



PRODUCTIVE

FINDING JOY IN WHAT WE DO



RONNIE & NICK FLOYD

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Work and rest. *What's the biblical balance?*

Balance.

Some people work too much. They trade relationships and fulfillment for experiences and stuff. Others barely do the minimum to stay employed and get a paycheck. They struggle to get by. Both groups need balance.

A joyous approach toward our work and a generous attitude toward our money are grounded in our relationship with Christ, lived out in community with others, and provide a refreshing witness to the culture around us.

This study lifts up the biblical mandates to work and to rest. It points us to actions that achieve balance. In light of these biblical values, we can move away from living and earning for ourselves and discover that our jobs, time, money, and life are resources we can invest for the kingdom of God.




Ronnie and Nick Floyd

Ronnie and Nick Floyd co-wrote this study. Ronnie has served as the Senior Pastor of Cross Church in Northwest Arkansas for more than 26 years. Nick Floyd, Ronnie's son, is one of the teaching pastors at Cross Church, preaching weekly at the Fayetteville Campus.

This growing and innovative multi-site church is reaching thousands every week for Jesus Christ. Read Ronnie's blog at RonnieFloyd.com. Follow Ronnie and Nick on Twitter: [@RonnieFloyd](https://twitter.com/RonnieFloyd) and [@NickFloyd8](https://twitter.com/NickFloyd8).

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SESSION 1

GOOD WORK



*What did you like best
about your first job?*

#BSFLGoodWork

THE POINT

Work is a gift from God, not a curse.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

The bed is so warm and the room is so cold. Your eyes are heavy. You glance over at the alarm clock and feel the weight of a million problems and tasks waiting for you later in the day. You struggle out of bed, head blindly to the coffee pot, stumble into the shower, throw on your clothes, and head to work.

Some of us work all day just waiting for the shift to end so we can go home ... and start the whole process over again. Day after day after day.

Is this really the work life that God intended us to have? No one is exempt from a tough day at work, but is our time working supposed to be one of misery and longing for the end of the day? In the Book of Genesis, God laid a very different foundation. In the first two chapters, God provided powerful words for how we are to approach our work.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Genesis 1:28; 2:8-9,15-17 (HCSB)

1:28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

2:8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He placed the man He had formed.

9 The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,

17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.”

Key Words

garden (2:8)—This word comes from a Hebrew verb meaning “to defend” or “protect.” In the garden in Eden, Adam and Eve experienced God’s full protection and provision.

knowledge of good and evil (2:9)—Interpretations of this phrase vary but this is clear: this tree offered knowledge that was unnecessary, inappropriate, and forbidden for humanity. It led to shame, punishment, and expulsion.

Genesis 1:28

In Genesis 3:17-19, God placed a curse on our work as a result of Adam's disobedience. This curse affected our work, but work itself is not the curse. In fact, when we look at Genesis 1:28, we see that God ordained for Adam to be busy working. God gave Adam work *before* sin entered the picture.

God gave Adam three commands:

- ▶ **Reproduce:** Adam and Eve were to have children who would also reproduce and begin the process of filling the earth.
- ▶ **Bring order:** The picture here is one of subduing. This represents the responsibility for Adam and Eve to work faithfully to take advantage of the natural resources that God put around them.
- ▶ **Rule:** Adam and Eve were to have dominion over all the fish, birds, and every living thing. God established an order right from the beginning.



Since work is a gift from God and not a curse, we can see that God's plan in Genesis 1:28 is for us to be faithful in doing our work. God could've told them to sit idly by while waiting for Him to take care of all of their needs. Instead, God called Adam to be proactive.

One of the greatest ways we see work as a gift from God is the way God uses our jobs to provide for our families and those who depend on us. Without work, how would we meet those needs? Even in our moments of frustration with work, we can thank God for the provision that He brings through our work.

***What is the
relationship between
God's blessing and
our work?***

QUESTION #1

How does your current work fulfill your purpose and advance God's kingdom?

QUESTION #2

Genesis 2:8-9,15

When we arrive at Genesis 2:8-9, we see two important factors in our understanding of work as a gift from God:

- ▶ God placed Adam and Eve in a specific location.
- ▶ God caused the land to flourish.

Think about this within the context of your own work. Understand two important principles.

- 1. God places you in specific locations.** Think about where God has led you to work. Think about the education and experience that enabled you to get the job or do the work. Think about the relationships that were crucial in your hiring. Remind yourself that God has put together, piece by piece, every part of the picture of your life, including work.
- 2. God blesses where He places you.** The garden was absolute perfection and unparalleled beauty. It provided a place for unbroken fellowship with God. God told Adam in chapter 1 to work the land. In chapter 2 God ordained trees to sprout up that would be beautiful for the eyes and full of fruit. Even though God gave Adam a task, it was still God who gave the blessing of growth.

How is your work a part of God's overall design?

QUESTION #3

Work is a gift from God, not a curse. Since that is true, we must learn to see ourselves in a good place where God pours out good things. He helps us earn a living, provide for our families, and enjoy His blessings while on this earth. God puts us in specific places—and blesses our lives at that place—to advance the kingdom of God. All the blessings we have received from God have not been accidents. Thus, we must use them for Him. Here's a key question to ask yourself: Why has God given me this particular work?

"We often miss opportunity
because it's dressed in overalls
and looks like work!"

—THOMAS A. EDISON

**What choices in your
work will lead to
blessing or curse?**

QUESTION #4

Genesis 2:16-17

In the midst of the perfection of Eden, God told Adam not to eat of one tree. Everything else—the entire garden—was fair game. Instead of doing the work of the garden and enjoying the fruit God provided, Adam focused on the one thing he couldn't have. Consequently, he fell into sin. How often do we do that? God gives us work that provides for us and for the work of the kingdom. Yet we get sidetracked into sin. *"If I would've stuck with what God had called me to do, I never would've gotten myself into this mess!"*

- ▶ Adam had a choice between right and wrong.
- ▶ Adam had a choice between obedience and disobedience.
- ▶ Adam had a choice between a blessing and a curse.

We are also put in specific places by God to do what He has called us to do. We have choices:

- ▶ Will I show integrity?
- ▶ Will I cut corners?

How we make work choices shows what we believe about work. Sadly, many view work as a self-serving way to achieve status or accumulate things. Others view work as a sad reality to be endured. We must always be on guard against the enemy's tactics of causing discontent over what God has called us to do.



MODEL WORKER

Who taught you the value of work? Jot down characteristics about this person's attitude regarding work and what you learned.

LIVE IT OUT

So how do we choose to appreciate God's gift of work?

- ▶ **Guard against discontentment.** When you feel dissatisfied at work, mentally list at least three ways God has blessed you in your job.
- ▶ **Encourage a coworker.** Find a tangible way to encourage someone in his or her work. For example, leave a thank you note for the custodial crew. Give words of appreciation to the supervisor who led an excellent meeting.
- ▶ **Thank a mentor.** Recall the person you described in the page 13 activity. Write that person a note or message to express gratitude for teaching you how to work. Share in your note one or two key attributes that person modeled for you.



God uses work to teach us how to follow Him more deeply. **So hop out of bed, get the coffee going, and anticipate what God will do.**

Accept His Plan



Something seemed amiss ... I had been faithfully serving as a full-time music minister for 32 years. I loved my work. I was good at it. Though I had my share of struggles in church life, I had always imagined retiring as a full-time music minister.

That was not to be.



To continue reading "Accept His Plan" from *Mature Living* magazine, visit BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles.



My group's prayer requests

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My thoughts

FINDING BALANCE

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