

— weekly —
**STUDY
GUIDE**

WORK MATTERS

WEEK 8 // *Vocation vs. Career*

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Introduction

Welcome to week eight of the Work Matters study. Last week we learned how to make a difference within our workplace. This week we seek to find the answer to the question: What's the difference between a vocation(calling) and a career? As you begin, prepare your mind to receive the lesson God has for you.

In this guide you will find questions for your own personal study along with questions to discuss at a Bible study, neighborhood gathering, or at the dinner table with family and friends. Enjoy!

Personal Study

When people fell upon hard times during biblical times, they would often make a deal to work off their debts through voluntary slavery. For a set amount of time, the debtor would become a servant within the household. Once the time of servitude was complete, the slave would be set free. Unlike the abusive and inhumane slavery found in American History, this was more of an Employer/Employee relationship.

READ

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 and consider the questions below.

CONSIDER

- In chapters 7-9 of 1 Corinthians, Paul responds to questions written to him from the church in Corinth. Although Paul spent many months with them, they still had questions about how their new faith should guide areas of their lives. What questions or concerns is Paul addressing in verses 7:17-24?

Personal Study Continued...

- Why would someone who was a slave or married to an unbeliever want to change the arrangement they were in? Why do you think Paul instructs them to “remain in the situation they were in when God called them?” (vs. 20)

- Are you happy in your current job situation? Why or Why not?

There is a mindset in our culture where careers, titles and the resources gained from them are what everyone pursues, but for the Christian, God expects a different perspective.

READ

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 and consider the questions below:

CONSIDER

- The people of the Thessalonian Church earned a positive reputation inside and outside of the church. What kind of reputation do Christians have in your workplace? How did they earn it?

- What practical tips for gaining the respect of coworkers can we glean from this passage?

- Give real life examples of ways we can “win the respect of outsiders” at work?

PRAY

Spend a few minutes thanking God for the good things you have in your current job situation. If you find yourself fighting feelings of discontentment, confess them to Him. If you are still searching for God’s calling in your life, ask him to guide your steps toward the vocation he has for you.

Group Study

ICE BREAKER

Discuss this question as a group. If you could switch jobs with anyone for one month, whose job would you choose? (Example: African Safari Guide)

Previously, we learned this key truth about work:

- God calls you to be light in a dark place. It is a part of His job description for you.

DISCUSS

- What new insights or questions about work came to your mind over the last week?
- What obstacles are impeding your ability to make a spiritual impact in the lives of your coworkers? What can you do to overcome these challenges?

READ

Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 (NIV) and notice how many times Paul uses the word “called.”

DISCUSS

- What does it mean to be “called” to a type of work? How do you know when you are being “called” to a specific profession?
- Who do you know that is working within their calling or vocation? How is their attitude towards work different than the average worker?
- Do you ever feel “enslaved” to your career with no way up or out? If so, why do you feel this way? What would it take for you to align your source of income with your passion?

CASE STUDY

Use the following case study as a model for a real life situation where you could put this week’s lesson into practice.

Michael dreads going to work every day, but it’s not a bad job. He gets to work with his hands, makes good money, and doesn’t mind his coworkers. The problem is, he is a gifted mechanic, but he’s not passionate about fixing broken-down oilrigs and service trucks. He would much rather spend his time customizing sports cars and motorcycles. He has always dreamed about owning a custom auto shop, but feels like this is just a foolish dream.

As a new Christian, he hears mature Christians talk about God’s calling on their lives and wonders what his God given “vocation” might be. He can’t discern if God wants him to be grateful for his existing job or try to make his auto shop dream a reality.

Using the scriptures from 1 Corinthians 7 as guidance, what could you say and do to help Michael?

PRAY

Close your time together by praying for the needs of the people in your group. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide each person toward their vocation or calling. Lastly, ask God to use you as the light and salt wherever you are working.