



Making work work

by Marcus Nodder

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The good book guide to work

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introduction: good book guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, mums and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That’s why we’ve designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let’s take a look at what is included:

- ↔ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here’s the question that will do that. It’s designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. **The Leader’s Guide** contains **guidance on questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- 🗨️ **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that’s not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- ➔ **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you’ll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. 🗨️ **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God’s word—in line with His concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader’s Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God’s word.

why study *Making work work*?

Most of us spend most of our waking hours at work. It takes up most of our energy and often most of our emotions. It is at times really fulfilling, and at other times utterly frustrating. It keeps a roof over our heads and food on our tables... but is there any more to work than that?

In *Snow White*, the seven dwarves sing: “We dig up diamonds by the score, a thousand rubies, sometimes more; we don’t know what we dig them for... Hi ho, hi ho, it’s home from work we go.” Like them, we are often a little confused about why we go to work, apart from to earn money. Christians can feel that what they do Monday to Friday is irrelevant to their faith; or, worse, gets in the way of them living out their faith. Others who don’t go to work in an office or factory can feel that they are of little worth.

Could work—should work—be anything more than something to go to, make money at, and return home from?

The Bible’s answer is: *Yes!* In these eight studies, we’ll see what work is, and why we find work in this world alternately fulfilling and frustrating. We’ll see how to approach the money we make, the people we work with, and the worries we have in a godly way.

And we’ll see that the ultimate worker is not you, or me, but Jesus Christ; that the Christian life is not so much a life of work, but a life of enjoying Christ’s work for us.

Whether you go out to work, or are a parent whose work is at home... whether you’re out of work, starting your first job, running a company, or retired... these studies will show you, excite you and challenge you with God’s perspective on working in His world.



1

Genesis 1 v 26 – 2 v 25

PURPOSE AT WORK

talkabout

1. How would you define work?

- What is the point of work?

investigate

 Read Genesis 1 v 26-28

2. What task does God give mankind to do? What do you think that means?

DICTIONARY

Image (v 26, 27): reflection, character.

Rule over (v 26): be in charge of and care for something lovingly.

Be fruitful (v 27): have children.

 Read Genesis 2 v 4-15

3. What particular job does God give Adam to do? How is this part of his God-given task?

4. How do God's work and man's work go together (v 5, 8, 15)?

 **apply**

5. Jesus told us to pray: "Give us each day our daily bread" (Luke 11 v 3). But how do God's work and human work need to come together before we find a loaf of bread in our kitchen?

6. Work is part of God's flawless, original creation. How should this shape our attitude to our work?

- How does it help us understand why being unemployed can be so hard?

7. Put the following jobs in order of importance: car mechanic, missionary, refuse collector, doctor, shop assistant, banker, teacher, church leader, brain surgeon.



- As Christians, does it matter what job we do?



getting personal

Where does the work you do fit into the bigger picture of enabling the world to function as God intended? Is this how you view it from day to day?

How often do you pray about your work? What does this say about your view of it, and of yourself?



explore more

optional

▶ Read Luke 3 v 12-14

"Christians working in banking or the Armed Forces should do something more worthwhile instead, such as becoming doctors or teachers." *What do these verses say to this idea?*

▶ Read Mark 6 v 3

Some people look down on those who do manual work (eg: builders or mechanics). Why, do you think? What does this verse say to that? Imagine a Christian teenager asks you how they should decide what job to do. What advice would you give them?



investigate

▶ Read Genesis 2 v 18-25

8. What does God say is not good? How does He solve the problem?



9. What does 1 v 28 suggest is one purpose of marriage? How does this help humanity “rule over” the earth?!

⇒ **apply**

10. What do people in our society think of the work of bearing children, raising a family and running a home compared to “pursuing a career”? How similar or different is this to God’s view?

11. How might we use our work as an excuse for neglecting our marriage (or vice versa)?

12. Sum up what we’ve learned about the ultimate point of work. What is the key truth you will take away from this study?





getting personal

If someone asked you: “How are you serving God at the moment?”, what would you say? Do you see your daily work as one way in which you serve Him? What difference would it make if you did?

No one job is more valuable to God than another. How does this encourage you, and challenge you, in your current job?

Are you in more danger of ignoring your family to focus on your job, or using family as an excuse to neglect your job? How will you make sure you do neither?



pray

Thank God:

- for the gift of work and the wonderful variety of jobs there is.
- for the privilege of ruling the world under Him and the part work plays in this.
- for the “work of the home” and the “work of the garden” and your work in one, or the other, or both.

Ask God:

- for help to see your work as part of how you serve Him.
- for help to have a biblical view of the “work of the home”.
- for a thankful spirit at work, even on Monday morning!

