

A MAN & HIS WORK

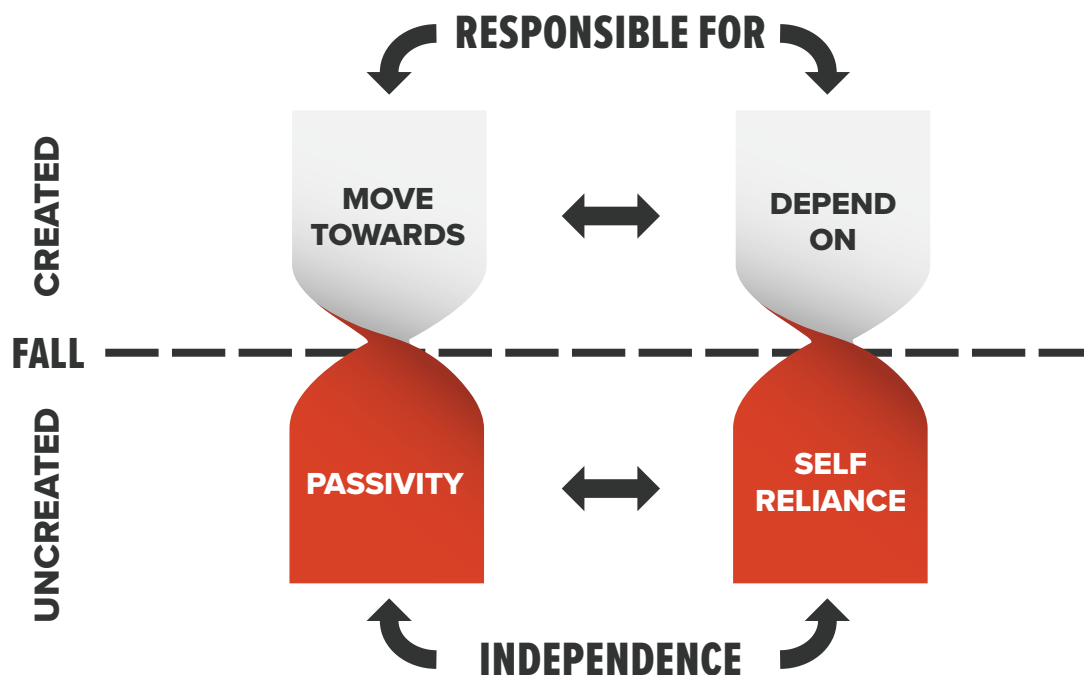


participant **GUIDE**

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Our goal is to equip men to be responsible for the people and situations that God brings into their lives:



CREATED

As men, we were created and have a Creator. We have a God-given calling to be **Responsible For** others. This means we **Move Towards** the people and situations God places in our lives and **Depend On** God our Creator. This was God's perfect plan before the fall.

UNCREATED

After the fall, we no longer live as created beings. We do not position ourselves under our Maker but, instead, want to be like God. We live as though we are **Independent**, uncreated beings. This leads to **Passivity** and **Self-Reliance** in our lives, a complete perversion of the good thing God created.

SESSION 1

Creation & Purpose of Work



INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF AUTHENTIC MANHOOD

Reject _____

Accept _____

Lead _____

Expect _____

1. DEITY AT WORK

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

— Genesis 1:1–5

So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

— Genesis 2:1–3

2. WORK COMMISSIONED: DOMINION & CULTIVATION

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.” So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

— Genesis 1:26–28

Humans are given _____ over the earth.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made . . . The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.

— Genesis 2:8, 15

Man’s earliest responsibility is _____.

Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you.

— 1 Corinthians 7:17

CATEGORIES OF WORK

Work: _____

Rest: _____

Recreation: _____

Escape: _____

3. A CORRESPONDING CAUSE

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil . . . He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

— Genesis 2:4–5, 20

4. PURPOSE IN WORK

Fulfillment or Idolatry?

10 Ideas to Consider

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

5. HIS WORK FOR US

You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.

— John 15:16–17

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else. But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

— Ephesians 2:1–10

Discussion Questions

1. Make sure everyone in your group has had a chance to meet. Share with the group a little bit about your job and what you are hoping to learn from this study.
2. What is the significance of God working from the beginning?
3. What are some of the unrealistic expectations you have regarding work?
4. How have those expectations made work more difficult?
5. In what ways do we exert dominion over the world through our work today?
6. From the list of 10 ideas, can you name three that resonate with you and help you find meaning in your work?

SESSION 2

Work in a Fallen World



INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF AUTHENTIC MANHOOD

Reject _____

Accept _____

Lead _____

Expect _____

CATEGORIES OF WORK

Work: _____

Rest: _____

Recreation: _____

Escape: _____

God is a worker, therefore we who bear his image are workers.

“Indeed, the Bible does not say we should work one day and rest six, or that work and rest should be balanced evenly — but directs us to the opposite ratio. Leisure and rest are great goods but we can take only so much of them.”

— Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavor* (p. 38)

Why does work occupy such a significant position in a man’s soul (psyche)?

Man was _____ from the earth and _____ to the earth.

MAN’S CORE CAPACITIES

Pursue

Protect

Provide

WORK UNDER THE CURSE

1. Frustration (Genesis 3:17–19)

2. Impermanence (Genesis 3:19)

3. Idolatry

Instead of turning to God in response to the curse, we look to work to provide a solution to the problems of frustration and impermanence.

HOPE OF THE GOSPEL FOR OUR WORK

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it.

— Romans 8:18–24

Discussion Questions

1. Who was the primary influence on your understanding of masculinity and/or work? Was that influence positive or negative?
2. What is one way your view of work has been challenged so far in this study?
3. Of the three effects of the curse (frustration, impermanence, and idolatry), which is currently your greatest struggle? Why?
4. Do you have a clear understanding of how the gospel provides encouragement for your work? Where do you need greater clarity?

SESSION 3

Escape & Corruption of Work

CATEGORIES OF WORK

Work: _____

Rest: _____

Recreation: _____

Escape: _____

_____ is part of the biblical story and part of our story.

Escape is when I _____ from _____.

FORMS OF ESCAPE

Escape usually takes the form of either _____ or _____.

RESPONSIBILITY

INDOLENCE

EXIGENCE

Indolence is an _____ of work and results in escape _____.

In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to marry a young woman named Tamar. But Er was a wicked man in the Lord's sight, so the Lord took his life. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your brother." But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having a child who would belong to his brother. But the Lord considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the Lord took Onan's life, too.

— Genesis 38:6–10

Exigence is an _____ of work and results in escape _____.

I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

— Ecclesiastes 2:4–11

I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned. And who can tell whether my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet they will control everything I have gained by my skill and hard work under the sun. How meaningless! So I gave up in despair, questioning the value of all my hard work in this world. Some people work wisely with knowledge and skill, then must leave the fruit of their efforts to someone who hasn't worked for it. This, too, is meaningless, a great tragedy. So what do people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety? Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even at night their minds cannot rest. It is all meaningless. So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him?

— Ecclesiastes 2:18–25

Signs of Indolence (escape from work):

Signs of Exigence (escape into work):

**The gospel calls us to _____ and have a _____
in our work.**

As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, “Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. So they went on to another village.

— Luke 9:51–56

A healthy ambition avoids being _____ or _____.

**The gospel frees us from escape because it removes the
_____ of _____.**

Discussion Questions

1. Share one area where you think you are hiding from responsibility.
2. In what ways are comfort, pleasure, or accomplishment causing you to run from work? Have you crossed into indolence or laziness in these areas?
3. In what ways are fear, power, greed, or affirmation pushing you into work? Has this caused you to be exigent and to overwork?
4. Once you've identified these areas, what does it look like for you to reject passivity and accept responsibility?
5. What are some ways you "bleed off energy," which takes away from productivity in your vocation?
6. Have you lost ambition in your career or workplace? Have you fallen into being domineering or disengaged? What does it look like for you to begin to pursue God in your workplace with a healthy ambition?
7. How does the gospel free you from escape?

SESSION 4

Redeeming Work

Work = Energy Expended ≠ Energy _____

10 STRATEGIES FOR REDEEMING WORK

1. Providing for your _____

But those who won't care for their relatives, especially for their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.

— 1 Timothy 5:8

2. Skillful and excellent work _____ God

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good.

— Genesis 1:31

3. Finding God's _____ through _____

Do you see a man diligent and skillful in his business? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men. (ESV)

— Proverbs 22:29

4. Work shapes your _____

You who are slaves must accept the authority of your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you — not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel. For God is pleased with you when you do what you know is right and patiently endure unfair treatment.

— 1 Peter 2:18–19

5. _____ is your megaphone for _____

6. Doing what you were _____ to do

Traps for Those Wanting to Work in Ministry

1.

2.

3.

7. Make money so you can be _____

8. Take _____ to work

Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple.

— John 2:15

9. Transferring skills between _____ and _____

10. Don't miss the _____ moments

I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns that you did not build.

— Joshua 24:13

“The Church in our time has forgotten that the secular vocation is sacred. Forgotten that a building must be good architecture before it can be a good church; that a painting must be well painted before it can be a good picture; that work must be good before it can call itself God’s work.”

— Dorothy Sayers

Discussion Questions

1. Review the statements below that highlight the 10 Strategies for Redeeming Work. Take a few minutes to rate yourself in each area using the following scale:

1 = I am doing well in this area.

2 = Not sure how well I am doing in this area; or at best I am inconsistent.

3 = This is an area where I definitely have room for improvement.

I provide for the needs of my family _____.

I demonstrate skill and excellence at work _____.

I am a diligent worker _____.

Work is shaping my character _____.

I have integrity at work _____.

I get to do what I do best at work _____.

I am generous with my money _____.

I have integrated my faith and work _____.

My work and ministry skills transfer _____.

I am thankful for God's faithfulness _____.

2. Have you experienced a time when you felt that your work was "redeemed" and used for God's glory? Discuss the details that led to that experience.

3. Spend the final time in your group praying for one another. Thank God for your "Shechem moments" and his provision in your work place. Pray specifically that each individual will have opportunities to see the redemptive value of their work.

SESSION 5

Relaxation & Recreation



CATEGORIES OF WORK

Work: _____

Rest: _____

Recreation: _____

Escape: _____

RECREATION

1. Low Impact

2. High Impact

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- Relieving stress: _____
- Litmus test of good recreation: _____
- Recreating _____ work
- Need to develop a daily/weekly _____ for you
- Recreation is a _____
- How do you handle constantly being “on”?

CHILDREN AND WORK

- Establish _____
- Develop _____
- Facilitate _____

DEVELOPING RESPONSIBILITY

PRINCESSES INCLUDED

TO OUR YOUNG MEN

School as work:

1.

2.

3.

Work outside of school:

1.

2.

3.

Discussion Questions

1. What is it about your work that you find most draining?

2. What is the one thing—at work or away from work—that gives you the most energy?

3. What do you do for recreation? Low and/or High Impact?

4. What are the two biggest challenges to having a healthy dose of recreation in your life? How can those challenges be addressed?

5. What opportunities have you given your children to learn to work and develop responsibility?

SESSION 6

Rest



Rest = _____

REST DEFINED

1. Cessation

2. No production

3. No cultivation

4. No creation

5.

6. Not carrying weight

THE IMPORTANCE OF RHYTHM

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Annually

Macro/Seasonal

REASONS WE DON'T REST

When I cease/rest I feel _____ (I have become what I do—I cannot simply be).

When I cease/rest I feel _____ and _____.

- I don't really know God and am not in relationship with him, or, my relationship with him is so shallow I cannot find comfort in him.

Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world.

— Psalm 46:10

- I don't have deep relationships with others outside of work.

When I cease/rest I become increasingly _____.

Which might reveal:

Pride — “I’m so important that if I don’t pay attention, the world will fall apart.”

And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

— 1 Peter 5:5b–7

Unbelief — “God is either inept or unfaithful.”

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

— Psalm 46:1–3

Greed — “I might miss an opportunity to maximize my wealth, prestige, or influence.”

If I don't rest I will inevitably fall into escape and ultimately addiction.

HOW TO SOLVE IT

1. Pray and work for a change of heart

Self-examination: Discern the condition of your relationship with God and begin to learn to be with him (Psalm 46—cease and know that I am God).

Spiritual Disciplines:

- Worship (focused — concentrated — intentional — public & private)
- Prayer (confessing need and sin — crying out to God — entrusting cares to him)
- Scripture reading/meditation
- Community
- Service
- Preaching to yourself instead of listening to yourself (taking every thought captive)

We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

— 2 Corinthians 10:3–5

2. Change the behaviors (immediately)

- Work on a schedule
- Daily rest (sleep)—work to sleep
- Weekly ceasing
- Periodic rest

Discussion Questions

1. In this season of your life, what are the circumstances that tempt you to disobey God by not resting (daily, weekly, periodically)?
2. Are there ways in which your work environment is particularly hostile to obeying God in this area? What are the difficulties you are likely to face applying this teaching in your workplace?
3. Which of the sinful motivations (pride, unbelief, or greed) have the greatest hold on your heart? What do you need to do about it? What truth do you need to preach to yourself?
4. Name 2 concrete steps that you need to take to obey God by resting.

Answer Key

Session 1 - Creation & Purpose of Work

- Reject _____ (passivity)
Accept _____ (responsibility)
Lead _____ (courageously)
Expect _____ (God's reward)

WORK COMMISSIONED: DOMINION & CULTIVATION

- Humans are given _____ (dominion) over the earth.
- Man's earliest responsibility is _____ (cultivation).

CATEGORIES OF WORK

- Work: _____ (energy expended)
- Rest: _____ (energy recovered)
- Recreation: _____ (energy diverted)
- Escape: _____ (energy corrupted)

10 IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- Making money to provide for your family
- Being skillful/excellent in your work
- Work with integrity and joy that creates credibility for evangelism
- Work for social justice
- Creating something new and beautiful
- Leverage a Christian worldview to bring change and value to your community
- Work shapes your character
- Provide a product or service for others that makes the world better
- Gifts and passions being used
- Make money to be generous

Session 2 - Work in a Fallen World

- Man was _____ (taken) from the earth and _____ (corresponds) to the earth.

Session 3 - Escape & Corruptions of Work

- _____ (Corruption) is part of the biblical story and part of our story.
- Escape is when I _____ (hide) from _____ (responsibility).

FORMS OF ESCAPE

Escape usually takes the form of either _____ (indolence) or _____ (exigence).

- Indolence is an _____ (under-valuing) of work and results in escape _____ (from work).
- Exigence is an _____ (over-valuing) of work and results in escape _____ (into work).

The gospel calls us to _____ (accept responsibility) and have a _____ (healthy ambition) in our work.

A healthy ambition avoids being _____ (domineering) or _____ (disengaged).

The gospel frees us from escape because it removes the _____ (idolatry) of _____ (self).

Session 4 - Redeeming Work

Work = Energy Expended ≠ Energy _____ (Wasted)

10 STRATEGIES FOR REDEEMING WORK

- Providing for your _____ (family)
- Skillful and excellent work _____ (glorifies) God
- Finding God's _____ (favor) through _____ (diligence)
- Work shapes your _____ (character)
- _____ (Integrity) is your megaphone for _____ (evangelism)
- Doing what you were _____ (born) to do
- Making money so you can be _____ (generous)
- Take _____ (Jesus) to work
- Transferring skills between _____ (work) and _____ (ministry)
- Don't miss the _____ (Shechem) moments

Session 5 - Relaxation & Recreation

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- Relieving stress: (three workouts a week)
- Litmus test of good recreation: (makes you ready to go back to work)
- Recreating (serves) work

- Need to develop a daily/weekly (routine) for you
- Recreation is a (necessity)

CHILDREN AND WORK

- Establish authority (0-8 years old)
- Develop responsibility (7-13 years old)
- Facilitate independence (12-18 years old)

TO OUR YOUNG MEN

School as work:

1. Education is the number one path to making a living.
2. Through your experience in school, you are learning to bear a burden.
3. There is a beauty in obscurity.

Work outside of school:

1. You gain the experience of someone paying you to do something—different from a ministry, mission trip, or serving in church.
2. You begin to explore what you can and cannot do.
3. You get to start experiencing the meaning, blessing, challenge, and even difficulty of what it means to work.

Session 6 - Rest

Rest = _____ (energy recovered)

REASONS WE DON'T REST

- When I cease/rest I feel _____ (empty) (I have become what I do—I cannot simply be).
- When I cease/rest I feel _____ (lost) and _____ (alone).
- When I cease/rest I become increasingly _____ (anxious).

