



PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

LESSON 1-2: THE DESIGN OF WORK

WELCOME & PRAYER

KICK OFF QUESTION

- What would need to change for you to enjoy your work?
- What kind of attitude should we have about work?

Let's investigate the history of work to understand its meaning and purpose.

KEY SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:26-2:3 (NLT)

Genesis 1 and 2 are foundational in understanding that God worked and therefore we have an innate need to work as well. If we do not work, we have a gaping hole in our worthiness. While folks sometimes struggle with the daily grind, we still have a basic need to work. Not always, but most times in Scripture, if you see the word 'work' you can substitute 'business'.

What observations you can make about what God says about work and about the creation?

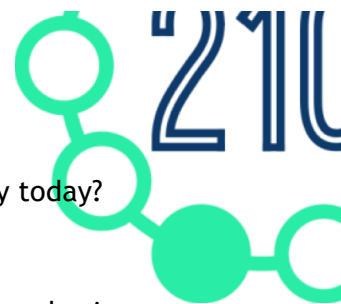
BIG PICTURE

1. Work is Godly: God created work, He worked and continues to work; and He created us to work.
2. Rest: God rested from His work, and he created us to, likewise, need rest.
3. Business: God's work parallels our work in business.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Is it reasonable to you to think that God worked, so therefore we should work? Why or why not?
- If you sometimes believe your work is menial, how does this Scripture impact your thinking?





- How did God design work for us? What was the work? Does this still apply today?
- How can we use our business and work for His glory? How could your work or business fit these characteristics?
- How should we work? What does now we work say about us? Should we work hard? What should our attitude be about work? How does this compare to your current attitude about work?
- If we truly believed that we were created in God's image, how would our work or business be different? Give specific examples.

SITUATIONAL EXERCISE

Think back to a Monday morning, after a weeklong vacation, when you first returned to the office. You have a pile of action items waiting for you and a team that has been missing your help ready to give you a list. What was your attitude? What does a Genesis-driven perspective do to that attitude?

Conversely, remember being unemployed, perhaps waiting for that first company to call you back for an interview, or maybe after you'd just been let go by a former employer. In either case, how did you feel? What does the Genesis-driven perspective lead you to do in that scenario?

WEEKLY APPLICATION

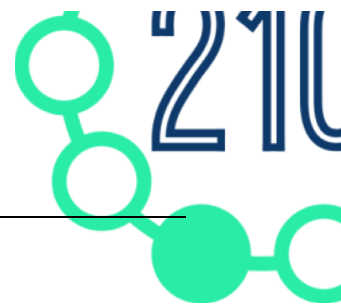
- Identify one action step that you can do to 1) work, and 2) rest differently than you currently do?
- During Lesson 3, be prepared to share what you personally experienced as a result of implementing this action step.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Every Good Endeavor*, by Timothy Keller, Chapters 1-3.
- *Work Matters*, by Tom Nelson, Introduction and Chapter 1.





SCRIPTURE AND BACKGROUND

Genesis 1:26-2:3 (NLT)

26 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.”

27 So God created human beings in his own image.

*In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

28 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.”

29 Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30 And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

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

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

2 So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. 2 On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested[a] from all his work.

3 And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

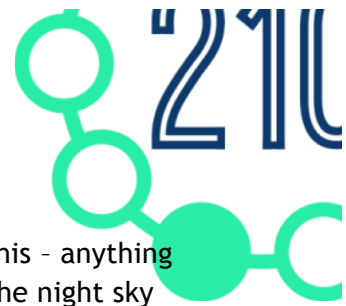
1. Work is fundamental in the Bible.

The Bible begins by talking about work. It is fundamental to God, just like love and grace. In the first three chapters of Genesis the word ‘created’ is used six times, ‘made’ is used eleven times and ‘work’ is used six times. Even though God created by speaking (or some other form of creation), His efforts can be considered “work.” In Genesis 2:1-3, ‘work’ is used three times to describe the act of creation. It is pretty amazing that God ‘worked’. Jesus states something similar in John 5:17:

“My Father is always working, and so am I.”

Thus, God the Father is working even today, and Jesus is as well. Both are always working. It is what they do; therefore, it follows that we should also ‘work.’ We are made for work. See Gen. 1:26-28a. If we do not fulfill that need, we have a life with less than full meaning.





2. God delights in his work.

The phrase 'very good' is used to describe God's view of his creation. Consider this - anything God does (His work) exceeds the ordinary. His work is spectacular. Just look at the night sky or the many images taken by the Hubble Telescope. God does amazing things and He delights in them. He looks around, smiles, and then enjoys His creation.

3. God Rested.

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. Gen 2:2-3 (NLT)

To enjoy His work, He must maintain a rhythm that includes rest. This allows Him to rest and also appreciate His creation, His work.

4. The Creation of Human Beings.

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. (Gen. 1:26-28a)

Three times in just two verses, it states that mankind was made in God's image. This is a remarkable revelation that God wants us to understand. He made us like Himself because He wants to have a relationship with us (Gen. 2 and 3 - God walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve). Therefore, if we are made in the image of God, we have a built-in need to do certain things He does, such as work. God created work and He actually worked Himself. Thus, since we were created in the image of God, we the capacity and fundamental need to work. We are not fulfilled unless we also work. Work is not a curse, but a blessing.

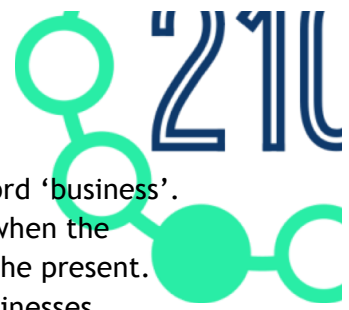
5. God's Direction for Work.

Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there He placed man he had made. Gen 2:8 (NLT)

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it [i.e., work]. Gen 2:15 (NLT)

The Lord planted the garden in Eden and then asked Adam and Eve to tend and watch (work) over it (Gen 2:8, 15). We are built and have a passion for work. It is undeniable. He used the Garden as a place to have community and communicate to Adam and Eve. Gen 3:8 says that the Lord God walked about the Garden and they heard Him. He sought a relationship from the beginning with Adam and Eve and used work as a form of common ground from which they could relate. God is in the marketplace where we work, just like He was with Adam and Eve.





Many times in Scripture, when the word ‘work’ is used, we can substitute the word ‘business’. Not all the time, but sometimes. While there were no formalized “businesses” when the creation occurred, there was “work.” The principle of godly work continues to the present. One aspect of godly work is “creation.” God created; businesses also create. Businesses provide goods and services to society. Simply put, they exist to help meet the needs of people. They provide jobs and therefore income to their employees, owners, and suppliers and vendors. Logically, when the author of Genesis (likely Moses) speaks of ‘work,’ we can relate it to business in today’s culture. The world continues to transform. It has changed from a solely agrarian society. to more of an industrial one, and now services and information are some of the big businesses. Regardless of the age, godly work applies. It's timeless.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES YOU CAN EXPLORE

- Genesis 1-3
- Colossians 3:17, 23

