



A publication of  **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

**1** Pastor Doug noted that some people **hate** their work, while others **worship** it. Where do you fit?



**2** In which direction is your view of work currently trending—and why?

**3** Read Matthew 5:13-16. Tasteless salt truly would be disappointing. Tell us about a product in which you've been thoroughly disappointed. How much did you pay for it? What did you do with it?

**4** Note that Jesus says that Christians ***are—not should be***—the salt and light of the world. What is the significance of the fact that these are statements of fact—not commands?

**5** Notice that v. 16 is a command, not simply a statement of fact. What is the significance of that?

**6** When our light shines properly, **whose** good works are observed? **Who** receives the glory? Explain this.

**7** Pastor Doug urged us to view our work as a context for ministry (see the [Sermon Summary](#)). Who has had a meaningful ministry opportunity in the workplace? Please tell us about it.

8 Of the six bulleted suggestions Pastor Doug made, which ones have opened doors for you to minister?  
Which of those suggestions do you think could help you minister even more successfully—and why?

**9** As a group, pair up and begin working on our memory verse...

## Application-Challenge

- Begin your workday by thanking God for the gift of work.
- Memorize Colossians 3:23-24 and determine to apply it. **10**
- Be salt and light at work by applying the **six bulleted suggestions** (see **Sermon Summary**).

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Colossians 3:23-24

- 1 This is a low-risk, soft ball question, and thus a good starting point. Ask both parts of this question—where they are on this “love-hate” continuum, and who/what most shaped your opinion of work.
- 2 Only after group members have explored where they lie on the continuum, and what/who influenced them most (positively or negatively), then it’s time to ask about what’s happening in their view of work now. Are they growing in a biblical direction (ie, from either of the extremes, to viewing work as a gift from jGod and an opportunity for ministry).
- 3 The objective of this line of questioning is to examine the disappointment of unfulfilled purpose—but we’re easing into it. It is a difficult theological idea for most American Christians to consider that God wants fruitfulness from us and that he’s not OK with barrenness (consider all of Jesus’ parables of kings who go away for a while and leave sums of money with servants to make a profit. He get’s peeved when they don’t.) So, this question asks, “What’s an item you’ve bought, but which didn’t fulfill its purpose?” Examples include bad haircuts, golf drivers that don’t live up to the hype, cheap vacuums, etc.
- 4 The idea here is that God **has given** us an assignment—it’s not optional. The only question is, “Will we be **profitable** salt and light?”
- 5 Just as a (lit) city on a hill cannot be hidden, but those same lights, when put under a basket, do no good, so Christians are to shine **in a certain way**. Jesus says explicitly that our light is “good works”—but they’re to be done in a way that draws attention to God, not to us. Just establish this idea, and then segue to 6.
- 6 People **must** see **our** good works, but their attention must be drawn to God. How? Dig into this idea. How could being an employee/boss/student/spouse/neighbor **in the right way** draw attention to God?
- 7 Say something like this: “In order for us to be salt and light, people have to know that it is **Jesus** who makes us different (otherwise we’re glorifying ourselves). Then, the question: Who has had a meaningful ministry opportunity in the workplace? Please tell us about it.”
- 8 Solicit examples of these points in action. Remember: dig for concrete examples, not abstract, vague, or ambiguous ones (a cross necklace **could** just be jewelery, or it **could** point to the governing reality of your life. Words are required too. As Pastor Doug says, “We are to be audio-visual Christians.”).
- 9
- 10 Everybody says he can’t memorize Scripture, but we’ve memorized a bunch of other things (like how to use your TV’s remote control!). Make it a game, a competition. Go for it!

Work dominates the landscape of modern life.

How should we view it?

## Sermon Summary

**I. Some people worship their work.** Whether these folks are working in the marketplace or as a full time student, some people love the work that they do. Maybe it pays well and they get lots of recognition. A lot of you also love the social network you have in the workplace. Work can be intoxicating, and so you put in lots of hours. But because you work so much, you have no emotional energy left when you get home, and so you end up neglecting your God-given responsibilities as a follower of Christ, as a husband, a wife, a mom, a dad, a son, a daughter, or a friend. God never intended that we find our ultimate fulfillment, or escape from other difficulties, through our work.

**II. Some people hate their work.** These folks live for the weekend—you want your paycheck (or, your diploma). You do just enough to get by. At its root, this attitude is a theological misunderstanding about the nature of work and how God views it. Filling out an expense report can be as spiritual as reading your Bible (1 Corinthians 10:31). God is just as interested in how you go about doing your work as he is in what you do at church. Both those who live for work, and those who live for the weekend, reflect an unbalanced, unbiblical perspective of work. We are not to worship our work, as if our ultimate significance were found there, nor to hate our work, as if it were insignificant in God's eyes.

**III. We should view our work as a gift from God** (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). **(a)** Work helps provide for our needs, and for those of our family. Money doesn't just magically appear in our bank accounts; we have to work for it (Proverbs 13:4). **(b)** Work gives us financial margin so that we can help those who are less fortunate (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:18). **(c)** Work generates resources to invest in God's eternally significant Kingdom (Matthew 6:19-20).

**IV. We should view our work as a context for ministry.** In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus used two metaphors to describe the influence that He wants his followers to have in this world: salt and light. In a world with no refrigeration, salt served as a preservative and a flavor-enhancer. Jesus wants us to have those impacts in our world. And, as light dispels darkness, God wants us to act as spiritual lights pointing people to his Son Jesus Christ. That's our purpose, and if we're tasteless salt or a covered light, Jesus said we're of no use at all. We spend most of our time and have the greatest opportunity to rub shoulders with those who don't yet have a relationship with Christ at work. God has sovereignly placed you where you work or where you attend school for a reason—and it is not just to get money or a diploma! Your goal is to be salt and light in those relationships. So, how can we do that?

- **Work hard and master your craft.** (Colossians 3:23-24)
- **Always act with character and integrity.** (Psalm 15)
- **Be kind and gracious.** (2 Timothy 2:24)
- **Be open about your Christian commitment.** (1 Peter 3:15)
- **Be alert to those who respond positively to you.** (*That's what Jesus did.*)
- **Ask God to give you opportunities to sow spiritual seeds, and then seize them when he does.** (Ephesians 6:18-20)

Remember: work is a gift from God and it provides a natural context for ministry.

### Talking To God About This Week's Message

*"Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."*

### Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, "*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

***Sometimes it's hard to "see God in our workplace". This week we're studying a worker who had perhaps the most adverse circumstances imaginable—a dungeon! Let's see what we can learn from the life of Joseph...***

**Monday**—Read Genesis 37

From today's text, how do you see Joseph...

1. ...serving others?
2. ...meeting his own needs and/or those of his family?
3. ...earning so as to have something to share with others?
4. ...loving God through right action and right motives?

**Tuesday**—Read Genesis 39

From today's text, how do you see Joseph...

1. ...serving others?
2. ...meeting his own needs and/or those of his family?
3. ...earning so as to have something to share with others?
4. ...loving God through right action and right motives?

**Wednesday**—Read Genesis 40

From today's text, how do you see Joseph...

1. ...serving others?
2. ...meeting his own needs and/or those of his family?
3. ...earning so as to have something to share with others?
4. ...loving God through right action and right motives?

**Thursday**—Read Genesis 41

From today's text, how do you see Joseph...

1. ...serving others?
2. ...meeting his own needs and/or those of his family?
3. ...earning so as to have something to share with others?
4. ...loving God through right action and right motives?

**Friday**—Read Genesis 45

From today's text, how do you see Joseph...

1. ...serving others?
2. ...meeting his own needs and/or those of his family?
3. ...earning so as to have something to share with others?
4. ...loving God through right action and right motives?

**Saturday**—Read Genesis 47

From today's text, how do you see Joseph...

1. ...serving others?
2. ...meeting his own needs and/or those of his family?
3. ...earning so as to have something to share with others?
4. ...loving God through right action and right motives?