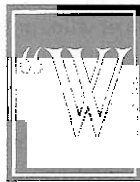




## THE WORLD OF WORK

TIM CLINTON AND GEORGE OHLSCHLAGER

(2 Thessalonians 3:10-15)



What do you do?"

Many people have been asked that question thousands of times. The question is presaged by the question in childhood, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

We are socialized early on in life to the importance of work. And so it should be. Much more than just a means to a livelihood, work is a source of identity, a well of friendships and associations, and a way in which people derive meaning and satisfaction in life. When things aren't going well on the job, it makes for some long days and discouraged people.

### GOD AND OUR WORK

Some Christians believe that work is also a form of worship, a sacred extension of the ongoing creative process by which God still functions. The Bible reveals that work, despite its being a product of the Fall, has been made a source of human dignity.

Because of disobedience to God, man was cursed to eke out an existence from the earth, struggling to live by the sweat of his brow until death (Gen. 3:17-19). Yet God has redeemed work, and looks upon people at work with dignity and protection, calling for justice and honesty in all employer-worker relations. God calls upon humankind to work honestly, heartily, happily, and as though we are working for the Lord (Ex. 23:12; Eccl. 5:19; Col. 3:23).

The church at Thessalonica had developed a serious problem. Some had become so convinced of Christ's imminent return that they gave up working and began to wait for the Second Coming. This created some serious problems as the wait extended from days to weeks to months. Paul encouraged these believers to follow his example of hard work and commanded the church not to feed those who refused to

work (2 Thess. 3:10-15). Honest work and understanding that one must work to provide for the necessities of living have been central values in the church for nearly two thousand years.

The fact that there are so many dissatisfied workers today may also mean that the value of work has been distorted. Think of how many people you know who are unhappy in their work, unfulfilled and bored to tears by the 9 to 5 routine. Maybe work has lost the moral and biblical anchors that balance its importance in the larger scheme of things. Maybe worker dissatisfaction simply means that too many people have chosen their life's work poorly, for the wrong reasons, or with the wrong fit of interests, skills, personality, and gifts. Whatever the reason, work dissatisfaction, job stress, and interpersonal conflict in work organizations are a big reason why many people and work organizations seek professional help, including counseling.

Our work life must be maintained as a proper priority in relation to God, marriage and family life, and commitments to church and community. When this balance is not held, work can easily become an idol, a false god that serves as a terrible taskmaster. "Workaholicism" has become an all-consuming obsession for too many modern workers, a sleep-depriving, health-robbing, greed-festering monster that may be the most rewarded—and least challenged—addiction in America.

Like all addicts, workaholics must be able to admit their obsessive drivenness and confess its many costs. They must be

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able to build and maintain times of rest, play, family, and leisure. Work addicts need to realize that the deeper life with Christ comes only after one is able to be still and know God.

### **FINDING THE BEST WORK**

Career counselors and experts say that the accelerating pace of technological change combined with the high mobility and trainability of the modern workforce will lead workers in the current generation to change jobs and/or careers nine times over the course of their lifetimes.

Career counseling generally seeks to facilitate four primary objectives in helping people find and fit into a good job or career:

- increasing self-awareness of values and work interests,
- becoming familiar with the world of work,
- teaching assessment and decision-making skills,
- teaching skills to enhance employability.

Work without a purpose, without a vision for how we are advancing the cause of God's kingdom, can easily become meaningless. Disciplined work is recognizing that excellence can be achieved by tackling tasks every day with wisdom, commitment, and earnest effort. Diligent workers are pursuing and achieving excellence—they have caught a vision of how their work fits into the larger purposes of God. These high-level workers seek to be directed by the Holy Spirit, and their effort and excellence reflect the fruits of this vision motivation.

The following values and goals are important when considering work and career issues:

1. Pursue your choice of life's work as a calling from God, believing that He will guide and prepare you to accomplish a good work in your life.
2. Increase understanding of your interests, personality, style, gifts, and talents, seeking to explore and test how these things fit into a variety of different jobs.
3. Increase your skill and usability of "universal" job skills—analytical thinking and evaluating skills, command of positive communicating, writing, and speaking skills, interpersonal relationship skills, and **problem-solving skills**.
4. Determine how to attain the skills and credentials you need for your particular work pursuits in the most time/cost effective way.
5. Be willing to engage in ongoing education for increased knowledge and skills enhancement in your field.
6. Whatever you do, do it with praise and thanksgiving, spread the credit around to your colleagues and coworkers, and give glory to God for its achievement.

### **FURTHER MEDITATION:**

Other passages to study about the issue of work include:

- Genesis 2:2, 15
- Exodus 20:8-11
- Proverbs 28:19
- 1 Timothy 5:8

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To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on work at 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 on page 1588. See also the personality profile of Aaron on page 87.

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wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. <sup>14</sup>Therefore I desire that *the younger widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. <sup>15</sup>For some have already turned aside after Satan. <sup>16</sup>If any believing man or<sup>a</sup> woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

#### HONOR THE ELDERS

<sup>17</sup>Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, "*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,*"<sup>a</sup> and, "*The laborer is worthy of his wages.*"<sup>b</sup> <sup>19</sup>Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup>Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

<sup>21</sup>I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. <sup>22</sup>Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

<sup>23</sup>No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

<sup>24</sup>Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. <sup>25</sup>Likewise, the good works of *some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

#### HONOR MASTERS

**6** Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. <sup>2</sup>And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

#### ERROR AND GREED

<sup>3</sup>If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup>he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with dis-

5:16 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *man* or. 5:18 <sup>a</sup>Deuteronomy 25:4 <sup>b</sup>Luke 10:7

#### SOUL NOTE



**Taking Care of Business (5:8)** To neglect one's basic responsibility of care and support of the family is the same as denying the faith. No one can claim love for and allegiance to God while neglecting to provide for their family. Paul called such an irresponsible person "worse than an unbeliever," for even unbelievers understand family responsibility. God gives us our families and they are our first responsibility. We show our love for God through how we treat our family. We can thank God for the work He provides whereby we can take care of those who depend on us. **Topic: Work**

#### SOUL NOTE



**Don't Pass It On (5:13)** The context of this verse discusses the care of widows by the church. The truth taught, however, is that people with too much time on their hands often get into trouble. Without enough work to occupy their time, such people can become gossips and busybodies, visiting from house to house, "saying things which they ought not." That describes gossip—saying things that shouldn't be repeated. We should be careful about what we say, seeking to make sure that our words are truthful, loving, and edifying. **Topic: Gossip**

## LIGHT BEARERS

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup>Do all things without complaining and disputing, <sup>15</sup>that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup>holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

<sup>17</sup>Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup>For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

## TIMOTHY COMMENDED

<sup>19</sup>But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. <sup>20</sup>For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. <sup>21</sup>For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. <sup>22</sup>But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup>Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. <sup>24</sup>But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

## EPAPHRODITUS PRAISED

<sup>25</sup>Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; <sup>26</sup>since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. <sup>27</sup>For

indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. <sup>29</sup>Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; <sup>30</sup>because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

## ALL FOR CHRIST

**3** Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. **3** For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.

<sup>2</sup>Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! <sup>3</sup>For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit,<sup>a</sup> rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup>circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

<sup>7</sup>But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup>Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteous-

<sup>3:3</sup> <sup>a</sup>NU-Text and M-Text read *who worship in the Spirit of God.*

## SOUL NOTE



**Works Don't Work** (3:5, 6) Paul seems to be boasting of his achievements, but actually he was explaining that his human accomplishments, no matter how impressive or extensive, could not earn salvation and eternal life with God. Paul didn't depend on his works to please God, because even the most impressive resumé falls short of God's standards. We can't rely on our good works to usher us into eternity—it's so much easier than that! All we need to do is confess our sins and believe in Jesus as our personal Savior. God isn't impressed by what we've done—He's impressed by our acceptance of His grace. **Topic: Work**

ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

<sup>5</sup>And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, <sup>6</sup>whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

<sup>7</sup>Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

#### STEPHEN ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

<sup>8</sup>And Stephen, full of faith<sup>a</sup> and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. <sup>9</sup>Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. <sup>10</sup>And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. <sup>11</sup>Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” <sup>12</sup>And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. <sup>13</sup>They also set up false witnesses who said, “This man does not cease to speak blasphemous<sup>a</sup> words against this holy place and the law; <sup>14</sup>for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” <sup>15</sup>And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

#### STEPHEN'S ADDRESS: THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

**7** Then the high priest said, “Are these things so?”

<sup>2</sup>And he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen:

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, <sup>3</sup>and said to him, ‘Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.’<sup>a</sup> <sup>4</sup>Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. <sup>5</sup>And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. <sup>6</sup>But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. <sup>7</sup>And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,<sup>a</sup> said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.’<sup>b</sup> <sup>8</sup>Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob. and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.

#### THE PATRIARCHS IN EGYPT

<sup>9</sup>And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him <sup>10</sup>and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. <sup>11</sup>Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. <sup>12</sup>But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. <sup>13</sup>And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and

6:8 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text reads *grace*. 6:13 <sup>a</sup>NU-Text omits *blasphemous*. 7:3 <sup>a</sup>Genesis 12:1 7:7 <sup>a</sup>Genesis 15:14 <sup>b</sup>Exodus 3:12

#### SOUL NOTE



**God's Work (6:1-4)** The Jerusalem believers were becoming divided over culture, language, and distribution of food to widows. So the church found men to put in charge of that job. These were likely the first deacons. While their job was to do the administrative work so the apostles could focus on preaching, that did not make their work any less important. They served well. Whatever jobs we do, we should do them knowing that we serve Christ above all others (Col. 3:23, 24).

**Topic: Work**

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<sup>24</sup>And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. <sup>25</sup>Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' <sup>a</sup> feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" <sup>26</sup>So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"—because of the circumcision.

<sup>27</sup>And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. <sup>28</sup>So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. <sup>29</sup>Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the

elders of the children of Israel. <sup>30</sup>And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. <sup>31</sup>So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

#### FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH

**5** Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.' "

<sup>2</sup>And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go."

<sup>3</sup>So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days'

4:25 <sup>a</sup>Literally *his*

### PERSONALITY PROFILE



#### Work

## AARON: SERVING TOGETHER

(EXODUS 4:27)

Before God called Moses to return to Egypt and lead Israel to the Promised Land, He sent for backup. Even as Moses and God debated the former's leadership qualifications, Aaron was already on the way. God had an answer for all Moses' excuses. But Moses persisted in dodging God's call. God finally silenced Moses' resistance with anger. It took God's passion to get Moses' full attention. God then agreed to assign Aaron as Moses' spokesman and assistant.

Moses and Aaron functioned as a task force. They fulfilled God's plan to free the Israelites because they worked together. Some people make their greatest contribution, not as individual stars, but as part of a team—in relationship to another or to a group. History is full of good working teams whose accomplishments are greater than the sum of their individual parts. In the Bible, we see David and Jonathan, Paul and Silas, Mary and Martha, and Peter, James, and John.

Like Aaron, some teammates always play "backup," never stepping into the starring role. During the infamous golden calf incident, Aaron learned a valuable lesson about himself—he wasn't cut out to lead alone. His most effective role was derived from his unique relationship with Moses. The mark of a successful supporting teammate is a commitment to promote and enhance the lead player, and to do so without jealousy or competition.

Aaron left an effective legacy as he labored with Moses. He accepted his secondary role, and did the work that was asked of him with courage and gusto. In our vocations, we should look for "significant others" who can share our goals and vision for the task. Sometimes we will lead; most often we will find ourselves supporting the efforts of other people. Until we know how to support, we will not be ready to lead.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about work on pages 1590, 1591. See also the key passage note at 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12 on page 1588.

<sup>12</sup>And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I *am* of uncircumcised lips?"

<sup>13</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

#### THE FAMILY OF MOSES AND AARON

<sup>14</sup>These *are* the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. <sup>15</sup>And the sons of Simeon *were* Jemuel,<sup>a</sup> Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These *are* the families of Simeon. <sup>16</sup>These *are* the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. <sup>17</sup>The sons of Gershon *were* Libni and Shimi according to their families. <sup>18</sup>And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* one hundred and thirty-three. <sup>19</sup>The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of Levi according to their generations.

<sup>20</sup>Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. <sup>21</sup>The sons of Izhar *were* Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. <sup>22</sup>And the sons of Uzziel *were* Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. <sup>23</sup>Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. <sup>24</sup>And the sons of Korah *were* Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. <sup>25</sup>Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him

Phinehas. These *are* the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

<sup>26</sup>These *are the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." <sup>27</sup>These *are* the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These *are the same* Moses and Aaron.

#### AARON IS MOSES' SPOKESMAN

<sup>28</sup>And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, <sup>29</sup>that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I *am* the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

<sup>30</sup>But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

**7** So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you *as* God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. <sup>2</sup>You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. <sup>3</sup>And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. <sup>4</sup>But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. <sup>5</sup>And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

<sup>6</sup>Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. <sup>7</sup>And Moses *was* eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

**6:15** <sup>a</sup>Spelled *Nemuel* in Numbers 26:12

#### SOUL NOTE



**Catch the Vision (7:2)** It's not enough to be *called* a leader—you must *act* like a leader if you expect people to follow you. That's the challenge Moses and Aaron faced as they prepared to meet with Pharaoh and to convince the Israelites. God had already authorized them to speak on His behalf. Now it was up to them to communicate that authority. A good leader must be able to articulate the vision, communicate the message, and express inner passion so others can envision the goal and strive for it. **Topic: Work**

dew lay all around the camp. <sup>14</sup>And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup>So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was.

And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. <sup>16</sup>This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.' "

<sup>17</sup>Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. <sup>18</sup>So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. <sup>19</sup>And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning." <sup>20</sup>Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. <sup>21</sup>So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted.

<sup>22</sup>And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. <sup>23</sup>Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.' " <sup>24</sup>So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. <sup>25</sup>Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the

field. <sup>26</sup>Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

<sup>27</sup>Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. <sup>28</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? <sup>29</sup>See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." <sup>30</sup>So the people rested on the seventh day.

<sup>31</sup>And the house of Israel called its name Manna.<sup>a</sup> And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

<sup>32</sup>Then Moses said, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.' " <sup>33</sup>And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." <sup>34</sup>As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. <sup>35</sup>And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. <sup>36</sup>Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.

#### WATER FROM THE ROCK

**17** Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>Therefore the people contended

**16:31** <sup>a</sup>Literally *What?* (compare Exodus 16:15)

#### SOUL NOTE



**The Rest of the Story (16:23)** God gave His people a day of rest, a day when they were not supposed to work. But everyone had to work hard in preparation on the day before, in order to be able to rest completely on the Sabbath. To take full advantage of our day of rest and worship, we too need to prepare ahead of time. That way, we won't need to run to the store or finish a work project. We need to be organized enough to be ready to rest and focus on God on Sundays. **Topic: Work**



dah; <sup>31</sup>and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, <sup>32</sup>to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, <sup>33</sup>in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.

<sup>34</sup>“And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, *in* him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. <sup>35</sup>He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine linen, and of the weaver—those who do every work and those who design artistic works.

**36** “And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded.”

#### THE PEOPLE GIVE MORE THAN ENOUGH

<sup>2</sup>Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work. <sup>3</sup>And they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. <sup>4</sup>Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, <sup>5</sup>and they spoke to Moses, saying, “The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded us to do.”

<sup>6</sup>So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, “Let neither man nor woman do

any more work for the offering of the sanctuary.” And the people were restrained from bringing, <sup>7</sup>for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much.

#### BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

<sup>8</sup>Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*; with artistic designs of cherubim they made them. <sup>9</sup>The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the curtains were all the same size. <sup>10</sup>And he coupled five curtains to one another, and *the other* five curtains he coupled to one another. <sup>11</sup>He made loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set; likewise he did on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. <sup>12</sup>Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain on the end of the second set; the loops held one *curtain* to another. <sup>13</sup>And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be one tabernacle.

<sup>14</sup>He made curtains of goats' *hair* for the tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. <sup>15</sup>The length of each curtain was thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains were the same size. <sup>16</sup>He coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. <sup>17</sup>And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain of the second set. <sup>18</sup>He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, that it might be one. <sup>19</sup>Then he made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, and a covering of badger skins above *that*.

#### SOUL NOTE



**On the Job (36:1)** How can the Holy Spirit be present in your work? Whatever job you have, you can work as though God were your employer. Bezalel and Aholiab were gifted by God. The trained men and women who worked to build the tabernacle had been gifted and motivated by the Holy Spirit. Their finished product shows that excellence was their hallmark. Together, this team modeled the Spirit's presence in their work—for they worked hard and with excellence. In any work you do, let God shine through every aspect of it. **Topic: Work**

for the head of *each* father's house. <sup>4</sup>Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. <sup>5</sup>And it shall be *that* the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

<sup>6</sup>So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods. <sup>7</sup>And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

<sup>8</sup>Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. <sup>9</sup>Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

<sup>10</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." <sup>11</sup>Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

<sup>12</sup>So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! <sup>13</sup>Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

#### DUTIES OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES

**18** Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity *related to* the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with* your priesthood. <sup>2</sup>Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve

you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of witness. <sup>3</sup>They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall **not** come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die—they and you also. <sup>4</sup>They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you. <sup>5</sup>And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there *may* be no more wrath on the children of Israel. <sup>6</sup>Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; *they are* a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>7</sup>Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood *to you* as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

#### OFFERINGS FOR SUPPORT OF THE PRIESTS

<sup>8</sup>And the LORD spoke to Aaron: "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heaven offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. <sup>9</sup>This shall be yours of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, *shall be* most holy for you and your sons. <sup>10</sup>In a most holy *place* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

<sup>11</sup>"This also is yours: the heaven offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

#### SOUL NOTE



**The Gift** (18:6, 7) Work is a gift? That's exactly what God told the Levites whom he had chosen to serve in the tabernacle: "I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service." God makes work sacred. Almost any job can be done for the glory of God. Those who see their vocations as gifts through which they can serve God gain a whole new perspective. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). **Topic: Work**

5 And behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to my father David, saying, "Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name."  
6 Now therefore, command that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon; and my servants will be with your servants, and I will pay you wages for your servants according to whatever you say. For you know *there is* none among us who has skill to cut timber like the Sidonians.

So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him.

1 KINGS 5:12

7 So it was, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly and said,

Blessed be the LORD this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people!

8 Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying:

I have considered *the message* which you sent me, and I will do all you desire concerning the cedar and cypress logs. My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon to the sea; I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you indicate to me, and will have them broken apart there; then you can take *them* away. And you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household.

10 Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs according to all his desire. 11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand kors of

wheat as food for his household, and twenty kors of pressed oil. Thus Solomon gave to Hiram year by year.

12 So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty together.

13 Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel; and the labor force was thirty thousand men. 14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adoniram was in charge of the labor force. 15 Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried stone in the mountains, 16 besides three thousand three hundred<sup>a</sup> from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. 17 And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the temple.<sup>a</sup> 18 So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried *them*; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.

**SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE**

6 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth<sup>a</sup> year after the children of Is-

5:11 <sup>a</sup>Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint and Syriac read *twenty thousand*. 5:16 <sup>a</sup>Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *three thousand six hundred*. 5:17 <sup>a</sup>Literally *house*, and so frequently throughout this book. 6:1 <sup>a</sup>Following Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *fortieth*.



**SOUL NOTE**

**Family First (5:12-14)** God had given Solomon wisdom to rule the nation.

There was peace in the land, so the nation could devote itself and its resources to building a glorious temple for God. Even as Solomon planned its construction, he used great wisdom. He drew upon the nation's labor force, divided it into three groups, and rotated the groups so they would be one month in Jerusalem and then two months at home. Solomon allowed for continuous work without burning out his workers or hurting their families. No matter how important the work, the workers' families must not be neglected. **Topic: Work**

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the vestibule that *was* in front of the sanctuary<sup>a</sup> was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the height *was* one hundred and<sup>b</sup> twenty. He overlaid the inside with pure gold. <sup>5</sup>The larger room<sup>a</sup> he paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it. <sup>6</sup>And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold *was* gold from Parvaim. <sup>7</sup>He also overlaid the house—the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors—with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

<sup>8</sup>And he made the Most Holy Place. Its length was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. <sup>9</sup>The weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold; and he overlaid the upper area with gold. <sup>10</sup>In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold. <sup>11</sup>The wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits in *overall* length: one wing of the one cherub *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; <sup>12</sup>one wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *also was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. <sup>13</sup>The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward. <sup>14</sup>And he made the veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.

<sup>15</sup>Also he made in front of the temple<sup>a</sup> two pillars thirty-five<sup>b</sup> cubits high, and the capital that *was* on the top of each of *them* was five cubits. <sup>16</sup>He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put *them* on top of the pillars; and he made one hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the wreaths of chainwork. <sup>17</sup>Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the

other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz.

#### FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

**4** Moreover he made a bronze altar: twenty cubits was its length, twenty cubits its width, and ten cubits its height.

<sup>2</sup>Then he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. <sup>3</sup>And under it *was* the likeness of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast. <sup>4</sup>It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. <sup>5</sup>It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained three thousand<sup>a</sup> baths.

<sup>6</sup>He also made ten lavers, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the Sea *was* for the priests to wash in. <sup>7</sup>And he made ten lampstands of gold according to their design, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. <sup>8</sup>He also made ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made one hundred bowls of gold.

**3:4** <sup>a</sup>The main room of the temple; elsewhere called the holy place (compare 1 Kings 6:3) <sup>b</sup>Following Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Vulgate; Arabic, some manuscripts of the Septuagint, and Syriac omit *one hundred and*. **3:5** <sup>a</sup>Literally *house* **3:15** <sup>a</sup>Literally *house* <sup>b</sup>Or *eighteen* (compare 1 Kings 7:15; 2 Kings 25:17; and Jeremiah 52:21) **4:5** <sup>a</sup>Or *two thousand* (compare 1 Kings 7:26)

#### SOUL NOTE



**Well Done** (3:1–17) Chapters 3 and 4 describe the intricate details of the construction of the temple. The effort, the care, and the attention to detail with which the temple was constructed show that work done for God should be done well. There should be no room for shoddiness or halfhearted measures in our work for God. The quality of our service for Him reflects our attitude toward Him.

**Topic: Work**

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rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces, and that they have incited sedition within the city in former times, for which cause this city was destroyed.

- 16 We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion beyond the River.

17 The king sent an answer:

To Rehum the commander, to Shimshai the scribe, to the rest of their companions who dwell in Samaria, and to the remainder beyond the River:

Peace, and so forth.<sup>a</sup>

- 18 The letter which you sent to us has been clearly read before me. <sup>19</sup>And I gave the command, and a search has been made, and it was found that this city in former times has revolted against kings, and rebellion and sedition have been fostered in it. <sup>20</sup>There have also been mighty kings over Jerusalem, who have ruled over all *the region* beyond the River; and tax, tribute, and custom were paid to them. <sup>21</sup>Now give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me.

- 22 Take heed now that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings?

<sup>23</sup>Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in

haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease. <sup>24</sup>Thus the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

#### RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE RESUMED

**5** Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, *who was* over them. <sup>2</sup>So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak<sup>a</sup> rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.

<sup>3</sup>At the same time Tattenai the governor of *the region* beyond the River<sup>a</sup> and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: "Who has commanded you to build this temple and finish this wall?" <sup>4</sup>Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building. <sup>5</sup>But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this *matter*. <sup>6</sup>This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent:

The governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions, the Persians who were in *the region* beyond the River, to Darius the king.

<sup>7</sup>(They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus)

4:17 <sup>a</sup>Literally *and now* 5:2 <sup>a</sup>Spelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14 5:3 <sup>a</sup>That is, the Euphrates

#### SOUL NOTE



**Never Give Up** (5:1, 2) The prophets Haggai and Zechariah not only encouraged the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, but they also got involved in the labor themselves. Even before they rebuilt the city's walls, the Jews rebuilt the temple as an act of devotion to God. Living so many years without a temple and experiencing the temporary setbacks during the reconstruction only served to strengthen God's people in their resolve to complete the task at hand. Setbacks aren't always detrimental—they give time to reflect and revise plans if the need arises, allowing us to press on toward our goals. **Topic: Work**

To Darius

All peace.

8 Let it be known into the presence of the great with heaven laid in the diligent

9 Then thus to build this walls? names to write the chief

11 And thus saying of heaven rebuild many years Israel by our father to write Nebuchadnezzar Chaldean and carried of Babylon to build gold and God, from the and carried those of Babylon named govern these a temple the house site and the God's time a const

Now a king, I treasure Babylon

Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.  
This also is vanity.

<sup>11</sup> When goods increase,  
They increase who eat them;  
So what profit have the owners  
Except to see *them* with their eyes?

<sup>12</sup> The sleep of a laboring man is sweet,  
Whether he eats little or much;  
But the abundance of the rich will not  
permit him to sleep.

<sup>13</sup> There is a severe evil *which* I have seen  
under the sun:

Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.

<sup>14</sup> But those riches perish through  
misfortune;

When he begets a son, *there is* nothing  
in his hand.

<sup>15</sup> As he came from his mother's womb,  
naked shall he return,

To go as he came;

And he shall take nothing from his labor  
Which he may carry away in his hand.

<sup>16</sup> And this also is a severe evil—  
Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.

And what profit has he who has labored  
for the wind?

<sup>17</sup> All his days he also eats in darkness,  
And *he has* much sorrow and sickness  
and anger.

<sup>18</sup>Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for *it is* his heritage. <sup>19</sup>As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup>For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* busy with the joy of his heart.

**6** There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: <sup>2</sup>A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.

<sup>3</sup>If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say

## SOUL NOTE



**Money Chains** (5:12) Many people desire to be rich, thinking that they will have no more worries. That is a paradox, however. A wealthy person may appear to live well, but "the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep." The rich lie awake worrying about losing their money, while poor laborers sleep soundly.

Riches give freedom to do many things, but the chains of worry often ruin any true enjoyment. The moral is that God would have us be content whatever our financial status, for all wealth ultimately belongs to Him. **Topic: Money**

## SOUL NOTE



**Fruits of Our Labors** (5:18, 19) Work is a double-edged sword in Scripture.

Transformed into "sweat" as part of the Curse after the Fall (Gen. 3:19), work is also an honored activity through which God delivers many blessings. The Bible emphasizes the importance of work as a God-given activity in life, and it says that the ability to enjoy the fruits of one's labor is also something that God provides us. The ability to work, enjoy that work, make money, and enjoy and share that income with others—"this is the gift of God." **Topic: Work**