

Foundational Principles

Lesson 1-6: Finding Meaning in Work

Discussion Guide – Confidentiality Reminder

One Word Check-in

Update – Personal, Business, Leadership

"I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned. ... 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." Ecclesiastes 2:18, 2:24 (NLT)

"Just a little more, and I'll be happy." If your desire is to make a lot of money, you will never have enough. If you want to be a millionaire and achieve it, next you will want to be a multi-millionaire. Like Solomon, many people pursue meaning through money, prestige and power, but eventually, maybe on their deathbed, they will look back to see this type of life was meaningless.

Examine your motivation for working. Solomon was one of the wisest and richest men that ever lived, but he did not get that way overnight. If you closely examine Solomon's writing in Ecclesiastes, you will notice in the first sentence that when his hard work was about making money, he found life meaningless. However, he eventually learned (decided) that finding satisfaction in his work was a gift from God. Satisfaction did not come from how much money he made. So, what changed Solomon's thinking? His purpose for work changed. He went from thinking about how much money he could make to learning how to find additional satisfaction in his work. What changed was why he worked.

So how does anyone, whether Christian or not, find meaning in their work? Galatians 5:22-23 gives the fruits of a meaningful life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These same attributes, if applied, will bring meaning to our work as well. From a practical perspective, this means we can find significance in our work if we do the following:

- Look for the best in people
- Help others succeed
- Be joyful in spite of difficulties
- Build relationships even with difficult people
- Ethically and morally do what is right
- Do the job well
- Be a humble servant, especially leaders
- Have empathy

Shared Experiences:

- Do you have examples of people who build others up? What are the results?
- What practices have you observed to motivate marginally performing people to want to fully engage in their work?
- How easy or difficult is it to always do what is ethically and morally right? What is a "gray" ethical decision you have faced?
- Describe what it would be like working with humble and empathetic leaders?
- From the bulleted list above, what is one thing you can focus on?

Bottom Line: Working just to become wealthy is meaningless and unfulfilling, but purpose in work brings great pleasure. It is a gift from God to enjoy your work.

Challenge:

- **Evaluate your current stage in life** and its direction. If nothing changes over the next 10-20 years, will you look back and be satisfied with your work?
- If this is not the direction you desire, what needs to change? **Write down the story for the life you want** over the next twenty years. Yes, this means to think, ponder and write it out.
- **Write down the decisions** you must make to achieve this life story.

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Dig Deeper

Want to learn more?

- *Video:* Simon Sinek presentation [The Secret Everyone Should Know](#)
- *Video:* Ken Eldred speaking at [CGI Seminar in October 2019](#)
- *Book:* [“The Integrated Life – Experience the Powerful Advantage of Integrating your Faith and Work”](#) by Ken Eldred. This book is excellent. Eldred was not a Christian initially but found Christ early in his career. He documents his journey as a successful entrepreneur (selling his first company for \$400 million), venture capitalist and philanthropist.
- *Book:* [“A Million Miles in a Thousand Years”](#) by Donald Miller. This is Donald Miller’s thought process, actions and ultimate decision to write a better story for his life, which is the challenge of this lesson. Miller was a best-selling author, but had no purpose, gained weight, slept much of the day and had failed relationships with women. This book is his journey that also included riding a bicycle across the U.S. Today, he has the best marketing concepts available for business and has a successful company called [Story Brand](#). If you want to write a better story for your life, you should read this book.

Rather than provide additional information for you, it is highly recommended you spend your time looking 20 years in the future to evaluate your current trajectory. Are you satisfied with the trajectory or should you make some changes? It is up to you.