

Series: WORK WISE

Text: Deut 8:18; Eccl 9:10; Col 3:17; Eph 5:15, 6:5; Gal 6:2-3

Title: "Finding Success"

Introduction: WELCOME, BACK ROADS CHURCH! Glad you're with us TODAY as we KICK OFF "**WORK WISE**"! Why talk about WORK? We spend MORE of our LIVES WORKING than ANY other ACTIVITY besides MAYBE, SLEEPING. Recent STUDIES show AMERICANS WORK MORE HOURS than any OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED NATION. We LIVE in a COUNTRY DRIVEN by WORK, and MOST DESIRE to be SUCCESSFUL in their WORK ... we WANT our WORK to MAKE a DIFFERENCE.

We KNOW ... GOD GAVE us WORK as a GIFT ... it's MEANT to BE a BLESSING in our LIVES. Then, WHY do so MANY of our JOBS cause us STRESS, WORRY, and CONFUSION? God says WORK is a BLESSING. It's to give us JOY and FULFILLMENT. Which means at SOME POINT, we MESSED UP God's INTENTION for WORK.

In this SERIES, "**WORK WISE**," I HOPE we REDISCOVER God's ORIGINAL INTENTION for our WORK. To DO SO, we're going to NEED HIS WISDOM.

TODAY ... SUCCESS! Let me CUT to the CHASE. As FOLLOWERS of JESUS, WE should be the MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE in our WORKPLACE. We should EXCEL at WHAT we DO and be GREAT at our JOBS. I BELIEVE the MORE our FAITH INFORMS our WORK, the MORE SUCCESSFUL we will BE. Today ... STRIVE for GODLY SUCCESS in our WORK, SCHOOL, and DAILY LIFE.

I BELIEVE WE WANT to be SUCCESSFUL. That's WHY we WORK MORE HOURS than ANY other INDUSTRIALIZED nation. MY GUESS is NONE of US GETS UP in the MORNING THINKING ... "**TODAY I want to be INCREDIBLY AVERAGE!**" NO! We DESIRE to be SUCCESSFUL in our WORK. BUT, too OFTEN, INSTEAD of being SUCCESSFUL, we FEEL STUCK in our JOBS.

My GUESS is MANY do NOT FEEL SUCCESSFUL ... BECAUSE we are working for the WRONG DEFINITION of "**SUCCESS**." We think "**SUCCESS**" is **SEVERAL things: HOW MUCH MONEY we MAKE / In a DREAM JOB / have INFLUENCE and POWER / maybe the EDUCATION we HAVE / RECOGNITION from OTHERS / AWARDS, etc.** BUT ... IF that is TRULY SUCCESS, then WHY does the PURSUIT of these things SELDOM lead to HAPPINESS and SATISFACTION? WHY do we still FEEL EXHAUSTED and EMPTY? WHY does the WORLD'S DEFINITION of "**SUCCESS**" take a TOLL on our HEALTH, FAMILY, and HAPPINESS?

Do you REMEMBER the GOAL of this SERIES? GET BACK to GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN for WORK ... So TODAY let's REDISCOVER God's WISDOM for SUCCESS. Let's start here ... **DEUTERONOMY 8:18a = Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful.** That MEANS, ACCORDING to The LORD, TRUE SUCCESS in our WORK and LIVES, BEGINS with HIM! SO, let's START with HIS DEFINITION of SUCCESS. Write this down ... **A Biblical Definition of Success: Bringing Glory to God in the WORK I DO, and the WAY I DO IT.**

NOTICE this DEFINITION does NOT say ANYTHING about WHERE you WORK, WHAT your JOB is or HOW MUCH MONEY you MAKE! If THOSE are your DEFINITION of SUCCESS, THEY are ALL about bringing GLORY to YOU! Listen, ESTABLISHING how

GREAT YOU ARE is NOT God's DEFINITION of SUCCESS! Let's go after ...
"BRINGING GLORY to GOD in the WORK I DO, and the WAY I DO IT!"

GODLY SUCCESS is NOT about your JOB, but about USING your JOB to bring GLORY to HIM. We DEDICATE our WORK and our WORKDAY to HIM. ONCE AGAIN, we LIVE DIFFERENT from OTHERS ... a VISIBLE DIFFERENCE in our LIVES at WORK / SCHOOL / WHEREVER! To bring GLORY to GOD, I BRING my BEST EVERY DAY!

Listen to THIS WISDOM ... **ECCLESIASTES 9:10 = Whatever you do, do well.**

It did NOT SAY, "WHATEVER you DO, do with a SNARKY / NEGATIVE / CRAPPY / CRITICAL ATTITUDE!" So, as we GO THROUGH these CHOICES, we GET to MAKE ... each INDIVIDUAL ... as we THINK about ... **How to Find Success at Work:** ... Let's THINK GODLY SUCCESS ... PUT a CHECK MARK NEXT to the ONES you are doing GOOD AT. I CAN'T FORCE ANY of us to CHOOSE THESE. IT'S BETWEEN YOU and JESUS. I'm just SHARING what the BIBLE SAYS. FIRST CHOICE is ...

- Start My Day with a GRATEFUL HEART.

Write that down. HOW we START our DAY is IMPORTANT. I'm NOT SAYING you need to be a MORNING PERSON, because THEY can be ANNOYING. I'm SAYING we CHOOSE to be GRATEFUL BEFORE our FEET HIT the FLOOR! It has NOTHING to DO with being a MORNING or NON-MORNING PERSON. It's a CHOICE we get EVERY DAY!

Your CHOICE: Be GRATEFUL or BE GRUMPY. GRUMPY people ... NOTHING makes them HAPPY / DON'T LIKE their JOB / CLIENTS / BOSS / CLASSMATES / CO-WORKERS ... they do NOT LIKE ANYTHING. They have a CRITICAL HEART, and it AFFECTS their WORK and HOW they DO their WORK. Remember: **COLOSSIANS 3:17 = And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.** Please UNDERLINE **"Giving thanks."**

Some people DO a GOOD JOB, BUT IF their ATTITUDE is CRAPPY / CRITICAL / NEGATIVE / GRIPING ALL THE TIME ... That's NOT as a REPRESENTATIVE of JESUS! Remember our DEFINITION. It's NOT just DOING the JOB, it's THE WAY you DO your JOB / SCHOOLING / LIFE. My SUGGESTION: Do NOT GRUMBLE and COMPLAIN EVERY TIME things are NOT PERFECT (That's what everyone else does ... WORLD'S BEHAVIOR / CUSTOMS). INSTEAD, be GRATEFUL for what is RIGHT / what is GOOD in LIFE and WORK. Remember, we LIVE DIFFERENTLY than OTHERS. Christlike ... REPRESENTATIVE of JESUS. IF we DO, PEOPLE WILL NOTICE! People will ENJOY WORKING WITH YOU MORE than the GRUMPS / COMPLAINERS. You will be **"GODLY SUCCESSFUL"** if you START your DAY with a GRATEFUL HEART. Next CHOICE ...

- Strive for EXCELLENCE.

I mentioned earlier, CHRISTIANS should be the MOST SUCCESSFUL people in the WORKPLACE. EXCELLENCE means NO Shortcuts, HALF-APPLE, EASY WAY ... NO ATTITUDE of **"I'm NOT going to GO OUT of MY WAY,"** etc. We DO a GOOD JOB at our JOB / SCHOOL / LIFE. Now, EXCELLENCE does NOT MEAN **"PERFECT."** Here is a DEFINITION of EXCELLENCE: **"EXCELLENCE is doing the BEST you CAN with what GOD has GIVEN YOU."** (repeat) IOW – GIVEN your GIFTS and TALENTS / MIND to THINK and SOLVE Problems / PHYSICAL ABILITY / EDUCATION / PEOPLE in your LIFE / EXPERIENCES / OPPORTUNITIES / ENERGY you HAVE IN THAT MOMENT (ALL the things that make up YOU) ... you take ALL those things GOD has GIVEN YOU and you USE them to the BEST of YOUR ABILITY.

Here's how PAUL says it ... **GALATIANS 6:4 = *Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else.*** What a GREAT DAY when I do NOT FEEL the NEED to COMPARE MYSELF with ANYONE ELSE! "MIND your OWN BUSINESS!" Next Choice =

- Seek Out What MY BOSS Wants and PROVIDE IT. (with Integrity)

Now, for SOME of you, this will be EASY. You have a GREAT BOSS who CARES about YOU and your CO-WORKERS, so this MIGHT be an EASY ONE for YOU. BUT OTHERS HERE, you are NOT THINKING THAT! For SOME of you, you have a DIFFICULT TIME WORKING with your BOSS ... and you're THINKING ... HOLD ON, Pastor Stan, I'm NOT SURE about THIS ONE. BUT this is a KEY PRINCIPLE as FOLLOWERS of JESUS ... we OPERATE DIFFERENTLY than everyone else! We LIVE under a DIFFERENT SET of RULES! This PRINCIPLE is as OLD as The New Testament.

Paul WRITES to The FOLLOWERS in EPHESUS (under the Roman Empire) ... Change out SLAVE for WORKER and MASTER for BOSS. **EPHESIANS 6:5-6 = *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart.*** PAUL Wrote this to CHRISTIANS in the FIRST CENTURY who were ACTUAL SLAVES. They were UNDER the ROMAN EMPIRE. He REMINDED them they were SERVANTS of CHRIST; REPRESENTATIVES of JESUS and they were to ACT / LIVE DIFFERENT from OTHERS. **"Do NOT COPY the BEHAVIORS and CUSTOMS of THIS WORLD. Instead, let GOD TRANSFORM you by CHANGING the WAY you THINK!"** STOP thinking about your BOSS the way the OTHER WORKERS DO.

Paul LATER WROTE about COMING UNDER the AUTHORITY or BOSSES / LEADERS ... EVEN if we DISAGREE with THEM ...

WITH INTEGRITY = SERVE your BOSS JUST as you would SERVE CHRIST ... WORK to PLEASE them EVEN IF they seem UNPLEASABLE. GOD gets the GLORY. NOT your BOSS, and NOT YOU. BUT NOT IF they ask you to DO something UNETHICAL! (with Integrity) IF they ask you to FUDGE the NUMBERS or LIE, you are NOT OBLIGATED in that case to DO what your BOSS WANTS. JESUS is your ULTIMATE BOSS!

Do NOT SKIP this ONE ... next CHOICE for GODLY SUCCESS ...

- See My Co-Workers as GOD SEES THEM.

So ... Grateful Heart / Strive for Excellence / Come under Authority of my Boss ... Then ... DO THIS: PICTURE your CO-WORKERS / CLASSMATES / (if not in school / work) FAMILY / FRIENDS. Like, PICTURE their FACES ... NOW, what is YOUR OPINION of your CO-WORKERS / CLASSMATES? Maybe it's REALLY GOOD! You have a GREAT TEAM to WORK WITH. MAYBE you have SOME who are REALLY GOOD and SOME ... well, THEY'RE "EGRs" ... Extra Grace Required PEOPLE!

Here's the THING: YOU / we ALL have PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS about YOUR CO-WORKERS / CLASSMATES, right? Here's the CHALLENGE for TODAY: SHIFT your PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS about your CO-WORKERS to a BIBLICAL VIEW of your CO-WORKERS. Let me use PAUL'S Letter to the GALATIAN people to help EXPLAIN ... **GALATIANS 6:2-3 = *Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.*** (Wait! What's the LAW of CHRIST? Jesus Command to LOVE ONE ANOTHER!) **3If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.** ... Turn to the person NEXT to YOU and tell them, **"YOU'RE NOT that IMPORTANT!"** Yep. Tell them! It's UP on the SCREEN so you have a SCRIPT. Tell them!

This is a REMINDER to US that, as FOLLOWERS of JESUS, we are to be SELFLESS in the WORKPLACE and NOT SELFISH. It's NOT about YOU!

Please ... PICTURE your CO-WORKERS / CLASSMATES. Now, HOW does GOD SEE THEM? Someone HE CREATED / LOVES DEEPLY and UNCONDITIONALLY / Wants to FORGIVE / Wants in a RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with HIM / SOMEONE HE SENT His SON to DIE FOR! THINK about THAT! Maybe you're the ONLY JESUS FOLLOWER at your WORKPLACE ... REGARDLESS, do WE UNDERSTAND JESUS DIED for those CO-WORKERS EVEN IF they are NOT YET FOLLOWERS of Jesus?

That's HOW MUCH God LOVES YOU and HOW much GOD LOVES THEM. GOD wants a RELATIONSHIP with YOU and THEM. GOD SEES YOU as a MASTERPIECE ... and THEM! WHEN we GO to WORK and SHIFT our VIEW from OUR PERSPECTIVE to GOD'S PERSPECTIVE, it makes ALL the DIFFERENCE in the WORLD!

Listen, I UNDERSTAND CO-WORKERS can be KIND of PRICKLY and DIFFICULT to WORK WITH. Here's PAUL'S ADVICE ... **ROMANS 12:18 = *Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.*** AS MUCH as it DEPENDS on YOU, LIVE in PEACE with EVERYONE. NOW, IF we can SEE them as GOD DOES, the next CHOICE is easier ...

- Share About MY FAITH When Opportunity ALLOWS.

Sometimes we THINK FAITH is a PRIVATE THING and we do NOT NEED to SHARE it. But JESUS did NOT DIE a PRIVATE DEATH or a LIVE a PRIVATE RESURRECTION. Hundreds SAW Him DIE for our SINS and in a RESURRECTED BODY for our ETERNITIES. And HE COMMANDS US to SHARE IT so OTHERS will have MEANING in THIS LIFE and ETERNITY with HIM!

About SHARING our FAITH, it needs to be a NATURAL part of our CONVERSATION and NOT SHOVED down ANYONE'S THROAT. But OPPORTUNITIES come UP ... like IF your WORKPLACE / SCHOOL is like MOST, tomorrow there will be TALK about what DID you DO over the WEEKEND? Saw a MOVIE / OUT to EAT / BINGED NETFLIX / KIDS activities, etc. Remember: NATURAL, NOT FORCED. So, if someone says they used their FIREPIT over the WEEKEND, that is NOT an INVITATION for you to say, "YOU KNOW where there is a HUGE FIREPIT ... in HELL!" NO! DON'T!

BUT you can MENTION that PART of YOUR WEEKEND was WORSHIP and a GREAT SERMON / MUSIC, etc. OR, when you're LEAVING WORK on TUESDAY you can ... IF it's NATURAL ... MENTION you need to GET to your GG ... then, WHEN they ASK, explain what a GG IS! PETER talks about READINESS ... **1 PETER 3:15-16 = *Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. (Listen) And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you (and they will), they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.***

We LIVE a GOOD LIFE / DIFFERENT LIFE, BECAUSE we BELONG to CHRIST! How are you DOING on THESE ... CHECKMARKS? Final CHOICE for Godly Success:

- Saturate My Workday with PRAYER.

Some of you PRAY at MEALTIMES / BEDTIME / MORNING ... How many of us PRAY ALL DAY ... even at WORK? I'm NOT talking about EMERGENCY Prayers ... "LORD, Help me NOT get FIRED after MESSING THAT UP!" We ALL do THAT! No, I'm talking about COMMUNICATING with GOD throughout the DAY ... Let's READ this NEXT verse TOGETHER ... It STARTS with ... **1 THESSALONIANS 5:17 = *Never stop praying.*** (repeat). GOOD! This is NOT about BOWING our HEADS and CLOSING our EYES ...

This is about PRAYING Before (Commute to Work), DURING (Lord, help me see what you see ... Help me to be a REPRESENTATIVE of YOU ... FILL me with your LOVE ... ALL the CHOICES we TALKED about TODAY!) and at the END of the DAY (Commute to Home). The MORE you CONNECT to GOD during your WORKDAY, the MORE SUCCESSFUL you will BE at WORK / SCHOOL.

Paul again ... **PHILIPPIANS 4:6 = *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.*** What should you PRAY about / TELL GOD about / THANK GOD FOR? EVERYTHING!

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize Colossians 3:17*

Read Ephesians 5-6

Pray every day this week for my work, co-workers, and boss.

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us! In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information.

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

- We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.

It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

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- Reminder ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... **GALATIANS 6:2 = *Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.***
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the first place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- Next Week: **WORK WISE ... FINDING BALANCE in our WORK / LIFE.**

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."

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