

Margin: Work

September 4-5, 2010

In the **BEGINNING**, there was **WORK** and the **WORK** was **GOOD**.

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden
to work it and take care of it.
Genesis 2:15*

*It is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.
Ecclesiastes 3:13*

But work is still **WORK**.

1. Develop good **PRACTICES**.
 - a. When at work, **WORK**.
2. Find strategic **PARTNERS**.
3. Keep your work in its proper **PLACE**.
4. Work with your **PURPOSE** in view.

*Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched
and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord.
Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord
and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive
the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ.
Colossians 3:22-24*

Morning Star Church
Devotional Guide
Margin: Work
September 6-10

Message Synopsis

Pastor Jimmy concluded our message series on *Margin* by talking about the subject of work. Whether we work inside or outside of the home—even if we are students, retirees, or unemployed—all of us have labor to which we attend throughout the course of our day and week. For many of us, work can be a struggle. It often feels as if there is more to do than can ever be done. Believe it or not, God wants us to *enjoy* our labor. To increase our margin in this area, Pastor Jimmy encouraged us to find strategic partnerships, develop good practices, keep work in its proper place, and stay focused on our primary purpose.

“It is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.” Ecclesiastes 3:13

Day 1 **In the Beginning, There Was Work . . .**
Genesis 2:4-24

1. Was “work” a result of the Fall, or was it there even before the first sins of Adam and Eve? Does this surprise you?

2. How should this (the answer to question #1) affect our understanding of work?

Day 2 **The Struggles of Work**
Genesis 3

1. After reading Genesis 3, how does it sound as if the nature of work changed after the sins of Adam and Eve and the fall of humanity?

2. What are your struggles that come from the work you do?

Day 3 **Finding Pleasure in Work**
Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:13; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-10

1. What percent of the time do you find enjoyment in what you do? What enhances your enjoyment of work? What takes away from it?

2. What difference might it make for you to remember that “it is God’s gift” for you to take pleasure in all your toil?

Day 4 **Develop Strategic Partnerships**
Exodus 18

1. What are some of your responsibilities that are NOT your strengths? List them here. Do the same with respect to your strengths.
2. In your current work environment, how much freedom do you have to play to your strengths and delegate to your weaknesses? Who can you partner with to get your labor done?

Day 5 **Focus on your Purpose**
Colossians 3:22-24

1. How would you “work” differently if you did all of your labor for the Lord?
2. Based upon this week’s message and devotional readings, what is one next step you can take to create margin with respect to your labor?

Morning Star Church
Small Group Discussion Guide
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Group icebreaker: Pastor Jimmy talked about the fact that when his lovely wife Erin heard he was to preach a message on *efficiency in our working lives*, she laughed at him. Most people have the same humorous view of having efficiency—margin—in their work lives. Discuss with your group why this seems to be so.

God's gift to us is the happiness we get from our food and drink and from the work we do.
Ecclesiastes 3:13, CEV

1. Pastor Jimmy taught us that, according to the Bible (Genesis 2:15), God's original plan for our lives was that we would enjoy working. He also pointed out that *struggle in our work* didn't actually happen until after man sinned (Genesis 3:17-19). Share with your group what kind of work brings great enjoyment to you and what kind of work brings stress.
2. Jimmy shared some practical suggestions from Ken Willard about good work practices:
 - Plan out your day's activities.
 - View your activities through the lens of your goals.
 - Start prioritizing the most important things.
 - Know when you are most productive and be intentional with it.
 - Plan for the unexpected.
 - Set specific times to return email, phone calls, Internet use, and so on.
 - Have conversations standing up.

Which one of these practices would help organize your work better? Which ones are you already doing?

3. Margin in work almost always involves finding strategic partners who can assist you with tasks. Have someone read Exodus 18:13-26. Why do some struggle with delegating or getting someone else to assist us? Offer suggestions for how to make delegation easier.
4. Read Colossians 3:22-24. Discuss in your group the difference between making a living and making a life.

Prayer Requests