

# The Journey to Biblical Manhood

## Challenge 6: Work

### Session 1: What Does God Want Me To Know About My Work?

Unedited Transcript

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Good morning men. I am glad to be back. I've been on a little sabbatical. So, you know you're sabbatical's over when you're driving down the road and the question pops into your mind, I wonder why money is green? You know you've had enough time off. In fact yesterday, I quipped to my daughter-in-law, "I'm so bored, somebody needs to pop some nails in me." So, I'm really ready to get back to work.

If you would, please turn in your bibles to John, Chapter 5, Verse 17. That's a little change if you could make on the handout, I got the first one wrong there.

And then, let's go ahead and do a shout out this morning. Today, we're going to welcome the group Barack. It's a group of men in Armenia, Columbia, led by Edwin. And Edwin, I'm going to say your name as Ferraro, but I could be wrong, so if I am, I apologize. These are six men and they call themselves a group of Jesus Soldiers with two dreams. To teach the good news and to serve God with their talents. We're really happy to have you with us. So, if you would join me in giving a warm and a rousing welcome to Barack. One, two, three, hoo rah. Welcome guys, we are really honored to have you with us.

With that said, we're in the series, the Journey to Biblical Manhood. We're starting the sixth challenge this morning on work. We have these faith in life objectives that we put together for each of these. You have little cards on your tables that have these. But, three things for head, heart, and hands. For the head, I will know that all work is sacred and every task is a calling. For the heart, I will passionately pursue the ministry, my work, with God's help. And with the hands, I will work with diligence, integrity and excellence to demonstrate God's character to a watching world.

So, first up this morning. What is it that God wants me to know about my work? On this sabbatical, I visited my childhood and things like that. I told my wife I wanted to go to the Black Hills of Orlando, Florida, where Mt. Rushmore is and the badlands. It's only a five day drive. She said, "I'm not driving." So, I drove our trailer out there, five days and picked her up at the airport and then we had a great vacation. Then I put her back on a plane and I drove five days to get back, so I was by myself.

So, I had this experience. I was driving through a city and I don't want to besmirch the name of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, so I won't make a big deal about it but, I'm driving through the downtown area. I'm in the left hand lane, I think there were three lanes, and of course I have a three foot trailer. It's a

relatively slow speed limit through the town, I'm going ten over and I couldn't have gotten over the right if I wanted to because there were a lot of cars there. So, after two-three miles, this white Econoline van pulls out beside me and almost sideswipes me coming back in, you can tell he's driving real recklessly. Then he takes a big giant Big Gulp and he throws it out the window and it covers my windshield. So, I said, "Road Rage, Road Rage." What did I do? Well, I chased that sucker down. And I ripped him by his limbs out of that van and then I pistol whipped him and I left him begging for mercy. Well, that's what I wanted to do anyway.

So, how's that relate to what God wants me to know about my work? Well, this is hypothesis but I figure that that might be one of the men that currently is among the people who don't find their work very satisfying. And by the way, that's down from 80% in the middle of the great recession. But, today, roughly, about 50% of people don't find their work to be satisfying. What I want us to do here, in our time together, is to talk about how can we integrate our faith and our work.

Bob Beauford says that, "Work is the psychological glue that holds a man together." Isn't that beautiful? Work is the psychological glue that holds a man together and this man that was road raging me, he had obviously come unglued. What is it that he did not know about his work that could've made him into a different man, a different kind of man?

So, let's take a look. First, my work as a calling. John, Chapter 5, Verse 17. I'm going to be using this book, my book, A Man's Guide for Work as sort of the template for what we're doing here so you can get more out of that if you're interested.

Jesus said to them, "My father is always at rest." God works six days on creation and rests on the seventh day. But that's not the nature of God today on a day to day basis. Jesus said, "My father is always at his work to this very day and I, too, am working." So part of the nature and character of God is that God is a working God, that's his nature, that's what he's like. And we created in his image, also have been given this opportunity to work.

Turn back to Psalm, Chapter 8, Verse 3. Psalm, Chapter 8, Verse 3. We read the first few verses, I believe, of this in one of other challenges. Actually, may have done these verses in one of these other challenges. Psalm, Chapter 8, Verse 3, "When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers. The moon and the stars, which you have set in place. What is man? That you're mindful of him?" So, God has done his work, there in creation. And the Psalm is asking, Dave says, "What is man? That you're mindful of him?" The son of man that you care for him.

Then to the identity of a man. You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. But, then to the purpose of a man. So, we have the identity. Little lower than the heavenly beings, crowned with glory and honor. But, as to the man's purpose. You made him ruler over the works of your hands. You put everything under his feet and then he goes there to the land, to the sky, to the sea.

Not only is the character in nature of God, that of a working man or a working God. We reflect in his nature and character, we also have been delegated dominion over the works to God to continue to, not only build God's kingdom but to tend God's culture. And that's right out of Genesis one, which we're not going to bother to look at here today.

Then, if you would, turn to Genesis, Chapter 2, Verse 15. This is the first assignment that man was given after he was created by God. The Lord, God, took the man, put him in the garden to work it and to take care of it. So, God is a working God and he has created us to work. He's given us a delegation of the dominion that he has over his creation and so, we are actually called to take care of God's creation. Work is a calling. Just one thing here. I thought work was a curse. Isn't work a curse?

Haven't you seen that work is a curse. Huh? Is work a curse? Work was never a curse. Work is never, today, to be considered a curse. There's a misunderstanding, a few people have, in a case, that's you. The misunderstanding is this, work preceded ... Everything God created was good. Work is something God created. God installed work and then because of sin and because of the fall, the ground is cursed. And you will do your work while feeling the prick of thorns. Turn over to Genesis, Chapter 3, Verse 17. To Adam he said, "Because you listen to your wife and ate from the tree ..." We're not going to say anything today about women guys. Enough's been said.

"And ate from the tree from which I commanded you, you must not eat of it. Cursed is the work that you will do because of you." Doesn't say that, does it? What does it say? Cursed is what? The ground because of you. Through painful toil, you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field by the sweat of your brow. You will eat your food until you return to the ground. So forth and so on. We do our work while feeling the prick of thorns because the field, itself, is cursed.

God's not cursed when he's doing his work. You're not cursed when you're doing your work. The work you do is not cursed, it's the ground. And there's so many other verses. Romans, 8:20, which I quote like every two months. "For the whole creation has been subjected to futility." Okay? That's the same, just another way of saying Genesis, 3. The whole creation has been subjected to futility. Not by its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it. And who would that be?

God. God. Do we have a Pentecostal Holiness, Southern Baptist preacher over here or something like that? God.

The whole creation has been subjected to futility, not by its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it. Why? In order that the whole creation might be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of light. This fall, this futility, this prick of thorns, you would best understand it to be the grace of God. The grace of God, the chief tool by which God graciously draws us to himself of our own free will. Because the pain of the prick of thorns forces us to seek the relief of a loving God, that if we were called to rest and not work, we would be sitting around and doing what people do. I don't know what people really do, but I know what the movies and the TV shows, show that people who are able to party all the time what happens to them.

God doesn't want that for us. He doesn't want us to waste away. So he's given us work and he's given us work, which, from time to time, are fraught with all these difficulties because of this prick of the thorns. So, here's the conclusion. Every vocation is holy to God. There is intrinsic value in whatever work that you've been called to do.

What question. If you're a christian, wouldn't it be more spiritual to be in ministry than in plumbing?

So, christian writers and thinkers, through the ages, there's so many quotes but the bottom line is ... I like the one, I don't ever remember who said it but somebody pointed out that Jesus was a carpenter, his apostles were fishermen and Paul was a tent maker. And those men, when they were doing their work, never once had any sense that what they were doing was any less holy, any less sanctified, any less sacred than doing the work of sharing their faith in Jesus Christ or helping someone grow in their faith or doing some other kind of christian service.

There is intrinsic value in the work we do. First Timothy, 4:4. Everything that God made is good. Everything that God made is good. And then Philippians 2:13, "for it is God that works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It's God who works in you to ... he gives us the desire to will it and then he gives us the power to do it. The beautiful thing that is our work. Whatever it is.

Now, you have two agents. Ticket agents at an airline. You would know about this. How many times a week are you on an airplane? Several. One agent can barely pay attention to you because for him, his work is simply a means to other ends to earn money so that he can do what he really wants to do and he can't wait to go off work to go with what he really wants to do. So, he does not particularly like his job so, you, as a customer, when you have a problem, you are actually an interruption to him or a bother.

But, you have another agent who's doing the exact same work and he understands the holiness of vocation and that there was intrinsic value in his work, that he's on a mission to help people and families get to their destination so that they can earn income for their families or recreate themselves so that they can come back and wonder why the color of money is green. So, every opportunity that he has to serve a customer, for him, is an opportunity to serve his great God and bring glory to Jesus Christ. And he views himself as doing this work as a witness for his lord and savior.

Two very different perspectives. So, what is the one idea that has been fully understood that changed everything for that agent? What is the one idea that has been fully understood and truly believed that has changed everything for that agent?

He understands that we are here to serve and he understands the holiness of vocation. He understands that there is intrinsic value in the work itself.

I had a septic tank system that had to be replaced earlier in the year. And we've talked about this, there's no joy in getting a septic tank replaced or the drain field. One of the guys that came, Bob, Bob The trucks dripped some oil on my pavement. He's been back five or six times to scrub out that oil. I mean months after. I looked out there and said, "Who's that?" It's been months since that oil dripped down but he's still interested in getting that oil out.

Meanwhile, he had another young guy, probably in his twenties. He was apprenticing, obviously apprenticing and you could tell that he was curious about doing the work well and everything like that. But you could also see a question mark. At least, I'm probably projecting what I wanted to see. It seemed to me that he wasn't quite sure what he was doing actually mattered.

So I pulled him aside. I said, "I want you to know ..." and I explained to him how much trouble having this septic tank system be out of sorts for about two months. The problems that it created, the disruption that it created and how valuable it was to me, to my wife, to us, to my family to be able to finally get this system working correctly. How it was actually changing our lives. It was making our world

a better place. And how important the work that you are doing, right here, right now is in the history of the world. And he lit up. He's in his twenties, he's looking for mentoring, he's looking for direction.

So, he did not understand the holiness of his vocation. He did not understand the intrinsic value in what he's doing. How important septic tank drainage replacement is. Or how important unclogging clogged drains is. Or how important fixing a light switch so that people can walk around in the middle of the night, how important these things are.

So what is the one idea that, that one ticket agent had fully understood and truly believed that changed everything for him? It's that he is ordained to be a ticket agent. He is an ordained ticket agent. That it is his ministry. So that's the Big Idea today, for you. **I am an ordained** \_\_\_\_\_ what? Blank. The big idea today is **I am an ordained** \_\_\_\_\_ blank. Say it out loud and say the word goes in the blank for you. I am an ordained ....

If you can fully understand and truly believe this idea, it can change everything for you. I've said it here before in some illustration, some time. When I left business, at the time, I kind of thought that being in ministry instead of business was going to be somehow better. And I remember looking in the mirror and wondering on what day it was going to be that I would see, I wouldn't expect anybody else to see it, but I kind of expected that one day I would look in the mirror and see looking back at me the little faint trace of a halo over my head.

I'm still waiting. I'm still waiting for that. It's interesting. I love what I do. I'm passionate about what I do. I feel ordained. I feel called. I feel this is my ministry. But as it turns out, I love real estate development. I was passionate about that. I felt ordained to do that. I felt there was intrinsic value in that. As it turns out, I don't feel like there's any difference between what I'm doing now and what I'm doing in the past in terms of this whole idea of spirituality. In other words, according to God, there is no such thing as a secular job.

Who has a concordance in your bible? Who has a concordance in your bible, somebody? Who has one? What are you all spiritual pygmies or something? You don't have concordances in your bibles for crying out loud?

Somebody tell me how many references there are to the word secular in the bible? Somebody look them up in your concordance. Look up the word secular. Search secular and then tell me how many times it's in your bible. How many times?

Zero. Zero. Because in the mind of God, there is no such things as secular. That's a convention that we've come up with. In the mind of God, every vocation is sacred. He makes no sacred, secular distinction. So that's the second point. My work is my ministry. My work is ministry.

I remember once, hearing a sermon. I won't say the church, like Sioux Falls, South Dakota to be funny, because it's a local church. And it was a visiting missionary but for forty minutes ... and I was a visitor, my wife and I. But for forty minutes I listened to this missionary talk about how it was more special. It was more spiritual to be in ministry and if you really wanted to serve God, you would go into the ministry. I remember slinking out of the place feeling guilty and ashamed of myself because I wasn't more interested. At that particular time I didn't want to be in the ministry, I loved what I was doing and I

didn't want to be in the ministry. So, I felt guilty and ashamed. That is a blatant misappropriation of scripture. Blatant. Oh my gosh.

So, whether it's air, land or sea, God makes no distinction between sacred and secular. Work is ministry. Anybody sing? You sing. Give me a C, give me a good C.

Yeah. Give me a C note. Bah. Okay, now, was that a sanctified C or a secular C? There is no distinction. So, wouldn't a career in ministry be more spiritual? Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Not in the mind of God. So, if you have that thought in your mind, now would be a good time to fully understand and truly believe that the one idea that can change everything for you is that you're ordained to do what you're already doing.

Now there are situations where you're ready for a job change. We're not talking about that. Okay? We're not talking about where you're feeling called to do something else. But, where you are where you're supposed to be, you are ordained to do that. So, work is not just a platform to do ministry. Do you understand this?

Work, your work is not just a platform to do ministry. The work itself is ministry. So, if you're doing a tax return, you're mowing the lawn, you're driving a truck, you're working on a legal deposition. That work itself is ministry. Because, God calls us to both build a kingdom and tend the culture. Any questions about this? No. I didn't think so.

I love the guy who came one time visiting and he told me the story. He said one day he was at a bible study. And an attorney said, "You look so familiar to me. Don't I know you? Haven't I seen you somewhere before." And he said, "Yes." He said, "I'm a disciple of Jesus disguised as Janitor at the office building where you work." He understood holiness of vocation. He understood his ordination as a janitor. He was an ordained janitor.

So, for owners and managers, some of you are owners and managers. What's important to your employees? What's to your employees? Well, you might be surprised. It's not compensation. These things are important but it's not the top thing. Compensation, benefits, all these different ... 67% of employees say that the number one thing that's important to them is to be respected. It's to be respected. It's to be respected, to have respectful treatment. So what does that sound like to you?

It sounds like neighbor love. It sounds like love your neighbor as yourself. It sounds like, owners and managers, that to do your ministry is to be ordained to do what you do is to neighbor love the people that you work with. Now you need the neighbor love up, by the way, if you have a boss or owner. Then workers ministry, how can you help a guy that's under 35 years of age?

So, it's interesting because another statistic is 65% of college graduates have no idea what kind of job might be suited for them. 65%. So, if you have somebody under 35 years of age, for you, part of your ministry could be to help them understand what it is that they've been ordained to do. The big idea today is this, I am an ordained... whatever.

Then finally. So, my work is a calling. My work is ministry. And then my work is worship. So, Hakeem Olajuwon, who knocked the Orlando Magic out of the play-offs back in the 90's. The only time we ever

made it to the finals. He won back to back NBA championships. He's considered to be, he's in that list of the 50 greatest NBA players to ever play the game. One time he had an interview with Roy Firestone.

And Firestone said, "Your teammates tell me that your crazy. They say that even though you're one of the greatest players of all times, you play like a rookie. You practice like a rookie. They said that you go out and you practice hook shots for hours and hours. And then when we do scrimmages, you will dive on the hardwoods going after balls like it's the NBA finals. Why don't you just take it easy at this point in your career."

And he said this, he said, "Roy, you don't understand. Basketball for me is not just a job. It's an act of worship. And every time I go on the hardwood floors, what would it mean if I were not to give it my 100%? I would be dishonoring my God. No, for me basketball is not work. It's an act of worship."

Now what's interesting is Hakeem Olajwon is muslim. And so here we have someone from a different religion who understands the holiness of his vocation. That he's ordained, that he was ordained to be a great basketball player or a basketball player. We can learn from him.

So, Francis was out hoeing his garden one day, St. Francis before he was St. Francis. And somebody said to him, "What would do if you knew that Jesus was going to be coming back this afternoon?" Without hesitation, he said, "Well, I'd finish hoeing my garden." And why did he say that? He said that because he understood that that was what he had been ordained to do. Do you understand what you have been ordained to do? The big idea. Today. I am an ordained... blank.

All right so we have three questions to discuss on your tables. Reflection, knowledge, and application. So, take some time, work those questions and then we'll come back together in about eight minutes before the hour. If you are a visitor and you have not sat with me at this table up at the front yet, would you please join me? I would love to have a chance to meet you and greet you and get to know you a little bit. So, with that said, let's break to the tables and we'll recollect shortly.

So, let's do this. On the count of three everybody say I am an ordained whatever. Okay? One, two, three. I am an ordained ...

Heavenly Father you have heard the words from our lips, we pray that you would sear it in our hearts, our consciences, our world view, our way of thinking, our attitude, our actions, our believing, our thinking, our behavior into the fabric of our being. We have this idea that we're spending half of our waking hours or more devoted to this thing and that we really do have this comprehension. That we fully understand, Lord, and truly believe that this one idea can truly change everything for us. That we are ordained to do this work. That it is ministry, it's not just a platform, Lord, to do ministry. It is ministry. It's a calling and it's meant to be an act of worship where we can bring praise and glory to you. And also, bring neighbor love to others around us. Lord Jesus, we pray this prayer that you just brought it into our minds in your powerful name. Amen.

Thank you. Have a great weekend.