

work

● Work intended as a blessing

* Genesis 2:2

Who was the first worker in the Bible? _____

* Genesis 1:27-28 * Genesis 2:15

What work was Adam given to do?



God is a worker and he made us to be workers like himself. Adam worked *with* God and *for* God. His work was *his calling from God*.

● Work became a burden

* Genesis 3:17-19

Why did work become a burden to Adam?



The pleasure and fulfilment of work has been lost to many because of our sin.

The evils of our society, hardship, exploitation, oppression, unfairness, dishonesty, corruption, abuse, poverty and unemployment have all contributed to a negative view of work. It is, however, still God's call for us to work and there can be fulfillment and blessing in work for believers.

* Ecclesiastes 2:17-26 Reflect on this passage.

What is your attitude to work?

- I enjoy it I try to avoid it I hate it
- I find it fulfilling I find it tedious and boring
- I am looking for it It is God's call for me



● Skills and God's purpose

* Exodus 31:1-6 * Exodus 35:30-36:2

What skills did God give to Bazalel and Oholiab?

What were these men filled with? _____ (35:31)

What other ability did they have? _____ (35:34)

Sometimes God's purpose is less obvious - which of the following do you think applies to God's purpose in *your* work?

- To serve other people To teach you patience and discipline
 To meet other people through your work and be a witness
 To provide for yourself, your family and the work of God
 To be a good influence in the world To use your gifts and skills to the full

* Mark 6:1-3 * 1 Thessalonians 2:9 * Acts 18:3

What job did Jesus do until he was about 30? _____

What did Paul do for a living? _____

Both were content to do ordinary jobs patiently even though they had other things on their minds! Less demanding jobs can be useful.

How well is your work matched to your gifts?

In the first column put your own assessment of your gifting in each skill on a scale 0-5. In the second column put the demands of your job for each skill again on a scale 0-5. In the last column put the difference between the other two columns. Finally add up the last column and put the total at the bottom.

Skill	Your gifting	Your work	Difference
Creative — planning, designing, inventing	_____	_____	_____
Coordination — use of hands, feet, eyes, ears	_____	_____	_____
Expression — speaking or writing	_____	_____	_____
Social — interacting with other people	_____	_____	_____
Knowledge — remembering information	_____	_____	_____
Intellectual — analysing, reasoning, organising	_____	_____	_____
Physical strength — manual work	_____	_____	_____
Artistic — art, music etc	_____	_____	_____
Total difference			_____

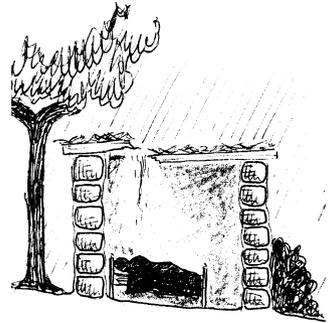
Results: 0-8 excellent match, 9-16 good match, 17-24 some match, 25+ poor match

Many of us will be engaged in work which does not use all our skills. Those which are not used in our job may be used in other areas of our lives.

● Being a hard worker

In the Bible we are encouraged to work hard and not to be lazy — look at the consequences of idleness and hard work.

	Rewards of laziness	Reward of diligence
Prov 6:6-11	_____	_____
Prov 10:4	_____	_____
Prov 12:24	_____	_____
Prov 15:19	_____	_____
Prov 24:30-34	_____	_____
Prov 28:19	_____	_____
Eccl 10:18	_____	_____



* **Proverbs 26:13-16** What does the sluggard do? _____

* **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12** Why should we work hard?

* **2 Thessalonians 3:8-12** Who was a hard worker? _____

* **1 Timothy 5:8** Why should we work? _____

* **Exodus 18:13-18** Who worked too hard? _____



How would you describe yourself?

lazy average work hard work too hard

Is there anything you should do about it?

● Being a good employee

There is also a lot in the Bible about how we should behave at work. Several of the following passages are about masters and slaves since this was a common situation in Bible times — many of the principles can be applied to employers and employees today.

* **Ephesians 6:5-8** * **Colossians 3:22-25**

How should we work when we are not being watched? _____

Whom are we serving when we work? _____

* **Titus 2:9-10** Why should we be polite, honest and trustworthy at work? _____

* **1 Timothy 6:1-2** Why should we respect our earthly bosses?

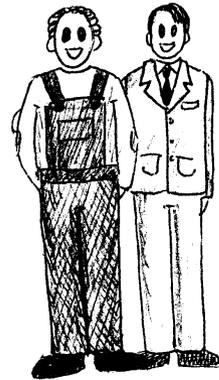
Why should we be careful if we have Christian bosses?

* **1 Peter 2:18-20** What can you learn from a bad boss?

This does not mean that we should endure endless abuse but it does suggest ways of dealing with these problems in a godly way.

● **Being a good boss**

What aspects of being a good boss are highlighted in these passages?



Deut 5:14 _____

Deut 24:14-15 _____

Jer 22:13 _____

Eph 6:9 _____

Col 4:1 _____



How well do you relate to your boss? _____
fellow workers? _____
employees? _____

work

extra thought and discussion

Full-time for God

Some people will be called to "full-time" Christian work (1 Tim 5:17-18). However we all need to see our whole lives as dedicated to God so in that respect we are all "full-time"! Read the book of Daniel and see how he was used in a "secular" job.

Philemon

Read this moving letter from Paul to Philemon asking him to take back his runaway slave.

Other discussion points

- **Ambition** — This can be bad if selfish (Phil 2:3). It is good to be successful if our motives are right..
- **Rights** — As a Christian do you have views on worker rights, trade unions and strike action?
- **Unemployed, disabled, retired** — How can the Christian community support those who are out of work for one reason or another?