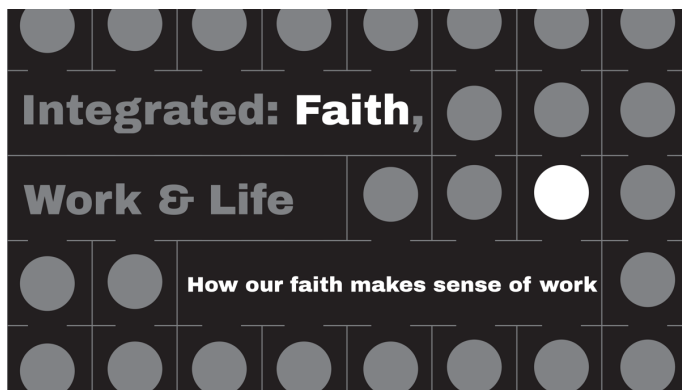
"as a Christian, work is only valuable insofar as it leads to me gospel opportunities with colleagues and helps me provide for my family"

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Probably disagree	Probably Agree	Strongly Agree

"my impact for the cause of the gospel happens when I'm at church, growth group or other ministries, not at work"

1	2	3	4
Strongly disagree	Probably disagree	Probably Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Consider the following verses. What can we learn from them about a biblical approach to work? (Gen 2:15, Gen 3:17-19, Deut 5:13-15, Eccless 2:22-25, Col 3:23-24, 2 Thess 3:10-12)
7. What questions do you have about a Christian approach to work? *Please record your questions and submit them to staff. There will be a Q & A later in the series and we may be able to answer them, if not in the sermons.*
8. **Pray** for the teaching series ahead: that God would teach us what he wants us to learn and that we'd change our thoughts and behaviour according to what we learn?



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

*Week Commencing 29
July 2024*

Study 1: A Desk in the Garden

Last weekend's sermon made the point that our work is good and God-like. God is a worker, and he's made us to be workers like him. Work isn't not a product of the fall – even though the fall has made work hard (see next week). This is true of all our work – not just paid employment. In work, our purposes are the same for the rest of life – to glorify God and love others, not self-service and career success. In fact, God works through us to maintain his creation. *Key passages include Genesis 1:26-31, 2:15; John 5:17*

Sermon review:

1. What was something that you found helpful from the talk?
2. What was something that you found challenging about the talk?
3. What is something that you want to change based on what you heard?

Scenarios to discuss:

4. Your work colleague doesn't like being at work and is often heard saying things like "We work to live, we don't live to work", "Thank God it's Friday". They often joke that their favourite time of the day is the lunch break. **Based on what we've learnt from Genesis 1, what is unhelpful about this attitude?**
5. Imagine you walk past three tradespeople outside a large building site measuring and cutting timber. You ask them what they are doing. The first one says, irritated, "Can't you see I'm cutting some wood!". The second responded without looking up, "I'm earning \$35 bucks an hour." The third stopped what they are doing, and said with pride, "We're building a school for the kids in this suburb to be educated in." **Which one do you think answered the question in the best way and why?**
6. Your friend retired a few years ago and was intent on "putting their feet up, after many years in the rat race". They've been on quite a few overseas trips and done lots of relaxing. But recently they have confessed that they're not as happy as they thought they would be in retirement and are actually getting bored. **Why do you think this might be the case? What would you encourage them to do?**

Me and my work:

7. Adopt the same attitude as the third tradesperson in the second scenario. How would you describe the final outcome of your current work (whether paid or unpaid)? How do you contribute to the work of serving/loving others?
8. Reflect on your current attitude to your work. What can you do to cultivate a view of your work that is more reflective of God's good design for work?



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

*Week Commencing
5 August 2024*

Study 2: A Bad Day at Work

Last weekend's sermon stated the obvious – we often find work hard, boring, draining and frustrating. This is to be expected, of course, because of human sin and God's judgment on us described in Genesis 3. We don't live in the perfect Garden of Eden anymore. Outside the garden, we not only find work hard and toilsome, but it's also become an arena in which we continue rebelling against God. We worship and idolise work instead of God and chase the satisfaction in work that only God can offer. The way forward for us is to have the right expectations, seek contentment amidst frustration, repent of our own sinful contributions, and most importantly, put our hope in Jesus not our work.

Sermon review:

1. What was something that you found helpful from the talk?
2. What was something that you found challenging about the talk?
3. What is something that you want to change based on what you heard?

Scenarios to discuss:

4. There is a book called *The Gospel According to the Harvard Business School*. It's opening words say: "This is a book about people who want to get to the top of the world. People who are determined that in their profession nobody is going to do or be better, and who are prepared to pay any price to live up to their expectation." **How does the aim of this book reflect human sinful thinking about work after the Fall?**
5. Your adult child has just secured their first full-time graduate job after completing university. They are very excited and say things like, "This is going to be amazing...I'm going to have the best time. This job is what I've always wanted". **What might be the dangers in this attitude? What would you say to them in light of this week's lesson?**
6. You find yourself debating another Christian about the purpose of humanity. They say "Now that we have peace with God through Christ, we go back Genesis 1. Multiply, subdue the earth, bring about God's Kingdom on earth. That's what we're called to do!" **What is incomplete about this view? Do you think the Fall changes God's ultimate purposes of humanity?**

Me and my work:

7. Consider your own work. What pains or frustrations do you experience? What aspects feel like burden and toil? How does this week's lesson help you process those setbacks?
8. Does your heart show signs that you're putting work first in your life, above God. What would the signs be? What steps can you take to lead to a more integrated approach to life where work isn't 'all-consuming'?



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

*Week Commencing
12 August 2024*

Study 3: A New Job Title

Last weekend's sermon reminded us of the new identity that all those that follow Jesus are given by God: beloved children of God and servants of Christ. This sense of identity liberates us from the misleading, pressure-building way of thinking which says "I am what I do!". Not only does our identity in Christ ease the pressure to succeed in work, it also comforts those feeling despair about work – whether that's the frustrations and toil, or perhaps if they don't have work to do! We were also challenged to reconsider our priorities. To serve Christ we must attend to our many other God-given responsibilities, including the important "new creation work" of evangelism and discipling. *Key passages included Col 3:1-4, 3:22:4-1.*

Sermon review:

1. What was something that you found helpful from the talk?
2. What was something that you found challenging about the talk?
3. What is something that you want to change based on what you heard?

Scenarios to discuss:

4. You keep hearing your ministers talk about 'our identity in Christ' and it's doing your head in. **Can you describe in your own words what it means to have an 'identity in Christ'. What does this idea entail? Why is it good news for us?**
5. Australian Olympic High Jumper, Nicola Olyslagers has said about her approach to the Tokyo Olympics: *"I was fearless because I knew when I was pursuing the highest thing that I could do in that Olympic Games that even if I didn't make it my identity in Christ meant that I was more than enough."* **What pressure situations do you find yourself in? When do you reminding that your life and sense of worth doesn't depend on the outcome of your work?**
6. One of your close Christian friends has recently found themselves out of work. They've expressed to you that they feel 'useless'? **How could you comfort and encourage them to see beyond their work circumstances to their identity in Christ?**

Me and my work:

7. Do you feel you have a balance between your assorted God-given responsibilities in life? Is your work (paid or otherwise) causing you to neglect other important responsibilities?
8. Why should our new identity in Christ motivate us to evaluate our involvement in 'new creation work' (e.g the work of speaking God's word to see people saved and built up)



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

Week Commencing
19 August 2024

Study 4: A New Role Description

If week 3 in our series was about *Who* we are as Christian workers, this week went on to consider the question of *How*. How should we conduct ourselves as Christian workers. The main answer to that question is that we're called to live like Jesus, with all that entails: honesty, integrity, compassion. In general, we aim to emulate all the beautiful values that Jesus embodies. One specific part of this aim comes from Colossians 3 – we're to work hard, even when no one is watching. *Key passages include Col 3:22:4-1, Luke 5:12-16, 1 Peter 2:21*

Sermon review:

1. What was something that you found helpful from the talk?
2. What was something that you found challenging about the talk?
3. What is something that you want to change based on what you heard?

Scenarios to discuss:

4. William Taylor in *Revolutionary Work* writes: *"The readiness of Christians to apologize is one of the most profound witnesses in the workplace. We all make mistakes; some of us do so often. What a difference it makes when a person is sufficiently humbled, because they serve the Lord Jesus, to come in and say, 'I'm really sorry, I got it hopelessly wrong. Please forgive me'". What alternative paths do people take when they've made a mistake in work? How would your co-workers/boss react if you apologized for your mistakes?*
5. Your boss has just gone on holidays for a week and the rest of your team are beginning to talk about taking long lunches and early marks. They joke that they can get the essential tasks done with ease and enjoy a 'lighter' week. **How should you think about the upcoming week? How would you balance the godly aim to work hard, with maintaining good relationship with your peers.**
6. You've noticed your colleagues being quite selective in the the people they give attention to. They're always very polite and warm towards those who 'rank' above them in the company. But they ignore or are rude with the cleaners that are often seen around the office. **How could you distinguish yourself from these colleagues and show the beauty of Christian values in the way you relate to all people in your workplace?**

Me and my work:

7. If someone you work with was told you are a Christian (assuming they didn't already know), do you think they would be surprised? Why or why not?
8. What opportunities do you have this week to demonstrate Jesus-like character in your work?



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

*Week Commencing
26 August 2024*

Study 5: Finding a New Rhythm

This week we considered the theme of rest. Not only is God a worker, teaching us that work is good, but God is also a restorer, teaching us that rest is good. The definition of rest put forward was that it is about *drawing refreshment from enjoying God and his gifts*. Rest according to the Bible is much more than refreshment for the physical body, it is also about the deep rest that can be found in knowing God. Some tips to pursue a new rhythm for rest included: planning for rest, learning to say no to some things, helping each other to rest, and diversifying the way we rest. *Key passages include Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Psalm 127:2, Matthew 11:28-30*

Sermon review:

1. What was something that you found helpful from the talk?
2. What was something that you found challenging about the talk?
3. What is something that you want to change based on what you heard?

Scenarios to discuss:

4. Imagine coming across a Christian of another denomination that takes the Sabbath command very literally. They're not legalistic, thinking that the Old Testament laws are still binding. However, they have a rigid practice taking a full day off on Sundays. They go to church, and choose not to do any paid work, study, shopping, or a range of other things on Sundays. **What would your attitude be towards such an approach? How is their approach similar or different to your current practice of weekly rest?**
5. There is research about different groups of people around the world who exhibit, on average, the longest lifespans. One of the groups with the longest lifespans come from the town of Loma Linda in California, where the majority of the population are 7th Day Adventists, who are strict adherents to the Sabbath command. **What insights about the importance of rest can we glean from these findings?**
6. You have a Christian friend who engages in lots of leisure activity. They play sport, they socialize and have a number of hobbies. On the surface they appear to make the most of their time 'off work'. However, they tell you that despite their rest patterns, they never really feel at peace. They often feel mentally and emotionally exhausted. **From what we've learnt about the importance of soul-rest, rather than just physical rest, how could you encourage your friend to find rest in God.**

Me and my work:

7. Do you find it hard to switch off and allow yourself to rest? What do you think is the reason for this?
8. If you could come up with an ideal pattern for regular rest in your weekly schedule what would it look like? What would you do during your rest?



2024 Term 3 Growth Group Material

*Week Commencing
2 September 2024*

Study 6: A New Measure for Success

This was our last talk in the *Integrated* series. The talk asked us to redefine our vision of success. Rather than being obsessed with outcomes and accomplishments, which is the way of the world, we endeavour to be faithful in service. The question to ask is how are we going in

25:14-30) means we seek to love God and love our neighbour with the resources and responsibilities God has given us. *Key passages include Luke 10:38-42, Matt 25:14-30*

Sermon review:

1. What was something that you found helpful from the talk?
2. What was something that you found challenging about the talk?
3. What is something that you want to change based on what you heard?

Scenarios to discuss:

4. The film *Mr* is about an aspiring musician who teaches high school music lessons to pay the bills. He thinks his life is a failure because he never accomplished his dreams. However, at a school assembly to mark his retirement, students testify to the impact he has had on them throughout his teaching career. **How is this storyline an illustration of what we learnt over the weekend (and throughout the series)?** ([See helpful article here](#))

5. **How**

this series? How would your feelings and responses change if, (1) you knew your child hard?

6. due on Monday. You know that your colleagues will be working hard all weekend, but you have other things in the calendar: your daughters soccer match; date night with your spouse, church on Sunday morning. **If we live for the acclaim of God alone, how would you go about navigating this dilemma? What are the factors to consider? How would you manage things if every weekend threw up this kind of dilemma?**

Me and my work:

7. What can you do this week to work in a Christ-like manner. What can you do this week to pursue a Christ-like outcome.
8. What has stood out to you from the Integrated series? How has your thinking or behaviour, as it relates to being a Christian worker, been impacted?