

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter One: No One Can Serve Two Masters

Groundwork

Read Chapter One.

(Note: References in the book to "men, "man," etc., are generic and refer to both men and women.)

In your own words, write a single sentence that summarizes the main point of this chapter.

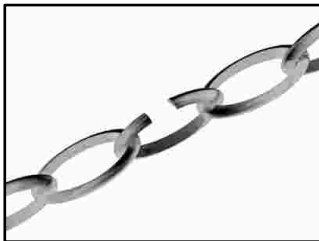
Read Colossians 3:22-25.

Note any points from Chapter One you'd like to discuss with your group:

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

James 1:8: "...a double-minded man" is "unstable in all he does."



How does James' description speak to the situation of the businessman quoted in the opening paragraph of chapter one in the book? (see p. 11)

Christians with thoughts similar to those of the businessman might experience what kinds of instability?

Matt. 6:24—"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other."

In Matt. 6:24, Jesus was speaking about God and money. Does the impossibility of serving two masters also apply in the context of a Christian working in a so-called "secular" job? If so, how?

Eph 6:5-8. "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."

How do Paul's instructions to slaves in Ephesians 6:5-8 point the way toward solving the "two masters" dilemma in the workplace?

*In his book, **Doing God's Business (p. 2)**, R. Paul Stevens quotes an executive as saying: "I suppose if I'm really going to be committed as a Christian I need to go into full-time Christian service and become a pastor or missionary."*

Have you experienced a struggle similar to that of the executive quoted to the left? If so, describe your struggle.

From the book: ". . . these sacred/secular distinctions of the Jewish law were only temporary" (p. 15).

What categories does the book cite (see pp. 15-16) as examples of the sacred/secular distinctions that faded away under the New Covenant?

From the Book: "The New Testament draws no sacred/secular lines between Christians in full-time service and those in other types of work. In fact, the Bible does not contain the phrase, 'full-time Christian service'" (p. 18).

Why did Christ's coming into the world make these Old Covenant distinctions obsolete?

To say that only pastors and missionaries, etc., are engaged in "full-time Christian service" suggests what conclusion about the *great majority* of Christians?

Such a conclusion might lead to what kinds of harmful effects?

Among your co-workers, what might you have seen or heard that suggests many of them find their work meaningless?

From the book: *"A large part of our task as Christians . . . will be to help men see the meaning of their work in light of what Christ has accomplished"* (p. 19).

Do you agree or disagree with the quotation from the book shown at left? Explain your answer.

Read Daniel 6:20

- He served God full time.
- He served God part time.
- His job had nothing to do with serving God.

Check the box (to the left) that best describes Daniel in his job as a government employee:

Explain why you chose the box you checked.

Heartwork

- Human traditions
- Comments by other Christians
- Teaching from Christian leaders
- Family expectations
- A desire to be noticed and appreciated
- Other: _____

If you have personally struggled with feeling as if you're a second-class Christian because you are not in "full-time service," check any influences (to the left) you think may have led to the tension.

Keeping in mind the points covered in Chapter One, write out a prayer in which you express to God your heart on the subject of your everyday work.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Two: Assignment: Babylon

Groundwork

Read Chapter Two.

Which point in this chapter did you find to be the most helpful?

Read John 17:15-19.

Jot down any ideas from Chapter Two you want to recall and discuss with your group:

1. _____ (p. _____)
2. _____ (p. _____)
3. _____ (p. _____)

Groupwork

Rom 1:1, 7. "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God. . . . To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:"

Chapter Two opens (p. 21) by describing two wrong ideas that typically make it difficult for many Christians to believe that God has placed them in "secular" jobs. Those two ideas are:

1. _____

2. _____



Summarize how either or both of these wrong ideas may have affected you concerning your own everyday work.

When you read of someone in the Bible being "called," how have you interpreted what that means?

Read Daniel 1:1-6.

Summarize how Daniel found himself in a decades-long career as a bureaucrat in Babylon.

Jeremiah 1:5. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Daniel and Jeremiah were contemporaries. Suppose Daniel had compared his own position in a "secular" job in Babylon with the way God had placed Jeremiah in his lifework (see Jeremiah 1:5). Had Daniel looked only at outward appearances, what might he have mistakenly concluded?

*"Summarizing the entire New Testament witness, 'call' is used for the invitation to salvation through discipleship to Christ, the summons to a holy corporate and personal living, and the call to serve. All are called. All are called together. All are called for the totality of everyday life." R. Paul Stevens: **The Other Six Days (p. 88)***

Read the quotation from *The Other Six Days* (to the left). In light of that summary, have you been "called"? If so, how does your "call" affect you in your everyday work?

A former soldier said: "I soon found that the military was no place for a Christian. Daily my ears were assaulted with profane and obscene language."

In the column to the left, read the quotations from the former soldier and the pastor. What comments have you read or heard that expressed similar warnings to avoid the "dirty" world of "secular" work?

A Christian pastor said this in a message: "The work-place is no place for a Christian woman. It is too hard to be spiritual there.... Stay out of the world!"

Have you yourself wrestled with thoughts like these? If so, describe them.

John 17:14-19. "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

How can you reconcile the pastor's advice to "Stay out of the world," with what Jesus says in his prayer to the Father in John 17:14-19?

On p. 25, the book describes some of the unholy influences Daniel encountered in his "secular" job there in Babylon. How do these compare with the corruption surrounding you where you work?

Daniel 1:8. "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. . ."

Read Daniel 1:8 in light of I John 5:4. How does I John 5:4 help you understand Daniel's secret in resisting the "rot" in his workplace?

1 John 5:4. ". . . everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."

Heartwork

- *Your geographic location*
- *Your gifts and abilities*
- *Your need for income*
- *Your interests*
- *Your desire to help others*
- *Your family history*
- *Your _____*

Through what circumstances did you come to work where you do? (Use the list to the left to stimulate your thinking.)

Where do you discern the hand of God in those circumstances?

In prayer, thank God for your work and for the ways in which he made it possible for you to serve him in that area.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Three: Up on the Lampstand

Groundwork

Read Chapter Three

Write a sentence that explains why this chapter is called, "Up on the Lampstand."

What from Chapter Three would you like to bring up as you dialog with your group?

Read Matthew 5:14-16

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

II Corinthians 4:4. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

P. 29 raises the question, "What did God lose?" as a result of human sin. In light of II Corinthians 4:4 (see left column), how would you answer that question?

As a result of sin-blindness, what God lost—that which rightfully should be directed to him—gets wrongly directed to what other objects instead? (Give specific examples from your own workplace.)

John 12:46. "I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."

John 12:46 refers to what major step God took to regain what he had lost because of sin?

John 1:4. "In him [Christ] was life, and that life was the light of men."

In light of the verses in the left column, describe God's strategy for regaining what he had lost as a result of sin.

Matthew 5:14. "You are the light of the world."

How did God reproduce the light of Christ in people?

Philippians 2:15-16. "...children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life..."

Where does God place his now-lighted people?

In that place, what are his lighted-ones to do?

How does knowing this strategy transform the way you see your role in the workplace?



Matthew 5:15. "Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

What are some of the "bowls" under which we Christians often put our lights?

How does your job offer some of the same benefits supplied by a stand that holds a lamp or light bulb?

- Vengefulness
- Impatience
- Wrong-Doing
- Cheating
- Lying
- Hostility
- Two-facedness
- Deceit
- Hopelessness
- Pride
- Other _____
- Other _____

Check the boxes to the left that describe the kinds of darkness you encounter in your workplace.

How can you—from the "lampstand" of your work—shine the light of Christ into those light-starved areas? Be specific.

Matthew 5:16. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Think of Matthew 5:16 in the context of your workplace. Why do you think Jesus gives priority to letting your light shine through *good deeds* [literally *works*] people can see? (Notice he does not emphasize *good words* they can hear.)

From the book (p. 33): "Dark-hearted men will not praise God nor give him the glory for his first good works—the sun, moon, stars, and all the other wonders of nature. So now God is doing his good works right in the world. People may avoid lifting their eyes to the hills or stars to see there the glory of God, but they cannot avoid a 'lighted one' working next to them hour after hour, day after day."

Read the quotation from page 33 of the book. Then tell of an example or two in which you have seen the effectiveness of God's strategy of placing a "lighted one" in a dark workplace.

Heartwork

- ✓ How is my attitude at work? Does it reflect my hope in Christ?
- ✓ Am I completely honest in all my relationships at work?
- ✓ Do I refrain from joining in workplace gossip?
- ✓ Are there tensions in my workplace? How might I serve as a peacemaker?
- ✓ What pockets of darkness in my workplace need prayer?

Reflect on the questions in the column to the left. Ask God to help you honestly answer each one.

If you have already built a strong relationship with a Christian co-worker, ask him or her to respond to the questions as they relate to the way you approach your work.

Confess any shortfalls to God and ask him to make you able, by His Spirit, to shine for his glory in your workplace.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Four: The Daily Grind

Groundwork

Read Chapter Four.

Chapter Four says God is aiming to carry out at least three purposes by sending you into the daily grind of the workplace. Summarize those three purposes:

Romans 12:2. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed. . . ."

1. _____
(see pp. 38-40)
2. _____
(see pp. 40-43)
3. _____
(see pp. 43-45)

II Corinthians 3:18. "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed. . . ."
Read Chapter Four

What questions did Chapter Four raise in your mind that you'd like to discuss with the group?

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

From the book: "While we may to have our work used in changing the lives of others, God is eager first to change our own lives through our work."

In the left column, read the quotation from the book. If God has spoken to your own heart along these lines, tell how he brought you to this realization.

- ✓ The work itself
- ✓ Management
- ✓ Co-workers
- ✓ Clients/Customers
- ✓ Other

List some of the most frequent and difficult workplace pressures you face that arise from the sources listed in the left column:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- *Matthew 16:24*
- *Mark 8:34*
- *Luke 9:23*
- *Romans 8:13*
- *Colossians 3:5*
- *Galatians 5:24*

What common theme do you discover in the Scripture references to the left?

What sentence from this chapter best sums up this theme?

From your own experience (present or past) tell of a time when circumstances in the workplace presented you with the opportunity to put the self-life to death.

Read aloud: Judges 7:8-21, the story of Gideon's battle against Midian.

As Gideon's men neared the enemy camp, what effect did the soldiers' jars have on the light from the torches?

**IN BROKENNESS
YOU SHINE**

*Your beauty shines
Your love surrounds
Where cries of brokenness
Are found bring hope alive
Help me believe
And trust You one more
time
In brokenness You shine
In brokenness You shine
(from a song by Steve
Green)*

When they broke the jars, what did the Midianites see?

How does the book apply the analogy between Gideon's jars and our natural selves?

Tell how you believe God is using workplace stresses and blows to make you more light-permeable.

The book mentions a few examples of how God tested people in Bible days. List other biblical instances in which God put his people to the test.

From the book: *Our occupations are often used by God as testing grounds* (p. 45).

Do you agree that God still tests his people, as stated in the quotation from the book to the left? If so, explain why God uses work situations to test us.

Describe what you believe is a test that God sent through your work.

"I see my role more and more as being open with people, being honest about how I live my life, and sharing how I work through things that stress me—such as when the money taps out or my kids cause me concern. Believers and unbelievers have said, 'I can't believe the way you're holding up.' And I can answer, 'If I didn't trust God, I would not be able to do this.'" (from a workplace testimony)

Tell of any example you may have seen in which the way a believer met job-related tests were used by God to speak to unbelievers. (See example to the left.)

Heartwork



"Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors."
(James 1:2, The Message)

Meditate on the analogy of lens-grinding in the last paragraph of this chapter (p. 45). Ask the Lord to show you parallels between the process of grinding a lens to refract light correctly and the abrasive elements of your own work.

On the basis of James 1:2, begin making it a habit to thank God not only for the trials that come from life in the home, the community and the church, but also from those that come from the workplace.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Five: Trimming the Lamps

Groundwork

Read Chapter Five

What new insights, if any, did you receive from reading Chapter Five?

Write the names of Christians you contact in connection with your work (co-workers, supervisors, clients, customers, vendors, etc.):

Groupwork

Read Exodus 27:20-21;
30:7-8; Leviticus 24:1-4

To keep them burning and spreading light, the lamps in the Old Covenant Tabernacle required what? Who was responsible for providing what they required?

To whom is Peter writing in the verses to the left?

Read I Peter 2:5, 9

In the New Covenant, who is included in the "holy" and the "royal" priesthood?

Read Luke 12:35

Jesus' words, "...keep your lamps burning...", imply what danger?

*Give me oil in my lamp,
keep me burning.
Give me oil in my lamp,
I pray.
Give me oil in my lamp,
keep me burning.
Keep me burning
'til the break of day.
(from an old song)*

How can the lamp-trimming work of the Old Covenant priests help us see our roles as New Covenant priests in our workplaces?

From the book, read the bottom paragraph on p. 47 through the middle of p. 48.

How do we sometimes exclude other believers from our fellowship because they don't fit our "mold" for what Christians ought to believe or do? Support your answer with specific examples.

Sample "fruit questions":

- How do they treat the name of Jesus?
- What is the basis of their hope?
- How do they respond to "nobodies"?
- Do they forgive when wronged?

Read the bulleted points to the left. What additional "fruit questions" do you believe would help you identify other believers in your workplace? (Jot them down and share them.)

Within a typical local church, how have our traditions taught us to think "programmatically" when it comes to serving our fellow believers?

*"A delightful part of my work is the way Christians encourage each other. Several have knocked on my door and asked if I could pray with them about something, because they sense I trust God. [They] have also encouraged me when I hear them witness or when they offer to pray with me in tough times." **Testimony from a Communications Manager for a state-run college savings plan:***

In contrast to the programmed approach, how do opportunities to serve fellow believers typically present themselves in your workplace? (Illustrate with specific examples.)

In your own words, summarize two "non-programmed" opportunities for Daniel to serve fellow believers in his workplace.

Daniel 1:5-20 _____

Daniel 2:1-48. _____

From the book (p. 51): "What are some of the different forms that service [to other believers] may take on the job?"

The New Testament includes a great variety of "one another" verses that describe how we are to serve other believers. The book (pp. 51 – 55) includes these examples. Can you think, for each one, how you might carry it out for the Christians in your work network?

Self-giving love. _____

Forgiveness. _____

Listening. _____

Prayer. _____

Bringing back strays. _____

Encouragement. _____

Example-setting. _____

Allowing others to serve us. _____

From the book (pp. 56-57).

If you know one, describe a believer who has had a similar influence on you to the one described in the last four paragraphs of Chapter Five.

Heartwork

Gal 4:19-20. "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you. . ."

Share with your study group how the Lord has spoken to you through the discussion of this chapter.

Ask the Lord in prayer to form Christ in you and to give you the power to turn what most people call "secular" work into a real ministry that includes serving fellow believers.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Six: Glowing Without Glaring

Groundwork

Read Chapter Six

After reading Chapter Six, explain in a single sentence the meaning of its title, "Glowing Without Glaring."

1 Peter 3:15. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."

Jot down one or two discussion questions you'd like to raise when you meet with your group:

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork



Chapter Six begins with the story of the roommate jarred awake by a flashlight. If you've ever been temporarily blinded by a bright light, describe how it felt.

How might unbelievers feel under the glare of insensitive, pushy "witnessing"?

From the book (p. 59): "In this matter of witnessing to non-Christians, it is easy to swerve into one of two extremes."

From what you've seen, give examples of the two workplace witnessing extremes.

What do you believe leads Christians to such extremes?

Read John 17:9-11 and 20-23.

In Jesus' prayer to his Father, what did he ask repeatedly for both his first followers and those who would later believe? _____

See verses 21 and 23.

In what two ways would the answer to Jesus' request affect the unbelieving world? They would _____ and _____ that God the Father had sent Jesus.

From the book (p. 62):
"...the starting point in evangelism is not better techniques or more training, but a demonstration of heaven's unity between believers on earth."

Chapter Five emphasized identifying other believers in your work network and serving them in love. How does this relate to effective evangelism in the workplace?

Why do you think demonstrating unity among Christians out in the world where others can see it has such an impact on unbelievers?

Put yourself in the place of an unbeliever in your workplace. What opportunities, if any, exist for him or her to actually observe Christian-to-Christian unity?

I Peter 3:1-2. "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."

In the verses to the left, Peter describes a household that includes a believer (the wife) and an unbeliever (the husband). In such a situation, what way of witnessing should the believer mainly rely on?

In what ways are the relational dynamics within a household like those within a workplace?

How do the relational dynamics between a traveling evangelist and an audience differ from those between co-workers in a job setting?

What lessons about workplace witnessing can you draw from Peter's word to believing wives with unbelieving husbands?

Titus 2:9-10. "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

In Titus 2:9-10, what elements of "workstyle witness" do you see in what Paul told Titus to teach Christian slaves?

Colossians 4:5-6. "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Colossians 4:5-6 and I Peter 3:5 both offer insight into our witnessing with words. Both passages include the word "answer." What does this imply about recognizing opportunities for speaking to unbelievers about our faith?

I Peter 3:15. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."

What guidelines for verbal witness can you glean from the combined wisdom of both passages?

Heartwork

Philemon 6 (The Message): "And I keep praying that this faith we hold in common keeps showing up in the good things we do, and that people recognize Christ in all of it."

How am I loving my workplace associates as my "neighbors"?

How well prepared am I to share the gospel clearly when an opportunity comes through my work?

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Seven: Light Housekeeping

Groundwork

Read Chapter Seven

If you were asked to tell a ten-year-old what Chapter Seven is all about, what would you say?

Genesis 2:2. "By the seventh day God had finished the **work** [Hebrew: mela'kah] he had been doing..."

What points made in Chapter Seven do you want to recall and discuss with others in your group?

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Exodus 20:9. "Six days you shall labor and do all your **work** [Hebrew: mela'kah]..."

Groupwork

"...many of us experience a real spiritual struggle....we wonder whether our work itself really matters—or simply the other things it provides or makes possible. Is there any real lasting or 'eternal' value in our work?"
--Darrell Cosden, The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work

Chapter Seven opens by saying: "Once a person begins to discover how to minister to others on the job he may come to resent his ordinary chores as interruptions to his 'real' work." Before you read this chapter, how might you have rated the spiritual significance of your "ministry-to-others work" in comparison with that of your "ordinary work"? (1 = low; 10 = high)

Significance of "Ministry-to-others-Work"

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Significance of "Ordinary Work"

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Review pages 70-71. Then make a list of the kinds of work the Bible reveals God himself as doing.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What is your work? How is it an extension of God's own work?

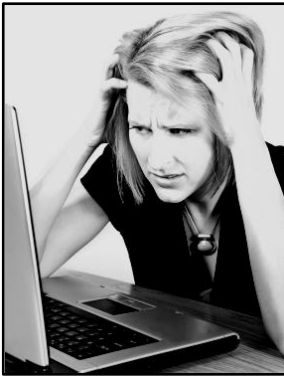
*From the book (p. 70):
"Work is not a punishment for man's wrongdoing. It originated as a continuation, an extension, of God's activity."*

Compare the statement from the book (in the left column) to the statement below—quoted from a church website:

"You see, work, toil, labour, whatever you want to call it, came about because God cursed the ground as a result of man's sin. Man only has himself to blame for having to work, no-one else, because he disobeyed God. "

Which of the two statements do you believe to be true? Back up your answer with Scripture.

Read Genesis 2:15; 3:16-19.



Did God assign human work before or after sin entered the picture? Before After

Describe the original effect of sin on human labor:

Name some specific ways in which you see that "sin-effect" still producing frustration in the work you do.

*Review Colossians 3:23, 24;
I Corinthians 15:58.*

On p. 74, the book says, "Any work done 'for the Lord' becomes the 'work of the Lord.'" After reading the passages to the left, do you agree with that statement? Explain why or why not.

Ephesians 6:6. "Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you..."

Paul tells slaves not to do their work merely to win favor or make people like them. In your workplace, what such a practice called—and how do some engage in it?

How can you intentionally cultivate the habit of doing your work “to the Lord”?

Food for further thought:

“Through our freedom in Christ, our work(s) becomes set free so that it has a genuine earthly usefulness now, but also a continued existence, like we do, in heaven.” **The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work, by Darrell Cosden**

Check the category or categories listed below that best describe the area in which your work contributes to the work of keeping conditions on earth suitable for human life.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | |

What would the world lose if no one on earth did the kind of work you do?

Heartwork

Do your God-given gifts fit your everyday work? Explain.

Tell why the work you are doing is acceptable to God and useful for others.

Psalm 90:17. “May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us — yes, establish the work of our hands.”

Write out a prayer that paraphrases in your own words the prayer of Moses recorded in Psalm 90:17:

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Eight: Secrets of a Light Heavyweight

Groundwork

Read Chapter Eight

"We do not just hear what Jesus said to do and try to do that. Rather, we also notice what he did, and we do that too. . . . his use of solitude, silence, study of Scripture, prayer, and service to others all had a disciplinary aspect in his life." **Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy**

Select one sentence from Chapter Eight that, to you, best sums up the whole chapter—then copy it into the blanks below:

What questions did reading Chapter Eight leave in your mind—questions you'd like to discuss with others in your group?

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

From the book (p. 79): "I learned to work by watching my father work."

Illustrate from your own experience how you learned a skill by observing how a more experienced person did it.

John 5:19. "...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing..."

Chapter Eight touches on several spiritual disciplines. Relate these to the statement (p. 79) that, "If we would learn how to do our daily work 'as to the Lord,' we must watch God at work."

*From the book (p. 81-82):
"We may even envy those in
gospel work, thinking that
such occupations would
permit more opportunity for
the soul to gaze upon God."*

Have you ever wished you were engaged in more "spiritual" work so that you could focus more attention on God? If yes, explain why. If no, explain why not.

One woman, trying to abide in Christ in her workplace, constantly played Christian music in her workspace and papered it with Christian slogans and Bible verses. If she came to you for counsel, how would you advise her?

Daniel 6:10. "Three times a day he [Daniel] got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God..."

In your own words, summarize how the book (p. 83) explains our need to spend time alone with God even though, as believers, we are constantly "in Christ."



Three prayer times a day suited Daniel's work routines. What schedule of regular quiet times with God do you practice? And how is it working out for you?

Given your workplace, with its opportunities and limits, what place(s) are available to you for getting alone with God?

In the spaces below, describe your current use of or experience with each spiritual discipline mentioned in the book and listed in the left column.

Worship and praise (p. 84-85).

Asking Prayer (p. 85-86).

Admitting Prayer (p. 87-88).

Fasting (p. 88-89).

Embedding Scripture (p. 89-90).

Meditation (p. 90-91).

Heartwork

How would you summarize the message of Chapter Eight?

I Timothy 4:7-8. "...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."

As you consider putting the counsel of this chapter into practice in your own life, what barriers seem insurmountable?

Write a prayer asking God, for whom nothing is impossible, to show you how to overcome those barriers and to cultivate your own spiritual life.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Nine: The Added Things

Groundwork

Read Chapter Nine.

What main points stood out as you read Chapter Nine? And how does Daniel's life illustrate those points?

Jesus in Luke 12:15:

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Hebrews 13:5. *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"*

Your participation in the workplace inevitably involves you with money. List anything from this chapter that you'd like to discuss with others in your group.

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

I Timothy 6:10. *"...the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."*

Both Scripture passages to the left rely on the analogy of plant life. How does I Timothy 6:10 help you understand Mark 4:19?

Mark 4:19. *"...The deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."*

What in Daniel's experience could have made the king's offer to him in Daniel 5:7 so appealing? (see pp. 93-94).



Tell of a time when circumstances in your own life may have made you particularly vulnerable to the love-of-money temptation.

Daniel's answer to the king's offer (Daniel 5:17) shows that he remained detached from the world's driving greed for more money. What was his secret?

From the book, read from the middle of p. 95 through the end of the first paragraph on p. 96.

Comment on how James 4:1-3 relates to some of the struggles over money you have seen in your current or past workplaces.

Have you ever wrestled with the question (p. 96), "Would a really spiritual person even work for wages?" If you have, describe how you resolved the issue in your own mind and heart.

From the book, see pp. 97-100.

The book identifies what four reasons Christians may legitimately desire a boost in income?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What other biblical reasons can you identify for wanting more money?

Pages 97-98.

The section on meeting your own and your family's needs contains several quotations from Scripture. What might the Holy Spirit be saying to you personally through these passages?

Bottom of p. 98.

From whom are you receiving instruction in God's Word? What gives them the right to receive something from what you earn on the job?

Page 99.

Should you be responsible to help in the financial support of those in gospel work who serve beyond the sphere of your local church? Explain your answer.

Bottom of p. 99 to p. 100.

In our society where many have learned to "work the system," how can you be both wise and obedient in this matter of giving to the poor?

Heartwork

Psalm 139:23-24. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Paraphrase David's prayer (from the left column), making it personal by applying it to your own relationship to your income.

After offering this prayer to God, expect him to answer—and listen carefully for it.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Ten: the Rest Areas

Groundwork

Read Chapter Ten.

How would you describe the difference between what this chapter calls "body weariness" and "soul weariness"?

Jeremiah 6:16. "This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Why, according to Jeremiah 6:16, did the ancient Israelites miss out on the rest for their souls?

Matthew 11:28-29. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

As you consider physical rest and soul rest, what would you like to ask about or share as you meet with your group?

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

From the book (p. 107): "God's six-to-one work-rest ratio has been written into the order of things."

In what specific, practical ways have you incorporated God's "six-to-one work-rest ratio" into your own lifestyle?

After reading this chapter, do you see any need for changes here?

"...if we really intend to submit our bodies as living sacrifices to God, our first step well might be to start getting enough sleep."

Dallas Willard,
Renovation of the Heart
(p. 175).

Have you (or anyone you have known) ever felt guilty about sleeping, thinking it a waste of God-given time? If so, tell how that idea has affected you and how you currently think about sleep.

Joshua 11:23; 14:15. "Then the land had rest from war."

The book of Joshua contrasts war with *rest*. So we might describe the war within—the war with Satan, sin and our own desires—as *unrest*. Give some personal examples of the unrest caused by your own war within.

From the book (p. 108):
"Our daily work is one thing; it can tire us. But far more exhausting is the work of fighting sin in our own strength."

What are some of the clues that let you know you have been fighting sin in your own strength?



Review pp. 109-110. If someone asked you to summarize God's alternative to fighting sin in our own strength, how would you explain the New Testament way to win the war and find rest?

Matthew 11:29. "...learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

P. 110 includes this question: "What does humility have to do with rest?" How would you answer?

In what forms do temptations to climb the success ladder present themselves in your work environment?

II Peter 1:4. "...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

Name some examples of God's promises you can claim when work tempts you to "realize your potential" or to "fulfill yourself"?

Read Daniel 6:1-9.

What workplace temptations do Daniel's co-workers illustrate by their behavior?

As you consider Daniel's co-workers, what similar temptations have you seen in your own workplace?

From the book (p. 115): "The whole gamut of ways in which the nonclerical person gets the message, 'You're just a layman,' can produce unrest."

Have you ever experienced unrest coming from being taught to think of yourself as "just a layperson"? If so, describe the unrest it has caused.

From the book (p. 116), read the last full paragraph.

This paragraph touches on some of the signs that accompany God's gift of rest. What other signs might you be able to add from your own experience of his rest?

Heartwork

Read Jeremiah 45:1-5.

How does God's word to Baruch speak to your own situation?

To what degree are you experiencing God's rest?

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Eleven: The Church in the Workplace

Groundwork

Read Chapter Eleven.

"...any effort to present Jesus as Savior must focus on the church on Monday rather than the church on Sunday. No matter how big the church on Sunday becomes, it will never penetrate the culture with Jesus." **Jerry Cook, The Monday Morning Church**

"...most, if not all, of the world is already filled with God's missionaries." **Darrell Cosden, The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work**

Write out what you believe to be a biblical definition of the word "church."

On the subject of the church in the workplace, what comments or questions would you like to discuss with your group?

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

From the book (p. 119). "Has a deficient view of the Church let many of us into blind alleys in which we see no way to 'really serve the Lord' in our jobs?"

Discuss the "from the book" question in the left column. (Put another way, the question is: "Does the way we see 'church' limit our vision of the church in the workplace?")

From the book (p. 122). "Without exception in Scripture a local church included all the believers in that community."

Do you agree with the statement to the left? (Consider, for example, Romans 16:1 and Revelation 2 and 3.) Explain your answer.



Consider this: "The church at the corner of Seventh and Main Streets." What picture of the church does such a description create in our minds?

OR



Identify other ways of referring to "church" that do not include all the believers in a given community.

Imagine yourself a believer who works in a city government agency with 100 employees. Suppose ten percent (10) of these government workers are Christians you contact frequently. But only two of them are part of the group you gather with on Sundays.

Read the hypothetical situation described in the left column. Are you to practice the "one-another" commands of the New Testament just with the two or with all 10? Explain your answer.

If you answered "all ten," what are some of the difficulties you'll encounter if you set out to serve them as believers in the church in your workplace?

How can you resolve some of these barriers to ministering to the other believers where you work?

Luke 6:43-44. "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit."

In the group you gather with on Sundays, how do you typically identify others as believers? How can you identify others as believers in the church in your workplace?

Accept
 Admonish
 Be kind to
 Bear with
 Build up
 Confess sins to
 Don't grumble against
 Encourage
 Forgive
 Greet
 Honor
 Instruct
 Live in harmony with
 Live in peace with
 Love
 Offer hospitality to
 Pray for
 Serve
 Spur on to love, good deeds
 Submit to

Once you have identified others in your workplace as believers, how—without formal church programs—can you serve them? (As you answer, consider the list of New Testament one-another instructions in the left column.)

Within your workplace, what proper limits must you observe as you serve other believers in love?

From the book (p. 126):
 "The real need is vision: we need to see our group as simply part of the one Church in our community. We must see that in our community there is only one Church—though it may have many meeting places."

How can you help other believers—including those you meet with on the weekend—to grasp the vision described in the column on the left?

Heartwork

"The church gets into trouble whenever it thinks it is in the church business rather than the Kingdom business....Church people think about how to get people into the church; Kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world." **Howard Snyder, Liberating the Church**

List the names of those you already know are believers in your workplace.

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Pray that God will give you opportunities to practice one-anothering for these and other believers in the church in your workplace.

STUDY GUIDE F O R SERVING CHRIST IN THE WORKPLACE

Chapter Twelve: Help Wanted: Spiritual Grownups

Groundwork

Read Chapter Twelve.

"We teach in a spirit of profound common sense so that we can bring each person to maturity. To be mature is to be basic. Christ! No more, no less. That's what I'm working so hard at day after day, year after year, doing my best with the energy God so generously gives me."
Paul, Galatians 1:28-29, The Message.

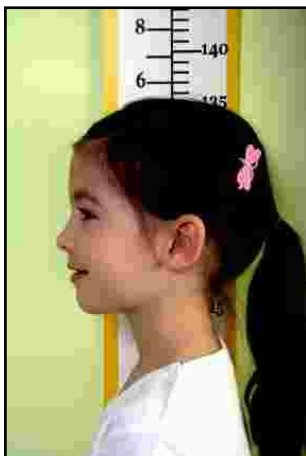
According to this chapter, what does Scripture present as the main task of the church?

What questions or points from the whole book or this final chapter would you like to discuss with your group?

1. _____ (p. ____)
2. _____ (p. ____)
3. _____ (p. ____)

Groupwork

See pages 130-132.



Summarize several misleading ways believers and Christian groups sometimes define maturity. List both those in the book and others.

In what way does each of those misleading definitions fall short?

Read the quotation from Richard Halverson (page 132).

Have you seen evidence to support Halverson’s point in this paragraph? Support your answer with specific examples from your own experiences in the church.

From the book (pp. 133-34):

"...our real goal should be to produce mature Christians who can take their places as lights in this dark world."

"Our goal is to equip [the Christian] for a ministry in terms of his life, not in terms of our program."

"...our primary object is to produce men and women whose ordinary stations in life can be transformed into platforms for ministry...."

Do you believe the goal descriptions in the left column accurately describe what a church ought to be aiming for? Explain your answer.

To what degree are the believers you meet with intentionally and successfully pursuing this overall aim?

If you answered no to the preceding question, how can you encourage your church to equip people in terms of their own stations in life?

"...there now is lacking a serious and expectant intention to bring Jesus’ people into obedience and abundance through training."
Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

This question appears on p. 135: "Why, then are so few giving the individual time and attention needed in teaching Christians how to live and work in the world? " How would you answer this question?

Pages 137-40.

Imagine a person gifted as a pastor [shepherd] working, not as a professional on a church staff, but in a full time in a job like yours. How might this person exercise the shepherding gift in such a role? Give specific examples.

See pages 140-42.

"Work in the Spirit that is mission, or, mission that works will be work that clears away, as much as possible, those things that seek to confound the purposes of God and threaten to destroy his kingdom." **Darrell Cosden, The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work (p. 146)**

The final pages of the book offer 15 or so descriptions of what would mark a mature believer [the generic "man" means man or woman]. If you were to choose a "top five" among these, what would they be?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What marks of a mature Christian would you add to those in the book?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Suppose the work world were peppered with mature believers who had been equipped to turn their work lives into platforms for ministry. What kinds of results would you expect?

Heartwork

What new insights has the Lord given you through your interaction with the questions in this course and through the discussions in your group?

"The Spirit of God calls, endows, and empowers Christians to work in their various vocations." **Miroslav Volf, Work in the Spirit (p. 115)**

Write a prayer expressing to God what you would like to see him do in and through you in your workplace.
