

=THE CHRISTIAN LIFE=

Lesson 7

Work

INTRODUCTION: Someone has well said, “I believe in luck; the harder I work, the luckier I get.” The secret to any success is hard work, whether it is the building of a church or a hot dog stand, the making of a good life or of good grades. Work is the great secret to success. No amount of talent can take its place. No gifts can substitute for it. Even if perchance one could obtain success without work, it would fail to satisfy. The Bible has much to say about work, and we should look at a few of its passages.

I. WORK IN THE BIBLE.

1. Work is spiritual. Proverbs 13:4, “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” Notice it says the “soul” of the diligent. In other words, the one who works will have a bigger soul or will be more spiritual. One of the great mistakes of our generation is dividing the secular from the sacred. As someone has said, “To the Christian every day is a holy day, every bush is a burning bush, and every place is a sacred place.” Being a good Christian is not having a good feeling, having a good cry, making a good speech; it is obeying the commands of God and doing His work. One can learn all the lingo, attend all the meetings, ride the spiritual merry-go-round, give a glowing testimony and still not be a good Christian. The great test of Christianity is obedience. Jesus said in John 15:14, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” He also said in John 14:15, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Work is spiritual.
2. Work is succeeding. The word “work” implies “to produce” or “to achieve.” The salesman gets no commission for trying to sell; he gets a commission for selling. This means that when we do a job, we are to do it well and point to success. From childhood one should be taught that if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well. Every job should be done thoroughly and carefully. When children are growing up and have a task to do (and they should have tasks to do), they should be taught to carry the task through to completion. They will learn character, and the parents will gain a helper.
3. The worker should do what needs to be done. Proverbs 24:31, “And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.” No task is too little to demand our best, and no task is too great but what our best plus God is enough. We should “keep up” what God has given us and work on it.
4. If a person does not work, he should not eat. II Thessalonians 3:10, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” College-age students who are not studying should not be supported by their parents at home. Socialists and communists who refuse to work are not supposed to eat. No poverty program, whether by church or state, should feed people who refuse to work. We do not help a lazy fellow when we feed him; rather, we help him when we teach him that if he does not work, he does not eat. This is God’s plan. Liberal Bible rejecters try to make their own social standards and develop their own social programs, but the Bible still speaks that if a man will not work, he shall not eat.
5. One should learn to work without a boss. Proverbs 6:7, “Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler.” Nothing quite reveals the lack of character in a person more than for him to refuse to work when the boss is not looking. The simple truth is that a little ant has more character than a lot of people. The sluggard should go to the ant bed, look down at the little red insect, salute him, and envy him because he has more character. A person has reached a very sad state when an ant on an ant hill has more character than he. We should work for work’s sake, for integrity’s sake, for honesty’s sake, for decency’s sake, not because the boss is watching.

A child should be given definite duties. The duties should be outlined carefully so that both child and parent understand. The child should be taught what he is to do and how to do it. He should be taught the willingness to serve. He should not be paid for his duty unless his job is done well. The parent should not do the job for the child after he has failed, but the parent should make him do it again and make him do it well.

Work is spiritual. One cannot be a good Christian and not work. One cannot be a good Christian and not obey. One cannot be a good Christian and not do his best at every task.

II. JESUS AND WORK.

1. Jesus was the hardest worker Who ever lived. Read John 21:25 and find that the world could not contain the books that could be written about the works that He did in a short thirty-three years on earth. Jesus worked. He was busy.

When we think of being Christlike, we inevitably think of having a smile and talking in a soft voice. Hardly anyone thinks of working as being Christlike. The simple truth is that no one can be Christlike unless he is diligent in work. Working hard is more Christlike than smiling sweetly.

2. Jesus finished His work. In John 4:34 Jesus says He came "...to finish his work." How vital this is! One should be taught to finish a job, to work diligently at it, and not to quit until it is finished. Such was the case in the life of Jesus.
3. Jesus said, "I work," John 5:17. The word "work" in the New Testament comes from the word "energy." The Greek word is very much like our word "energy"; it is "expanding energy." Jesus worked! I think it is very interesting that Jesus was a carpenter. At one time in His life the question was asked about Him, "Is not this the carpenter of Nazareth?" He was Nazareth's carpenter. He worked with His hands. He knew what it was to sweat. He knew what it was to be tired and weary.
4. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me," John 9:4. He had no choice but to work. He "must" work. In other words, there was something in Him that made Him work. He could not be happy without working.
5. Jesus tells us that we are to work six days. Luke 13:14b, "There are six days in which men ought to work." We make much ado about "keeping the Sabbath day holy," but very little is said about the other part; men ought to work six days! The man who works six days is a happier man. This does not mean that a man must work six days on his particular job; it does mean that he has to work six days at something. We are to be diligent six days a week. In these days of 40-hour weeks and even 32-hour weeks we have more frustrations, more neurosis, more psychiatrists, more psychologists, and more nervous breakdowns than we had when men worked from sunup to sundown six days a week.
6. Work is a great testimony. In John 14:11 Jesus said, "...believe me for the very works' sake." He was saying, "If you don't believe Me for what I say, look at what I do." Ah, this is so vital! A Christian who works hard on the job is a good testimony. A student who studies hard at school is a good testimony. A good job well done and a finished task always speak well for the child of God.

CONCLUSION: Teacher, by all means, teach the students the importance of work. This lesson is one of the most vital of them all. Let us take every moment we have and try to plant in the hearts of our pupils the dignity and spirituality of work.