

## Bible Studies on a Christian Attitude to Work

### Study 3: Working for God ... and resting

1. Discuss:
  - a. Do you think God is interested in the work you do? Why/why not?
  - b. Whose work does God take an interest in?
2. We probably don't find it hard to see how God takes an interest in, and values, the work of those who work in Christian ministry [if you have the time and inclination, see for example Matthew 10:8-10; 1 Corinthians 9:1-12; 1 Timothy 5:17-18]. However, it is not just ministers and missionaries whose work is valuable to God. Have a look at what Paul says about how we should all serve God in every situation in 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:22-24 ...
  - a. According to Paul, who do you work for ultimately?
  - b. How do you – or could you – serve God and live for his glory in your work?
3. Often our workplaces and environments in which we move are hostile place. Not that people are necessarily cruel and unpleasant (although sometimes that's the case!), but that their beliefs and values are quite different to – and increasingly opposed to – ours. Have a look at what Peter says about how we should conduct ourselves among the “Gentiles” (that is, unbelievers) in 1 Peter 2:11-25 and 3:13-17 ...
  - a. What does Peter say we should be *doing* before we try to *say* anything?
  - b. St Francis of Assisi has often been credited with saying “Preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words.”<sup>1</sup> What do you think this means? Is it true?
  - c. Under what circumstances does Peter say we should open our mouths and share, or explain and defend, our faith? Can you share a time when this has happened for you?
4. However important work is, rest is also important. Discuss:
  - a. What do you like to do on your day off?
  - b. Do you feel guilty about not working?
  - c. Do you find it hard to take time off work?
5. God told his people in the Old Testament to have one day of rest a week [see Exodus 20:8-11]<sup>2</sup> ...
  - a. Why was this important, and what was this day for?
  - b. Do you think this instruction applies to Christians today?
  - c. What do you think Jesus meant in Mark 2:27 [it might help to read in context]?
6. Rest, however, was not just one day at the end of the week – it was the ultimate goal at the end of the journey. As Israel travelled through the wilderness, they looked forward to resting in the Promised Land [see for example Deuteronomy 4:8-12]. And yet, although they did enter that land, they didn't experience real rest [see Psalm 95:10-11].
  - a. Where, when, and how do find proper, long-term, rest [Read Hebrews 4:1-11]?
  - b. Can we know “rest” here and now [Read Matthew 11:28-29]? What does this mean?

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<sup>1</sup> It seems he probably never actually said this – at least no solid evidence can be found that he did. But it does kind of fit with some of the things he *did* say.

<sup>2</sup> Those passages referred to as “see ...” are not necessary reading, only interesting reading if you have time!