

“Vocation & the All-Sufficiency of Christ”

Sermon Notes

➤ **If you are in Christ, you possess membership in the ultimate labor union**

So...

1. Employees...never forget that Jesus is your supervisor - and that changes everything
(3:22-25→3:11)

2. Employers...never forget that the buck doesn't stop with you - it stops with Christ
(4:1→ 3:11)

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of March 6th - 12th

Getting Started

1. What's the first, best, worst, weirdest, longest, shortest, or most rewarding job you've ever had? Feel free to pick any of the choices above in your answer. Make sure everyone in the group has an opportunity to share.

Digging Deeper

2. If you are in the working season of your life (age eighteen to retirement), do you believe you have found your 'calling' with your present employment? If yes, why do you suspect so? If not, why not? If not, is your present employment preparing you in any way for what you sense to be your calling? Explain.

If you are currently unemployed, do you have a clear sense of your calling? If so, what do you believe that to be and why?

If you are retired, as you look back over your working years, do you believe that you labored with a sense of vocation, or calling, from the Lord? Why do you think so?

If you are currently a student, what sort of vocation do you believe the Lord is preparing for you? Do you believe that your current time of education is equipping you adequately for the work to which the Lord is calling you? Why or why not?

Open your Bible to the book of Proverbs...

3. There are over two dozen verses in the book of Proverbs that touch on the topic of sloth or laziness. Consider some of the following: 6:6-11; 12:27a; 13:14a; 18:9; 19:24; 20:4; 21:25; 22:13. Why is idleness such a temptation for us? When is it a temptation for you in particular? In what ways can this sin become a significant problem as it relates to our work life?

What sorts of gifts, resources, motivations, and promises does the Lord give us in our lives and in the Scriptures so that we can combat this sin? There are many. Can you name a few?

4. Proverb 15:27a says: "Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household...", yet the 'American dream' oftentimes can run on exactly the reverse assumption. In what ways is Proverbs 15:27a true and how does it serve to pull the curtain on the nebulous and insatiable 'quest for more'? Consider, also, Jesus's words in Matthew 19:23-24.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 speaks clearly to this issue of contentment. Take time to look up this reference and read it together in your group. Are you someone who is content with

mere “food and clothing” (v.8) or do you “desire to be rich” (v.9)? How might you know if you fall into one category or the other? What further light does Proverbs 30:7-9 throw on this discussion? How might our standard of living (and our standard of giving!) be impacted by a careful consideration and application of these verses?

5. Proverbs 11:1 is concerned with honesty in the workplace: “A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight.” In the Ancient Near East, a dishonest shopkeeper would have two different weights in his possession, one heavier than it ought to be for buying and the other lighter than it ought to be for selling. Few things in the Scriptures are explicitly called an “abomination” to God. This is one of them.

Why is truth telling in our places of work such a significant issue to the Lord (see Proverbs 16:11 also)? In what ways do you most frequently witness dishonesty in your workplace? When are you yourself most tempted toward dishonesty in your own work?

6. Proverbs speaks of employer / employee relationships as well (see 10:26; 26:10; 28:16; 27:18). How ought our presence in the workplace as followers of Christ affect our relationship with our employer or employees? Consider the following New Testament texts, noting how the authors connect these relationships with the gospel of Christ.
 - Ephesians 6:5-9
 - Colossians 3:22-4:1 (you should have some notes on this one :0)
 - 1 Peter 2:18-25
7. As you close your time together as a group, pray for one another in your vocations. If someone is retired, thank God for their years of work, asking that he might continue to make them fruitful in these days. If someone is unemployed, pray for their future employment. If you have students in your group, pray for their preparation for their life’s vocation.