

Scriptures Relating to Jobs and Careers

Meetings for Young People, December 2001

Work is God's Order

God worked to create all things, then rested. Genesis 1 & 2

He resumed working after man sinned. *John 5:17... My Father worketh hitherto and I work.*

Man was given work to do before sin. *Gen. 2:15 15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to tend it and to keep it.*

Work: sweat of the brow, due to Adam's sin. *Gen. 3:19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou shalt return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and to dust shalt thou return.*

Benefits of Work

Blessing on results of labor. *Prov. 13:11. Wealth [gotten] by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.*

Work to provide needs, laziness brings poverty. *1Tim 5:8 But if any provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house [kindred], he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

Prov. 6:6-11. 6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: 7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, 8 Provideth her food in the summer, [and] gathereth her food in the harvest. 9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? 10 [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Work, instead of laziness, brings results. *Prov.10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth [with] a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.*

The apostles worked with their hands. *1Cor. 4:12.12 And labour, working with our own hands:*

Neither slave or free in Christ. *Col. 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond [nor] free: but Christ [is] all, and in all.*

Motives to Work

Work with own hands. *I Thess. 4:11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are outside, and [that] ye may have need of nothing.*

Work or don't eat. *II Thess. 3:10-12 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

Maintain good works for necessary uses, that they not be unfruitful. *Titus 3:14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they may not be unfruitful. {maintain...: or, profess honest trades}*

A loving labor to help other believers. *Heb. 6:10 For God [is] not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

Work with the hands, to give to needy. *Eph. 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with [his] hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Priorities related to Working

Getting priorities straight, Seek first the kingdom of God.

Matt. 6:33 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and riches. 25 Therefore I say to you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? 28 And why are ye anxious for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say to you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clotheth the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore be not anxious for to morrow: for to morrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day [is] its own evil.

A search for riches is not a proper motive for desiring a certain job. *I Tim. 6:6-10 6. But godliness with contentment*

is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment with these let us be content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some have coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. {erred: or, been seduced}

No desire to get rich quick. *Prov. 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain [persons is] void of understanding.*

Prov. 13:11 Wealth [gotten] by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

Don't seek short cuts to riches. *Prov. 21:5 The thoughts of the diligent [tend] only to plenteousness; but of every one [that is] hasty only to want.*

Examples: Jesus: *Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?*

Mary and Martha: attitude is important. *Luke 10:48 Martha was cumbered about much serving;*

Choice of Work: General Principles, Precautions and Advice

*We have been sent into this world,

*as pilgrims and aliens, *1Pe 2:11 Beloved, I exhort [you], as strangers and sojourners, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

*citizens of heaven, *Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven; from which also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

*ambassadors for Christ. *2Cor. 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

*We have **not** been sent to pursue careers and ambitions, no matter how worthy or enjoyable, but to serve and glorify the Lord in our work, family, recreation, and fellowship with other believers as part of the body of Christ, His assembly, doing the work of an evangelist until He returns.

*Therefore consider occupations that do not unduly interfere with the Lord's prescribed scriptural priorities for our lives.

For instance, choose an occupation, job or career:

* to enable or at least allow for part time service for the Lord, and a possible call of God to full time service.
*to enable parenting without extensive use of sitters or day care, and allows for substantial daily periods with spouse and children.

* with continued access to a scripturally gathered local assembly.

NOTE: Some of these same admonitions also apply to the choice of a spouse and a decision to marry, and to a chosen standard of living on this earth.

* that does not incur undue stress or fatigue which will detract from the energy needed to serve the Lord and ones spouse and family. There will be plenty of stress in life and in serving the Lord and raising a family without looking for it in the world.

John 16:33 33 These things have I spoken to you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good courage: I have overcome the world.

1Cor. 7:31 and they that use the world, as not disposing of it as their own; for the fashion of this world passes. 32 But I wish you to be without care.

*that serves and results in "good" being received by others.

*Beware of an occupation, job or career that rests upon stirring up and feeding upon the covetousness, self gratification or lusts of others, or results in harm to others.

Career advice:

Parents helping a child develop his natural talents make it easier for him to discover what he is fitted to do or wants to do. *Prov. 22:6 Train up the child according to the tenor of his way, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Therefore, start with the abilities God has given you, BUT! Be sure you have presented them to the Lord for His use, and not for your own self gratification and enjoyment!

(Romans 12:1-2) 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We may learn from this passage that having a natural born ability is not an automatic license to use that in ones life or career. It may indeed be wise and useful to choose a career that utilizes inborn natural abilities. For example, if the job I have comes easy to me I can have more energy left to serve the Lord and my family. On the other hand, a natural ability to sing well or to hit a baseball well does not necessarily mean a believer should pursue a career in entertainment.

Other factors must be considered:

*Will there be unequal yokes with unbelievers?

*2Cor 6:14 Be not diversely yoked with unbelievers; for what participation [is there] between righteousness and lawlessness? or what fellowship of light with darkness? 15 and what consent of Christ with Beliar, or what part for a believer along with an unbeliever? 16 and what agreement of God's temple with idols? for *ye* are [the] living God's temple; according as God has said, I will dwell among them, and walk among [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be to me a people. 17 Wherefore come out from the midst of them, and be separated, saith [the] Lord, and touch not [what is] unclean, and *I* will receive you; 18 and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters, saith [the] Lord Almighty.*

1 Cor. 5:9 I have written to you in the epistle not to mix with fornicators; 10 not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the avaricious and rapacious, or idolaters, since [then] ye should go out of the world.

*Will I be associating with wicked people which may continually vex me?

2Peter 2:7 ...and saved righteous Lot, distressed with the abandoned conversation of the godless, 8 (for the righteous man through seeing and hearing, dwelling among them, tormented [his] righteous soul day after day with [their] lawless works,) 9 [the] Lord knows [how] to deliver the godly out of trial, ...

*Will the career keep me away from attending important meetings of the Assembly such as remembering the Lord or Prayer Meeting?

Heb 10 24 and let us consider one another for provoking to love and good works; 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom [is] with some; but encouraging [one another], and by so much the more as ye see the day drawing near.

*Will I be doing good (e.g. teaching people how to read so they can read the word of God)?

Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have occasion, let us do good towards all, and specially towards those of the household of faith.

*Will my work harm or stumble others (e.g. bartender)?

*Will I be expected to use force, even deadly force, to do my job (law enforcement, armed services)?

*Will I be asked to lie or to falsify records as part of my duties (e.g. some accountants, some lawyers, some politicians, some executives, etc)?

*Will my work distract others from seeking the Lord, e.g. amusement/entertainment?

*Galatians 5:13 For *ye* have been called to liberty, brethren; only [do] not [turn] liberty into an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another. See also Rom. 14, 1Cor. 10.*

*Will I be expected to use unscriptural principles (such as “self esteem”) to deal with difficult people or their problems?

*Does the firm I will be employed by have a good reputation in the community?

These are merely a few examples but may help one ask the right questions when considering a job or a career.

Some Scriptures giving Instruction on Work:

Col. 3:17 Do all in the name of Christ Jesus.
Col. 3:22-25 Relationships between servants and masters.
Numb. 8:11 Ready to do the service of the Lord.
I Cor. 9:6 Work of an evangelist.
Psalm. 1:1 Uprightness and faithfulness blessed.
Prov. 11:1 Honesty on the job.
Prov. 20:17 Dishonesty doesn't pay.
John 3:21 Need for honesty.

Romans 13:1-2 Be subject to boss and rules.
Rom. 12:11 Not slothful in business.
Eph. 4:21-25 Truth, righteousness.
Col. 4:1 Masters to treat and pay workers fairly.
I Thess. 5:2 Avoid appearance of evil.
Titus 2:9-10 Well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering.
Eph. 6:5-9 Servants to masters.

Examples: Joseph, Joshua, and Nehemiah are examples of those who did well whatever was before them and became leaders without seeking that position.

How do we use our time? Family, homework, sleep, read Bible, work, free, body, (temptation?)

Finally: Consider any spiritual gift the Lord has given you. Is the Lord preparing you to labor in His service?

Additional Notes:

A. Careers for Women

The above outline largely applies to both men and women. However, men are by creation providers and women are care-givers. This is borne out by numerous scriptures. Therefore, these God given roles should be considered in decisions regarding jobs and careers. Consider these and other scriptures concerning careers for women.

Proverbs 31:10-31. 10 ¶ Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [is] far above rubies...

1 Timothy 5:10 Well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath lodged strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.

Titus 2:3-4 ... teach the young women to be sober minded, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 [To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

B. The key to finding what the Lord wants us to do.

Prov. 16:3 Commit thy works unto Jehovah, and thy thoughts shall be established.

*Have an attitude that wants what He wants for me.

Psa. 37:3-7 3 Confide in Jehovah, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on faithfulness; 4 and delight thyself in Jehovah, and he will give thee the desires of thy heart. 5 Commit thy way unto Jehovah, and rely upon him: he will bring [it] to pass; 6 and he will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. 7 Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him:

*Direction from parents.

Prov. 1:8 Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother; 9 for they shall be a garland of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

*Hearken to wisdom.

Prov. 1:33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be at rest from fear of evil.

*Instruction on finding God's will.

Prov. 3:5 Confide in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own intelligence; 6 in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will make plain thy paths.

*Learn from parents.

Prov. 4:1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know intelligence;

*Direction from Gods word.

Prov. 4:20- 20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thy heart. 22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. 23 Keep thy heart more than anything that is guarded; for out of it are the issues of life. 24 Put away from thee perverseness of mouth, and corrupt lips put far from thee. 25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. 26 Under the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be well-ordered. 27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.

*Seeking wise counsel is encouraged.

Prov. 11:14 Where no advice is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Prov. 15:22 Without counsel purposes are disappointed; but in the multitude of counselors they are established.

*If lack wisdom, ask of God.

James 1:5 But if any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all freely and reproaches not, and it shall be given to him: 6 but let him ask in faith, nothing doubting....
