



# PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

## LESSON 1-3: WORK AS WORSHIP

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### WELCOME & PRAYER

### FOLLOW UP FROM PRIOR LESSON

At the end of Lesson 2 you identified 1 action step that you could do to change your approach to work and/or rest. How did that go? What did you discover?

### KICK OFF QUESTION

- What are the different ways that we currently worship God?
- Is worshipful work limited to those in the field of ministry?

Let's investigate the concept of work as worship.

### KEY SCRIPTURE

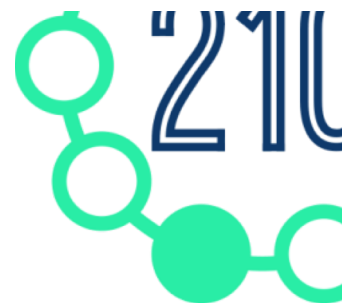
Romans 11:36 and Romans 12:1-3

God wants us to worship him. Worship is not solely the act of singing praise songs. In Romans, Paul pleads for people to give their bodies to God. Worship is giving all to Him - it is the true way to worship him. Worship is what we give to Him at all times, both at home *and* at work.

How can we consider our actions at work as worship of God the Father? This comes from seeking His will for our lives and approaching all things (including work) with a perspective unique to His Word. We are transformed by God and, thus, approach our work with an honesty and integrity that may not line up with generally worldly practices that we might encounter.

**How might the attitude of someone approaching work as *worship* be different from someone that isn't Kingdom-minded?**





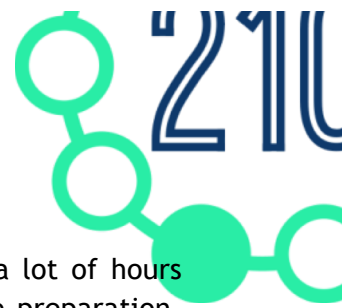
## BIG PICTURE

1. Our work and our business are intended to glorify God.
2. Our actions at work should be considered a holy sacrifice to Him.
3. We cannot change on our own - we can learn God's ways, learn a new way of thinking, only by choosing to let Him change us and by spending time in prayer and reading His Word.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What is the difference between worshipping work and using work as worship? How do you distinguish between the two in your work (be honest)?
- How do you glorify God at work? How do you worship God at work? Why can these challenges at times?
- In Romans 11:36, Paul says that “everything” comes from God. Do you agree with this statement? Is there anything that does not come from God? Do you live in accordance with this principle? Can you give an example of an area in your work or business that you do live in accordance with it, and an area that you do not?
- When do you normally go to God to seek His input at work? How would you like to do this differently, if at all? Identify an example of a time where spending time in the Word and/or in prayer resulted in a “new” manner of thinking that had an immediate application in your work or business?
- If your staff was asked to give you an evaluation in accordance with Romans 12:3, what would they say?
- How do your relationships with fellow staff, customers, competitors and suppliers promote or hinder your witness? Can you give an example of the way you acted/reacted to a situation promoted or potentially hindered another from seeing Christ work in your work or business?





## SITUATIONAL EXERCISE

Think of a scenario where a work team that you are on has been putting in a lot of hours towards a project that will be presented to your leadership team. During the preparation, one of your fellow team members makes a couple of errors in the information, and it slips past you, the editor of the presentation. The material is presented to a group that includes your direct supervisor, and the faulty data is caught and questioned, dampening the success of the report out. After the presentation, each of your team members is doing a one-on-one review with your supervisor.

Now even if you haven't experienced this exact scenario, you've probably experienced something similar. If you approach work as worship, what does this conversation with the supervisor look like? How does your conversation, as a Kingdom builder, potentially differ from those of teammates who approach the work differently?

## WEEKLY APPLICATION

- Over the next 2 weeks, spend time in prayer and in the Word. Ask God to transform your thinking and to give you a specific opportunity to put this principle of “Work as Worship” into practice in your workplace or business.
- During Lesson 4, be prepared to report what you personally experienced as a result of these prayers.

## CLOSING PRAYER

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Work as Worship: How the CEOs of Interstate Batteries, Hobby Lobby, PepsiCo, Tyson Foods and More Bring Meaning to their Work, by Mark Russell*





## SCRIPTURE AND BACKGROUND

*For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen. Romans 11:36*

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. <sup>2</sup> Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good*

*and pleasing and perfect. <sup>3</sup> Because of the privilege and authority\* God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Romans 12:1-3*

The following commentary is intended to help us understand that worship is much more than singing (although that is certainly a part of worship). We want to encourage you, as Paul was encouraging early Christians in Rome, to worship God in every aspect of your life, including your work and business. But, understanding how to worship Him through our work and business can be a challenge - the application of this truth is not always clear. To worship Him, we need to think differently (not arrogantly); and to think differently, we need to read His practice manual and spend time in prayer.

## SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

### Overview of Romans

The Book of Romans sets forth Paul's theological views. All other writings of Paul are personal letters to churches or people he knows, addressing issues within the church or sharing encouragement. Not so with Romans. Paul has never been to Rome when he writes the letter from Corinth in AD 59. He longs to go to Rome, but at this point, he has not been able to achieve this objective. Paul believes that travelling to Rome is critically important to his calling. Why? Rome is the capital of the Roman Empire and, in essence, the center of the world at this point in history. If he can get to Rome, he can influence its leaders, which will likely aid in spreading the Gospel globally. Paul was a strategic thinker.

The end of Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 presents a rich discussion of Christian living and has significant implications on how we glorify and worship God in our work and business.





## Romans 11:36

Paul discusses salvation, sin, grace, God's faithfulness and the struggle of Israel's unbelief in the first eleven chapters of Romans. He concludes the first 11 chapters with a dramatic finish and his most important point:

*For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen. Romans 11:36*

He expounds on this conclusion in Romans 12 through 15. But, before we venture into those Chapters, let's first drill into what Paul means in this verse.

Paul says: Everything comes from the Father. Everything. This includes our businesses and, more specifically, our work. These parts of life are provided by God, and are a gift from God. Paul uses repetition here to stress this most important point - everything is intended for His Glory! Thus, our businesses and our work are also intended for His Glory. We are working for the glory of God. We are to approach our daily work, no matter how mundane or trivial it may seem to us, as a way to glorify Him. We should recognize that our work (i.e., our businesses, leadership roles, relationships, money, treatment of employees and customers) is intended to glorify Him. Glorifying Him is worshipping Him. With this principle in mind, we must orient our thoughts about work to glorify Him.

Romans 11:36 is thus the foundational principle (we are to glorify God) that Paul builds upon in Romans 12:1-3 (which provides insights into how we are to worship Him).

## Romans 12:1

*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

Paul pleads with Christians in Rome to give every part of themselves and their lives to Christ. Jesus wants every part of us every day of the week, not just on Sunday. One of the biggest failures of our modern day society is that we don't give every part of our lives (work included) to God.

So how do we offer our "bodies" (every part of us) as a living and holy sacrifice in accordance with this worship? The answer is more than a physical task or labor: it is demonstrated by our thoughts, words and actions. He wants us to glorify Him:

- In difficult conversations in our workplaces;
- By how we treat our staff;
- When we interact with or entertain our customers;
- In how we talk about/treat our competitors;
- When we bid a job;





- When we are treated unfairly or unjustly;
- When our work is going well and when it is going poorly; and
- Whether our work is rewarding and when it is challenging.  
(Do you notice the theme of the Second Greatest Commandment?)

Clearly, glorifying Him in some of these circumstances will require sacrifice. But as Paul points out, this requires not just any sacrifice, but a holy sacrifice that is acceptable to God. (And isn't that what the Second Greatest Commandment really seeks - genuine sacrifice of "our" wants or needs to those around us?) Wow, our work is for Him, and this is one of the ways we worship Him. In fact, surrendering our wants, egos, desires, etc. to those of others is "truly" the way to worship Him. We don't do this to earn a reward from him (we would never be able to sufficiently earn it); but, because we love the Father and His Son, we do these things for God's glory.

## Romans 12:2

Verse two expands on what living as a sacrifice means:

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

We should not copy the worldly behavior of individuals or other companies and their business practices. Rather, God wants to change the way we think so that He can transform us. *Remember, God wants us to spend time in the Word and in prayer. One way we grow in our love for God is to spend time with Him in getting to know Him, and we do this by spending time in His Word and in having conversations with Him as we are in the Word (i.e., prayer). Being in the Word directs our prayers towards God's will.*

The encouraging aspect of this verse is that we can learn to think differently; we can be transformed. Like learning any profession or job, we can learn God's will for us and for our business. The question is: How do we learn this from God? First, it is intentional - we must choose to let Him do this. Second, we get His textbook and spend time processing the truths that He has for us. By doing these things, we will be transformed into a new person that looks, thinks, acts, reacts, speaks, and interacts with others drastically different from our former self. Our transformed person will know God's will, which will be good, pleasing and perfect. In other words, it is worship.

When you are transformed, other people see it, and notice the difference. Hopefully, this creates opportunities for us to have "Kingdom conversations" with others.





## Romans 12:3

But, after instructing us on sacrifice and transformation, Paul gives a warning in verse three:

*Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.*

If we are arrogant or think we are better than we really are, Paul's encouragement in verses 1-3 becomes immeasurably more difficult. Our spouses know the truth about us. Our employers know when we overvalue ourselves. And, our employees certainly understand our limitations, often better than we do (in the absence of candid, self-evaluation).

Thus, Paul encourages each of us: if you want to be transformed then be honest when you evaluate yourself. This requires humility. A good mechanism for self-evaluation may be your company's performance evaluation. If you have a meaningful "360 degree" performance evaluation, you will only get truthful feedback into who you are and how you are perceived.

When we are candid with ourselves, we understand the need to change the way we think; we know we must spend time with God in the Word and in prayer. When we do this, we change the way we act/react. The way in which we act and react in our work and business setting is a form of worship, and we glorify God as a result of this behavior.

### Additional Scripture References you can explore

- Romans 12:1-18
- Romans 6:13
- 1 Peter 2:5
- Ephesians 4:23
- 2 Corinthians 3:18

