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Erie, PA  
February 7, 2010

## **“Wisdom Goes to Work!” Proverbs 6:6-9, Varied**

### **Introduction**

A new college graduate was asked if he was looking for work. He thought for a minute and then replied, “No, but I would like to have a job. Poet Robert Frost said, “The world is full of willing people: some willing to work and the rest willing to let them.”

What is your first reaction when you hear the word work? “Ugh?” “Can't wait till Monday!” “Drudgery?” “Joy?” “Necessary evil?” “Calling?”

When we are born, we start with a belief that life is one long play time and vacation. As babies, we eat, sleep, and try to be merry! At some point in our childhood, we are given chores and small jobs to do at home. Then comes school—where other people start scheduling our lives for us—and only a small portion of that is play! If that weren't, added to that along the ways is extra homework. At some point you get a job, usually start off part-time, but more of your time is no longer your own. Then you pursue more schooling, a career, and your first real job—and it is hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work you go.

Today, we want to explore some of what Proverbs teaches us about work. This is important because as Jim Newheiser [whose commentary has helped me greatly in preparing and organizing this message] has said, “There is no aspect of life on which we spend more time than our vocation.” We need wisdom as we go to work.

We first read about “work” in the book of Proverbs, chapter 6, verse 6, where Solomon warns his son about three men in the first part of this chapter: the man who foolishly co-signs for a virtual stranger, the wicked man in general and in these verses—the sluggard. Let's hear this call regarding work:

*"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man." (Proverbs 6:6-11).*

### **● Why bring God into it?**

Now before we look at the theme of work in Proverbs, let's answer several introductory questions about work that immediately arise when the theme of work comes up. First, of all, why bring God into this subject of work? The truth is, “In the beginning God created!” That is, “In the beginning there was work.” God created work. The first command ever given to man was ““And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be

*fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* (Genesis 1:28). The command to work was given before sin ever entered this world. *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”* (Genesis 2:15). Certainly after Adam and Eve sinned, many things changed—among which was the fact that work would become more difficult as now there would be thorns and thistles and additional effort needed. *“And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”* (Genesis 3:17-19).

Work would now involve some drudgery, risk, and pain. Some would now resist work and others would oppress the worker (James 5:1-6). Yet Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and no doubt one of the most significant acts was to restore work to its proper place in the life of the believer.

God therefore cares very deeply about work. In fact, God is the consummate worker. He was the first worker in the universe as He created all things. Jesus Christ, His Son came to this earth and announced, *“My Father is working until now, and I am working.”* (John 5:17). Jesus is even now working. *“And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”* (Colossians 1:17). He *“is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”* (Romans 8:34). And the Holy Spirit is working in every believer's life as well (Philippians 2:13).

### ● **Why is there work?**

For years there was the legendary American work ethic. Where did that originate? Out of nowhere? No, it came straight from a biblical understanding of work—when work was seen as a calling and a blessing from God.

Sadly that work ethic has largely disappeared. As James Patterson and Roger Kim's study confirmed back in 1991, “Patterson and Kim: “The Protestant work ethic is long gone from today's American workplace. Workers around America frankly admit that they spend more than 20% [7 hours a week] of their time at work totally goofing off. That amounts to a four-day work week across the nation.” This research was done before the Internet was widely available. Many workers today very busy but widely unproductive. A 2003 study concluded that 23 million American workers are “actively disengaged” from their work.

But a biblical and Proverbs-driven life sees that work originates with God, its a calling and part of the core purpose of every man and woman.

### ● **What is work?**

Now, let's define work because you might be thinking that work is simply what you do to earn a living—what you get paid to do. But really “work” according to Genesis is “any set of tasks to be performed in pursuit of a particular goal.” Work is not just what you do in exchange for payment, although that is often true.

- **Who works?**

But as you can see from that definition, more than just employees or employers work. Many people work in hopes of getting paid—like the ever present “starving artists.” Others pay people to let them work (that would be college students), and others work for no financial reward (mothers). So the truth is all of us work.

- **When do we work?**

So, if the above definition is true, we learn that we are really working most all of our lives, aren't we? In fact, we will be “workers” much longer than we are “employees”, much longer than our careers or profession. We will be workers longer than we are parents or much longer than we are married. So this is pretty important to get right.

- **What are some key principles regarding work?**

- **All lawful employment honors God and dignifies man**

So here are some key principles to get right before we look at the two main truths of this passage. First, all lawful employment honors God and dignifies man.

- **No job, done diligently and for the genuine service of God and others, will go unnoticed.**
- **Success is fulfilling my God-given vocation faithfully, excellently, and completely.**

There is spiritual significance to all lawful work. We shouldn't divide the sacred and the secular. All work is sacred as Paul Helm argues,

Christians have become accustomed to think of themselves as having a “spiritual life” which is sharply distinct from the every-day life in the family, and from work and leisure. A “spiritual life” is a life of prayer and watchfulness, of Bible-reading and church-going. As a result of this distortion, instead of the Christian life being thought of as an integrated whole, it is artificially broken up into compartments which have little or nothing to do with one another. . . . It is as if Christian responsibility ceases at the church porch, as if the Christian gospel has nothing to do with the pavement outside and the roads and the motorways beyond.”

So “whether therefore you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God!” As Paul says,

“Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:22-24).

So, how can we take wisdom with us whenever or wherever God has called us to work.

Let's consider two main truths in this passage and the rest of the Proverbs.

- **Don't be a foolish sluggard**

Verse 6 speaks of a sluggard—a term that appears 17 times and is always negative. Nothing good is said about a sluggard. But notice three observations from Proverbs about this kind of worker.

- **Characteristics of sluggard**

- **Lazy**

First, a sluggard is lazy. So, he is told, "Go to the ant, O sluggard!" Wow, how low is that! Go get tutored by a bug—by an ant! Most of us aren't too impressed by ants. Every spring and summer, I have to go around the outside of our house and spray for ants, because if I don't do that or if I don't do that about every four weeks during warm weather, we end up with an ant invasion, usually in our kitchen—and my wife is not happy about that.

But one thing is true about ants: they are workers! They aren't lazy. So we are to go to the ant, consider her ways and be wise! In other words, "Sluggard, get off your duff, stop being lazy, start doing something—go watch and learn from the ants to begin with!"

We learn in other Proverbs that this man is so lazy that he won't even cook his own food or if he does, he is so lazy he won't even feed himself. *"Whoever is slothful will not roast his game." 12:27). "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth." (26:15)*

- **Lacks initiative**

*The sluggard lacks initiative. But not ants. "Without having any chief, officer, or ruler", the ant goes to work, but a sluggard won't do any work unless forced to do it. When the boss is not looking on the floor of the shop or when the supervisor is away, the sluggard doesn't work. The only initiative that he displays is coming up with good excuses why he can't work. "He takes great pains to escape pain," Spurgeon quipped. "The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" (Proverbs 22:13). He will take no challenges, avoid growth in his job, is often unwilling to learn new things, to make progress and is always trying to get by with the bare minimum.*

- **Procrastinates**

*Next, we see he procrastinates unlike the ant who "prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest." By contrast the sluggard's motto is "never do today what you can put off till tomorrow!" "The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing." (Proverbs 20:4). He waits and waits and delays and postpones—until it is too late and he misses the deadline.*

- **Delights in rest and recreation**

*"How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest." The more a lazy man rests, the more rest he craves. He never comes out directly and refuses to work, but doesn't commit to it, choosing rather to pursue nothing unless it be leisure. Now while sleep is*

a "sweet gift of God" to us (3:24), the sluggard spends so much time in bed that he is like "door turning on its hinges" (26:14).

- **A destructive force**

Beyond Proverbs 6, we learn that far from simply hurting himself, a sluggard, a lazy person is actually a destructive force. "Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys." (Proverbs 18:9). He actually brings harm to those who hire him. "Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him." (Proverbs 10:26). These substances aren't lethal, but they are **irritants**, just like a lazy worker is to his or her boss or employer.

- **Full of excuses** (20:4; 22:13; 26:13)

"The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" (Proverbs 22:13). When it comes to work, he will say it is too cold, too hot, too easy, or too hard. People who are good at finding excuses often aren't good at anything else. He will play the "**exception excuse**" which basically says, "Because I am different than everyone else, I shouldn't have to work so hard" as well as the "**lowest common denominator**" excuse which argues, "Because everyone else does the least possible, so I will I."

- **Doesn't finish his work**

"The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth." (26:15). He regularly allows distractions to lead him away from the work he is supposed to be doing, procrastination seeps into his work habits, delays difficult or unpleasant tasks, and leaves work undone hoping someone else will do it. He may undertake certain tasks but then find them too challenging and leave them undone.

- **Knows it all**

"The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly." (26:16) The lazy person is self-centered, loves himself, and rejects the counsel of others. He lives in a fantasy world and even though he doesn't do much work he's always ready to tell everyone else how they should do their job. "The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor." (21:25)

- **Looks for easy money**

The last characteristic we will mention is that that the sluggard looks for easy money. "Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty." (28:19). Lazy people are always looking for the latest get-rich-quick scheme. They are dreamers, big talkers, but not good workers. "In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty." (Proverbs 14:23). Sadly when his schemes fail, he expects family, friends, and other agencies to rescue him.

- **Consequences for sluggards**

There are sad consequences for sluggards. He or she may be fired from the job, be poor, or even starve. "Poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man." (Proverbs 6:11). "A slack hand causes poverty." (Proverbs 10:4). 14 passages connect the sluggard and poverty in Proverbs alone.

A sluggard will live a life of many regrets: unfulfilled dreams, wasted opportunities and repeated failures. *"The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns."* (Proverbs 15:19). *"Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes"* (Proverbs 20:13).

- **Don't help the sluggard**

What is one to do with a sluggard, an habitually lazy person who refuses to work? Don't help him. That's right. Now, the objections will come flying maybe, but we aren't talking about someone who is just poor but a hard-working, or someone who has had some sort of unexpected financial reversal due to a natural disaster or illness, or even someone who is disabled and truly unable to work. There were measures in the OT law as well as principles in the NT church that teaches we are to care for these—to help them and assist them.

But here we are talking about someone who can work but chooses not. Unfortunately today, today our society has all sorts of safety nets, even for people such as this, but we do them a disservice if we don't compassionately require them to work. That's not me talking, that's the Scriptures.

*"A worker's appetite works for him; his mouth urges him on."* (Proverbs 16:26). *"Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us."* (2 Thessalonians 3:6). And really some of the biggest thieves in the world are sluggards so Ephesians 4:28 comes into play here, *"Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need."* (Ephesians 4:28).

- **Be a wise worker**

Now, that is what we are not to be. That is what we are to put off! Those characteristics of the sluggard! But what are we to put on! What are we to cultivate as biblical Christians fulfilling our calling. Well, from this text and others, we see many positive virtues characterizing a biblical work ethic:

- **Characteristics of a wise worker**
  - **Diligence**

Diligence characterizes the ant that we are to consider! Have you ever seen an ant on vacation? Taking it easy in the summer? No, they are always moving, aren't they? [Not saying there is no time for rest and leisure, mind you]. His hands are diligent. He gathers in the summer. He works the land. The hand of the diligent rules. (Proverbs 10:4-5, 12:11; 12:24).

Diligence often means you exert consistent, regular effort over time rather than waiting and putting things off until they overwhelm you. *"I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,"* (Proverbs 24:30-33). Contrast that with the virtuous wife

and mother: *"She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night."* (Proverbs 31:15-18).

- **Takes proper initiative (7)**

A wise worker takes initiative when appropriate. Such an employee is valued in a company that wants to be successful. He sees something that needs to be done and does it. This too is modeled by the godly wife/mother, *"She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard."* (Proverbs 31:16).

- **Prepares for the future (8)**

Like the ant who "prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest," so a wise worker prepares for the future. A wise person demonstrates forward thinking about his work, chooses a career path [though it may change], acquires necessary skills and training, proves himself well and isn't afraid to start out low and work up.

- **Starts early**

When you have a job to do, get started on it as soon as possible and get off on the right foot. Make the initial investment in time, effort, study up front in the process to get the maximum results. Don't wait till the last moment or day to study for that test, prepare that proposal, turn in the project, or get the necessary supplies! And don't just do enough to get by! Get off on the right foot, quit talking and roll up your sleeves and go to work. *"Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox."* (Proverbs 14:4). *"In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty."* (Proverbs 14:23).

I heard about a young man recently who was out of work and started going to work for a new company. He was pretty talented but he decided he would take any job. They put him on some menial tasks at first and he decided he was going to do those jobs better than anyone else. Within a few months, he was promoted to a managerial position in that store. It doesn't always work that way, but starting early and doing your job well will bring the blessing of God on your life.

- **Wholeheartedness**

When you work do it wholeheartedly. *"Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys."* (Proverbs 18:9). *"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,"* (Colossians 3:22-23).

Do you waste time at work? Do you give 100% effort, not the minimum? Are you a clock-watcher, lunch-stretcher, time-waster?

- **Plans work and works his plan**

A wise worker knows what he is supposed to, plans his work, and works his plan. He tackles the most important tasks first. *"The plans of the diligent lead surely to*

*abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty." (Proverbs 21:5).  
"Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house." (Proverbs 24:27).*

If you have some leeway in how you do your job and what you do, remember that the good is often the enemy of the best in time management and the urgent often stands in the way of the important. Key in on what is most important in your work and do that. That's what Jesus did when he was doing His Father's work. There was much he could have done but he would often say, *"Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."* (Mark 1:38).

- **Excellence (22:9)**

*"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men."* (Proverbs 22:29). Doing a few things well is better than doing many things poorly. A humble job done well is far better than doing a glamorous job poorly. Jim Newheiser writes,

The Reformers rediscovered the biblical concept of vocation. You do not have to be a preacher or a missionary to serve God in your work, nor do you have to be a corporate CEO, a physician, or a high-powered lawyer to achieve significance. 'The milkmaid and the manure-hauler have the noblest of vocations,' said Luther, 'for they are doing God's work in the world.' We are all full-time Christian workers, no matter what our vocation. The first biblical uses of the Hebrew word translated 'wisdom' speak of the persons skilled in creating garments for the high priest and building the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant (Exodus. 28:3; 31:3, 6; 35:26; 36:1–2). The wise man sees his vocation as being significant because he is imitating God's work of creation (Prov. 8:22–31). When engineers, electricians, or homemakers work wholeheartedly using their God-given skills, their work is highly honorable and worthy of recognition (Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:17, 22–24).

Students, are you doing your very best in your classes? Are you striving for excellence now? Are your grades what they should be? Is it because you truly lack the ability or are you lazy? Failure due to lack of effort is always unacceptable. Doing less than your best never pleases God. Put your best foot forward! Strive for excellence because you belong to God, because you want to serve your employer and have other opportunities to minister to others.

- **Good steward of resources (27:23-24; 24:30-32)**

*"Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds, for riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations?"* (Proverbs 27:23-24). In modern day settings, we would say that a wise worker keeps his equipment, his tools, his office, his skills in the best working condition possible. He knows well his resources and abilities that he brings to his vocation.

- **Patiently pursues success (28:19)**

*"Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty."* (Proverbs 28:19). A wise worker gains valuable skills, keeps improving and growing and works hard at what he does. He patiently

trusts the Lord for success, not following the latest way to earn a million dollars in three easy steps.

- **Rewards for the wise worker**

- **Financial stability:** *"The hand of the diligent makes rich."* (Proverbs 10:4).
- **Fulfillment in vocation**

*"The hand of the diligent will rule."* (12:29). He will be in high demand, standing before kings, and promoted to positions of responsibility and respect.

- **Enjoyment**

*"There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God,"* (Ecclesiastes 2:24). Of the virtuous woman we read, *"Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come."* (Proverbs 31:25).

There is nothing wrong, when you are done with a project or job, with stepping back, taking a moment and admiring the end product. I used to do that when I cut grass during my summers in high school. I'd get it all done and then just sit back in the shade and look at how straight I had cut the grass or whatever. Even God did that: *"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."* (Genesis 1:31).

- **Heavenly pleasure**

So we have earthly joy and heavenly joy as well. *"Knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:8). The man who works well may or may not stand before kings and company presidents, but he will surely stand before the King of Kings and hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

When work is in its proper place, we can taste divine joy and we experience real joy within our hearts. After all, God finds joy in His creation, so should we. The classic illustration of this is when missionary Eric Liddell softly answered his sister Jenny when she urged him not to be so caught up in his running, "I believe God has made me for a purpose. . . for China. But Jenny he also made me fast, and when I run, I feel his pleasure."

And so can we—when we work—whether you are a teacher, salesman, plumber, doctor or nurse, businessman, engineer, mother, student, work in an office or in manufacturing.

I'm not saying that your job will always be exciting. Sure there are parts of it which are dull and tedious. Sure you will have days when you will want to roll over in bed and hit the alarm. But overall, if you believe God's Word, you will view it as a privilege, a gift, a calling, an opportunity to mimic God, the Master Craftsman.

- **Warnings to the diligent worker**

Let me add some counterbalance to all I have said and then just a brief word of exhortation to each of you.

- **A call to trust: right motive**

First, some warnings and these all describe the other side of the ditch of the path of wise work. We have spent most of our time talking about not falling into the ditch of laziness. But there is probably as much likelihood, if not a greater probability in our culture of falling into the ditch of workaholism. After all, whereas laziness and living off the public dole is viewed unfavorably, workaholism is often very respectable in our day as well as economically driven at times.

We are the culture that never gets everything done. We are the culture that works 24/7—faster, better, smarter. We are the culture that loves to multi-task. We fear maybe losing our job to our colleague who is a company person. We rationalize the need for a little bit more. We have an obsession with getting more things done—with increased productivity.

So, please hear these brief calls regarding worshipping your work. Psalm 127:1-2 reminds us that *“unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.”*

So here is a call for trust in our God. Labor is really empty if we detach our work from trust in God and seek to wrest control of our work from God. And this unbelief in God's sovereignty can exhibit itself in workaholism. But we can stop working too much and rest biblically because God is sovereign. *“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” (Proverbs 16:3).*

We trust a God who has given us enough time to finish everything to which he has called us to do. We can and must trust God who has not only called us to be workers and students, but also to be children, spouses, parents, church members, citizens, and stewards of our God-entrusted resources.

- **A call to balance**

To those who may tend toward the sin of working too much, God has issued a call to balance—a call to work and a call to rest. *“Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” (Exodus 20:9-11).*

- **A call to reject idolatry**

And to avoid the ditch of workaholism, we must hear the call to reject idolatry. *“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” (Colossians 3:5).* Generally speaking, those who fall into the ditch of workaholism are coveting something— either money, recognition, power, more control. And coveting is a sin. It's idolatry.

Both laziness and workaholism are serious because in both are declaring, "I'll do it my way, not God's." Both neglect God-given responsibilities—some do it by crowding out other important areas of obeying God, others do it by neglect. So don't despise work like a sluggard but don't worship work like one who works far too much.

### ● **Closing exhortations**

I'll close with these brief exhortations.

#### ○ **Young people: learn diligence when you are young**

Your work right now is mainly to study, although some of you are in the workplace already. Establish a diligent and a disciplined work ethic now. Help around the house with chores. Do them joyfully! Do them thoroughly. Do your routine work, your homework, without being asked. Do everything to the best of your ability. Learn now!

#### ○ **Stay at home wives and mothers: God bless you!**

You have the most challenging and yet most rewarding vocation there is. It is challenging because you have to be very self-disciplined. You don't clock in and out! You don't have a performance review annually. On the other hand, you don't get paid either. Well, you don't get paid with money. But great is your reward as you help your husbands and raise your children with him. We rise today and call you blessed!

#### ○ **Retirees: keep working for God**

Some of you are blessed to have completed your vocational calling. If you are retired, don't feel guilty. That's a unique blessing in our time. But biblically, you are never to retire from work. You now have more time to work in other areas of your life rather than just fill your time with your favorite hobbies or recreation. You have tremendous opportunities to serve in Christ's church, in your community, to serve your family.

#### ○ **Disciplined workers: don't be spiritually sluggish**

Here's a word of exhortation to you who are already disciplined in your work. Praise God! But I have known some successful men and women who are the model of diligence when it comes to their vocation and yet are sluggards when it comes to their relationship with God. They are so committed and wrapped up in their work, and yet devote very little discipline to the means of grace God has given for the good of their souls: communing with God in the Word, in prayer, in the ordinances, and in the church. Oh, they say, "One day. . .after this assignment. . .when I'm done with grad school. . . when I have more time." That's dangerous thinking—to be so wrapped up in one God-given responsibility to the neglect of another.

#### ○ **Everyone: God has give you work to do! God has given you rest to enjoy!**

So take wisdom with you to your work—wherever that might be—in the classroom, at home, or at the jobsite. God has given us all work to do for His glory. Work for the glory of God. Do it excellently, faithfully, fully! God notices how we work.

And God has given us the wisdom of rest as well. This is a day of rest that reminds us of our heavenly rest (Hebrews 4:4-11), a heavenly rest made possible by One who

came to this earth to do His Father's work. Who, knowing of His ultimate work, His work of dying for sinners on the cross, set his face resolutely toward that work! Who labored with His own hands as a carpenter, I imagine a good one at that. But whose greatest work was living a perfectly righteous life—without sin—so that He could bear the sins of the world in His death for sinners. On the cross, He hung between God and man. He completed His work and cried out, "It is finished!" meaning He had completed all that was necessary for the salvation of sinners so that we can be restored to fellowship with a holy God. Salvation was never by works. Nor is it now. Rather, we rest from our work of trying to please God with our own righteousness and we rest in the work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and trust His fully finished work of redemption. We look forward to an everlasting rest in the presence of God one day. Are you trusting Christ's work for your everlasting joy? Are you resting in His finished work for your eternal hope? That's true wisdom!