



WORK





How not to Work

1

Do not overdifferentiate between secular & sacred.

2

Do not be satisfied with average performance.

3

Do not downplay the importance of planning.

4

Do not waste time.

5

Do not substitute divine favour for hard work.

6

Do not hesitate to learn from others.

7

Do not lose the spirit of servanthood.

8

Do not neglect your body.

9

Do not underestimate the importance of small things.

10

Do not ever lose enthusiasm in work.



How not to Work

Introduction

- Work is a blessing from God —
 - Assigned to man before the fall (Gen 2:15).
 - The Fall of man is in Genesis 3 only.
 - Even after the fall, God did not curse “work;”
 - He cursed the “ground” only (Gen 3:17b)
- In Churches and Fellowships we talk so much about spiritual activities; but seldom about our jobs and workspot.
 - We become too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use!
 - A question to John Wesley:
 - “What would you do if Jesus were to come the next morning?”
 - Wesley’s answer:
 - “I would finish mowing my lawn!”
- Not every worker is as productive as he should be.
 - This leads us to frustration at the end of the day.
 - Reason: We have not learnt the right way of working.
 - These lessons are to help us avoid or unlearn the wrong ways of doing whatever is assigned to us.
- What has “work” to do with “sound doctrine?”
 - We don’t study doctrine for doctrine’s sake —

eg) Paul's admonition to servants:

Tit 2:9,10 ... *adorn the doctrine of God*

- It's easy to be a Christian on Sundays;
but its challenging to be a Christian on weekdays!

Be a Monday Christian!

We are called to be the "*light of the world,*"
not the Church! (Mt 5:14)

We must maintain our testimony at workspot.

- A hymn by E.E. Dugmore (1843-1925):

Almighty Father ...

Thou dost the strength to workman's arm impart;

From Thee the skilled musician's mystic art,

The grace of poet's pen or painter's hand,

To teach the loveliness of sea and land.

How not to Work

1. Do not overdifferentiate between secular & sacred.

- The Bible begins with the words —

“In the beginning God ...” (Gen 1:1)

We meet God as a **worker**.

His work of creation (Gen 1)—

- Day 1 — (vv 3-5) ... *Light & darkness* ... Physics
- 2 — (vv 6-8) ... *Waters below & above* ... Hydrology
- 3 — (vv 9,10) ... *Earth & Sea* ... Geology
(vv 11-13) ... *Plants & Herbs* ... Agriculture
- 4 — (vv 14-19) ... *Stars, Sun, Moon* ... Astronomy
- 5 — (vv 20-23) ... *Fish & fowls* ... Biology
- 6 — (vv 24,25) ... *Animals* ... Zoology
(vv 26-28) ... *Man & Woman* ... Anthropology
(vv 29-31) ... *Food: herbs & fruits* ... Dietary
- 7 — (2:2) ... *Rest from “work”*

In Genesis,

God is busy with the **work** of creation.

After Genesis,

God is busy with the **work** of re-creation.

It is with this fact Jesus rebuked those who overdifferentiated between the “secular” and the “sacred” —

Jn 5:16 ... Anatomical miracle on a 38-year old
paralytic man (orthopaedic)

:17 ... *My Father **working** ...*

*I am **working** ...*

- Jesus was a wood-worker for 18 years (12 to 30);
but a wonder-worker for 3 years only (30-33).

He received the divine approval even before
preaching the first sermon; or performing the first miracle!

Mt 3:17 ... *My beloved Son ... well pleased*

- There are so many examples to this truth
both in the OT and the NT —

a) Old Testament

We quote the names of the following individuals
while teaching spiritual truths —

- Joseph ... Secretary for the Dept. of Agriculture &
Food Supply (Gen 41:40,48,49)
- Nehemiah ... Personal Assistant to the King (Neh 1:11c)
- Daniel ... Chief Administrator (Governor) in Babylon
(Dan 2:48)
- Zerubbabel ... A Builder (Zech 4:9,10b)
Position ... *“Governor of Judah”* (Hagg 1:1)
To him ... *“Neither by might ... but by My Spirit”* (Zech 4:6)
He was helped by Prophets for building (Ezr 5:1,2; 6:14)
- Bezaleel anointed not for preaching
but for craftsmanship (Ex 35:30-33)
- *“Holiness unto the Lord”* Zech 14:20,21
Not only on *“bowls of altar”* — Worship
but also on *“bells of horses”* — Warfare
and *“pots for cooking”* — Work
- God’s wisdom + understanding for grinding of
grains also—
Isa 28:27-29 ... *cummin ... wheat ...*

- Virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31
Out of 21 verses, 12 about **work!**
Final verse (v31) — *“Let her **works** praise her!”*

b) New Testament

- Paul continued “tentmaking” with
Aquila & Priscilla — *same profession*
Acts 18:1-3 ... *“stayed ... **worked**”*

This was in the midst of Paul’s second Missionary journey—
not just the “first!”

■ The NT teaching:

1 Cor 10:31 ... *eat ... drink ... whatever you do ...*
all ... “glory of God”

Anything a Christian does is “ministry” to God —

Col 3:23,24 ... *whatever you do ... you serve the Lord*

■ Jesus on this subject:

Lk 17:34-36 *“two men” ... bed ... sleeping*
“two women” ... kitchen ... grinding
“two workers” ... field ... farming

You don’t need to be in a prayer meeting
or a Church Service to be raptured!

How not to Work

2. Do not be satisfied with average performance.

- God's will for us is always "excellence"—
He desires His people to excel in their work —
Prov 22:29... *a man who excels in work...before kings*
About anything substandard or defective,
there's a common word we're accustomed to —
That's ok!
Tamil : பரவாயில்லை!
Telugu : పరవాలేదు!
Hindi : परवा नही!
So many Indian languages use more or less the same word!
- The supreme model for excellence is **God** Himself —
Gen 1:4,10,12,18,21,25 ... *God "SAW" or reviewed!*
:31 ... *"everything ... very good"*
He improved it if it was not good enough —
eg) Gen 2:18 ... *not good for man to be alone ...*
 - *God does everything beautiful in its time* —
Eccl 3:10 ... *God-given work*
:11 ... *God's work*
 - This is what Jesus showed in His life
Mk 7:37 ... *"He did all things well"*
eg) **Both** *deaf to hear and dumb to speak* —
inter-related handicaps!

In the very next chapter,

He **asks** the blind man *“if he saw anything”* (Mk 8:23-25)

Nothing left half-done!

Yes, what God begins, He perfects it!

Phil 1:6 ... *begun good work ... complete it ...*

■ How do we attain excellence?

Guidelines:

a) By diligence

Prov 22:29 ... *“diligent in work”*

— No half-heartedness

□ King Hezekiah

2 Chr 31:21 ... *“all his heart ... prospered”*

□ Solomon gave credit to it —

1 Ki 7:13,14 ... Hiram (bronze worker)

11:28 ... Jeroboam (officer)

Solomon’s admonition:

Eccl 9:10... *Whatever your hand ... do with your might*

b) By learning/training

Gifted alone not sufficient —

Eccl 10:10 ... *axe ... dull ... more strength ...*
sharpening of skills

□ Read books like ... *“How to Speak Better”*
“How to Write Better”

□ Attend Seminars & Programmes

Women: Cooking classes
 Cookery books

Don't stagnate: Don't keep saying,

“We have been doing like this only!”

- Students: Intelligence vs. Industriousness
- Get tips from elders.

c) By healthy competition

- Don't compare yourself with yourself
2 Cor 10:12 ... *comparing ... themselves ... not wise*
- Try to do better than others
eg) Lk 1:1-4 ... *perfect understanding*
... *orderly account*

d) By review

- God “saw” ... *good ... not good ...*
- Jesus “asked” the blind man if he saw anything (Mk 8:23)
- Students write exams again to improve grades.
- No good article is just “written” but “re-written!”

Not always FF (Fast Forward),
but also REW (Rewind)!

■ Be inspired by slogans in the business world —

“The best of the best!”
“Better than the best!”
“The sky is not the limit!”

Get inspiration from sportspersons —

1 Cor 9:24,25 ... *“they ... but we ...”*

■ Excellence in work will result in excellence
in spiritual matters also —

eg) Rightly cutting the tent material vs.

Rightly dividing the Word!

2 Tim 2:15 *“... worker ... not ashamed”*

How not to Work

3. Do not downplay the importance of planning.

- A text we have earlier referred to —

Eccl 10:10 ... *axe ... blunt ... more strength ...*
... *but WISDOM brings success*

i.e. think a lot before and while doing anything.

Even though the intelligence level varies from individual to individual,

“thinking” before “doing” anything does two things —

- a) helps us do anything better
- b) prevents us from making blunders

Time spent in planning will be saved while working!

eg) Lk 14:28-30 ... Building ...
... *sit down first ...*

:31,32 ... Battling

Both refer to common sense!

This is what’s explained as “practical wisdom” throughout the Book of Proverbs and the Book of Ecclesiastes —

Prov 4:7 ... *wisdom ... principal ...*
... *all your getting ... get understanding*

- How to get wisdom and understanding

a) By prayer

Js 1:5 ... *If anyone lacks wisdom ... ask ...*

Solomon even in his dream! (1 Ki 3:5,10)

Pray for God's wisdom in all your works —

Prov 16:3 ... *commit ... works ... thoughts ...*

Practise the presence of God at workspot —

For instant wisdom — eg) Neh 2:1-5 ... especially v4
“*I prayed to the God of Heaven*”
i.e. instant telegraphic contact with God!

b) By receiving advice

Prov 20:18 ... *plan established by counsel*

24:6 ... *multitude of counselors ...*

No one knows everything —

We must seek advice from others,
especially when the work is crucial or huge in magnitude.

We must work with a sense of urgency,
but that must not sacrifice taking sufficient time for
planning—

Prov 21:5 ... *plans ... plenty ... hasty ... poverty ...*

— Youngsters especially to learn from elders (Job 8:10)

Job 8:7-10 ... *inquire ... consider ... they will teach*

c) By systematic Bible meditation

This gives us “freshness” for sane thinking and planning —

Psa 1:2,3 ... *rivers ... fruit ... leaf ... prosper ...*

This is pictorially illustrated in —

Prov 24:3,4 ... *wisdom ... understanding ...*
house ... rooms

Many Scientists were men and women of the Bible —

Amidst their scientific research work,
they took time to meditate the Bible.

eg) Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1717):

“No sciences are better attested
than the religion of the Bible.”

- When the work is more, we normally get tensed up, and at such times we are not able to think and plan properly—
That’s why **prayer** must be increased while **work** increases—

eg) Nehemiah (Neh 4:9,10)

Jesus (Lk 5:15-17)

- It’s also necessary that we take breaks to rest and relax —

- Gen 3:17b ... ground cursed and so work is hard.

- 5:29 ... Good success when we turn to the

Lord and rest

*“Noah ... rest ... comfort in **work**”*

- Ex 31:17 ... Sabbath is *rest from **work***

(Though no ceremonial significance today)

— **refreshing** of bodies and minds

- Keep a “To-do” notebook

- Prepare a list every morning

and review it each evening.

eg) If you go to a supermarket without a shopping list,

you end up buying what you want

and not what you really need!

Similarly, if the 5 of the 10 virgins had a **To-do List**,
they would not have forgotten to take oil with them !!!

How not to Work

4. Do not waste time.

- This is not a new piece of advice;
but the amount of time an average person wastes
in his lifetime is mind-boggling!

We normally waste time in 3 ways —

- a) Either by doing nothing,
- b) or by doing the wrong thing,
- c) or by doing everything!

a) Doing nothing

- This is what is called “laziness” —
Oversleep is a major cause (Prov 6:9-11)

So many references to this in Proverbs —

19:15

20:4,13

24:30-34

26:13-15

The best remedy: “Early to bed, early to rise.”

Avoid late night chats, TV programmes, etc.

Some youngsters say they can concentrate
better for long hours at night only —

This may be an exception, not a rule!

If we don't get up early,
the casualty is always our “Time with God.”

- Slothfulness **ruins** a person —
 - Don't take it lightly!
 - Prov 18:9 ... *slothful in work ... great destroyer*
 - Avoid day-dreaming —
 - Isa 56:10 ... *watchmen ... blind ... ignorant ... dumb*
 - See how serious slothfulness is in God's work:
 - Jer 48:10,11 ... *“Work of God ... at ease ... cursed ...”*
 - Mt 25:26 ... *“You wicked ... slothful servant ...”*
 - Be brisk like an ant
 - Prov 6:6-8 ... *no leader ... yet self-motivated ...*
 - Young people, don't expect to be pushed!
 - Jesus the perfect Example for self-motivation—
 - Jn 9:4 ... **“I” must work!**
 - I “must” work!*
 - I must “work!”*
 - Paul's admonition:
 - Ministers of God must work like an “ox” (1 Tim 5:18)
 - Jesus' Teaching
 - The Kingdom parables of Mt 13 —
 - “Action packed” — A Sower (v3)
 - A Cook (leaven) (v33)
 - A Tiller of soil (treasure) (v44)
 - A Merchant (pearl) (v45)
 - A Fisherman
 - (separating good & bad) (vv47,48)
 - Watch these workers!
 - “Be on your toes and work!”
 - “ஒடி ஒடி உழைக்கணும்!”

- Beware of wasting the “*fragments*” — 12 basketful!
Little drops of water make the ocean;
little grains of sand make the pleasant land!

b) Doing the wrong thing

- Vain chat
2 Thess 3:10-12 ... *not working ... busybodies ...*
Mt 12:36 ... “*every idle word*”
TALK LESS, WORK MORE!
Prov 14:23 ... *labour ... profit ... idle chatter ... poverty*
- Beware of those who waste your time —
 - eg) An excellent Tabletext of an Executive:
Talk of business;
Finish your business;
Leave me to do my business!
 - Be punctual;
otherwise you waste others’ time!
- Beware of mobilephones which are great time-stealers!
Also Television!
- At the end of the day,
list out things you could have avoided.
 - useless, unprofitable, good-for-nothing stuff!
 - even backbiting, gossip, ...
- Redeem the time
Eph 5:16,17 ... *evil days ... **will** of God ...*
Only when we confine ourselves to the will of God,
we can make the best use of time!

□ The devil does not waste time —
Rev 12:12b ... *short time ... great wrath ...*

□ When we waste time doing what we ought not,
we don't find time to do what we ought to!

If you have wasted lot of time in life,
confess it to God and repent —

He is able to restore the wasted years!

Confess: I did not what I ought to;
but did what I ought not!

c) **Doing everything**

— Don't spread too thin.

— Set priorities.

Dissipation of energy in less important things —

eg) What Brother Dinakaran told me in the 70's
("Avoid driving long distances yourself.")

— Learn to say "No" to certain things.

Many things are **important**;
but what's **necessary**?

Usually "**one thing**" is *needful*! (Lk 10:41,42)

Have a Mary spirit in a Martha world!

— When I go to preach,
I minimise house visits and discussions —

eg) Lk 10:4,5 ... *Greet none on the road ...*
but in the house, *say, Peace! ...*

How not to Work

5. Do not substitute divine favour for hard work.

Or, Do not substitute “skill” for “industriousness.”

- We are what we are by God’s grace.

We do what we do by God’s strength/enablement.

God has given gifts/skills/talents to all of us —

Mt 25:14,15 ... 5-talented man earned another 5

2-talented man earned another 2

Single talented man did **not** work

i.e. He did not put his “ability” to work (v15)

Verdict: vv 26, 28, 30 ... *wicked ... lazy ... unprofitable ...*

See how seriously God views lack of industriousness.

Understand the difference between —

skill and sweat

intelligence and industriousness

inspiration and perspiration

It’s usually 10% inspiration, and 90% perspiration.

Less industrious individuals charge God of favoritism —

eg) *“I loved Jacob but hated Esau!”* (Rom 9:13)

But Jacob progressed & increased because of hard work.

See what he told Laban —

Gen 31:40 ... *day and night*

:39 ... no excuse for losses

It was not a cakewalk for him!

- We will look at two outstanding examples of “hard work” along with “God’s favour” —

OT: Nehemiah

Repeated mentioning of God’s favour

Neh 2:18,20 ... *hand of God ... God of Heaven*

4:20 ... *our God will fight for us ...*

6:16c ... *work done by God*

But people worked hard!

4:6,21 ... *a mind to work*

NT: Apostle Paul

1 Cor 15:10 ... **“laboured** more abundantly ... **grace**”

Rom 1:15 ... *“as much as is in me”*

This was the apostolic tradition

even though God had promised them daily bread —

God’s promise:

Mt 10:9,10 ... *worker worthy of food ...*

6:31-33 ... *all these things added ...*

Apostles’ toil: 2 Thess 3:7-9 ... *worked ... labour ... toil*

- Wrong quote:

“What can I do? It’s **all** in God’s hands!”

Two examples —

Rom 9:16 ... Running race

— but you must “**RUN**” with “**WILL**-power!”

1 Cor 3:7,8 ... Agricultural work

— but you must plant and water ...

the reward is “*according to our **labour!***” (v8)

■ Another wrong quote:

Mt 6:26 ... *Look at the birds ... no work ???*

This is only against “*worrying*” (v27),
not against “*working*”—

birds search for food, build nests ... not lazy!

Pray as if everything depends on God;

Work as if everything depends on you!

■ God rewards “painstaking labour” in His own way —

- Philip ... running in the desert to overtake the “chariot”
Acts 8:29,30a ...

... returning by flight (v39)

- The 5-talented man was given another talent!

(Mt 25:28,29)

■ A word to those in Christian ministry:

“*Sow bountifully ...*” (2 Cor 9:6)

Because, we don’t know which one “God” will prosper —

Eccl 11:5b,6 ... *sow ... morning ... evening ...*

■ Tamilians, Don’t say that Malayalees are dominating.

In general, Malayalees are hardworking.

■ A call for consistency —

Some people’s lives are full of things **halfdone!**

An age of instant/quick results.

The mind must be trained, even when you are young,

to work patiently till the work is over!

My training in student days:

weaving/carpentry/smithy/foundry

How not to Work

6. Do not hesitate to learn from others.

- We must have a basic willingness to **change** for the better!
Don't be rigid — Be flexible.
It's ego that prevents us from learning from others.

- In order to learn,
 - you must be a keen observer —
 - Jesus was a keen Observer —
Otherwise He would not have known about
 - leavening & grinding: kitchen work
 - sewing (needle): domestic work
 - sowing & reaping: farm work
 - separating fish: fishing industry
 - recruitment: labour & pay

Above all, He learnt carpentry from His dad —

Mt 13:55 ... "*Carpenter's son*"

Mk 6:3 ... "*Carpenter*"

- Apostle Paul was a keen observer —
 - Games: Christian race with self-control (1 Cor 9:24-27)
 - Planting & Watering:
Christian ministry with patient labour (1 Cor 3:6-7)
 - Grafting: Israel vs. Gentiles (Rom 11:16-20)
 - Building: Christ the Foundation,
materials for superstructure (1 Cor 3:10-14)

- Learning is never one-way traffic —
 - It's not always youngsters to learn from elders;
it can also be elders from juniors/youngsters/subordinates
 - This is real maturity
 - Psa 119:99 ... *more understanding than my teachers*
:100 ... *understand more than ancients*
- A word to Seniors/Experts:
 - If you find someone not doing a thing the right way,
offer help politely; it's not interference.
 - Do not hesitate to share the “trade secrets” with juniors
 - I was inspired by my dad's preparation of sermon notes.
 - I have taught and trained so many youngsters
in the art of sermon preparation.
 - We must rejoice to see the nextliners “excel” us!
- Our entire life must be one of learning.
 - In an hour of emergency, you must be able to do any work —
 - Rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem:
 - Who did the repair work?
 - goldsmiths & perfumers* (Neh 3:8)
 - Levites & Priests* (vv 17,22)
 - Watchmen & Merchants* (vv 29b,32b)
 - Paul went into a deep jungle to gather firewood
and carried it on his perhaps “bald” head
with a snake on it! (Acts 28:1-3)

(See also Pages 59-61, 303-306, 350-351, 380-384, 546-549,
642-646)

How not to Work

7. Do not lose the spirit of servanthood.

- Many people begin their career with service-mindedness; but in course of time they lose the spirit of servanthood and become merely professional.

Consideration for our fellowmen should run
throughout our career.

- A Christian is obliged to bless 3 groups of people —

1 Cor 10:32,33

- a) *Jews* — nominal Christians
- b) *Gentiles* — non-Christians
- c) *Church* — true Christians

- My privilege to work in the

Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore, 1971-75

The Institution's Motto: "*Not to be served but to serve!*"

Jesus made this statement in the context of
secular administration —

Mk 10:42-45 ... *rulers of Gentiles ... authority ... servant*

- I'm always amazed at the spirit of "servanthood"
of those who carry away night soil.

This inhuman practice is still in vogue in India —

Someone suggested to them:

"Why don't you go on a strike?"

Their reply: "O no, it will start stinking everywhere!"

Mahatma Gandhi's statement:

“If I would be born second time,
I would like to be born in the scavenger community,
so I can understand their problems and uplift them!”

— *Frontline Magazine*: Sept 2006

The issue: Dignity of labour

“No work is inferior or superior to the other!”

■ A call to those in business:

If you are a Christian businessman,
your chief motive must be to **serve** your customers —

Prov 11:26 ... *curse on hoarders* ...

eg) Joseph was primarily service-minded.

He suggested to Pharaoh to appoint “someone” to save
and distribute foodgrains during the 7 years of famine
(Gen 41:33).

He was not vying for that post!

But Pharaoh said, “*No one like Joseph!*” (v38)

We hear of so much of corruption in the distribution
of essential commodities in India.

It's because, no concern for the poor!

Even thieves must work “to give” —

Eph 4:28 ... *steal no longer ... labour ... give*

■ For service-minded people, honesty in financial matters
is a natural thing.

— especially, payment of taxes:

Taxes = Contribution to the government to serve people
(eg. provide roads, transport, housing, etc.)

If this gets into the mind,

tax-payment becomes a joyful exercise!

eg) Even the Temple tax (Mt 17:24-27)

Jesus was not a “*stranger*” but the “Son” of the Owner of the Temple!

“*My Father’s House*”

Not easy money:

Go to sea, ... catch by hook ...

“first” fish, i.e. you don’t catch at the first instance itself!

So much of WORK involved!

- Servanthood manifests as “courtesy” to coworkers and subordinates —

eg) King to Nehemiah (Neh 2:2)

“Why is your face sad?”

Joseph to coprisoners (Butler & Baker) (Gen 40:7)

“Why do you look so sad?”

Threatening the subordinates is not servanthood —

It’s anti-Christian! (Eph 6:9)

- A word to workaholics:

Don’t worship work!

Work is not the end;

it’s a means to an **end**:

to glorify God and to bless people (Rom 14:18)

- To those in Christian work:

First a “servant,” then only an “apostle” or whatever—

Paul: Rom 1:1/Tit 1:1

Peter: 2 Pet 1:1

- Servanthood will be rewarded —

Prov 17:2 ... *servants* ► *sons/brothers*

1 Tim 3:13 ... *deacons* ► *good standing*

How not to Work

8. Do not neglect your body.

- My dad's frequent quote:
"No painting if the wall is not there!"
சுவர் இருந்தால்தான் சித்திரம்!
My neglect of body during college days and early days of ministry.
- Neglect of body is not spiritual —
Be appreciative of the body —
David: Psa 139:13-16... *fearfully and wonderfully made...*
"my soul" knows (v14)
Neglect of body an useless exercise —
Col 2:20-23 ... *self-imposed religion ... no value*
Wrong concept: The more you neglect your body
the better will be your soul.
- A wrong quote:
1 Tim 4:8 ... "*Bodily exercise profits a little*"
This is just a warning against **overoccupation**
with physical wellbeing & **neglect** of devotional exercises (v15)
"this life" vs. "this life and one to come"
- Overambitiousness leads to depression —
Jesus did not come to India even though
millions of souls were perishing here in His time!
Nevertheless, He said,
"I've finished the work
You have given Me to do" (Jn 17:4)

This was because He had learnt to say “no” to several things—
eg) Extension of ministry requested in Capernaum
because of better results compared to Nazareth (Lk 4:42,43)

Similarly, the Apostles —

2 Cor 10:13,14 ... *beyond ... limits ... sphere ...*

My personal testimony:

I said “No” ...

- to shift the ministry base to Chennai
- to accept every invitation to preach in Conventions
- to shift to USA as many top preachers have done —
for a “global” ministry!
- to be involved in a new translation of the Tamil Bible

If I had not said “no” to such attractive offers,
I could not have written so many books,
raised so many missionaries,
preached and taught so much from the Bible, etc.

When I was taken for heart surgery (1996), at 50,
no regrets of anything unfinished!

- Do not stretch yourself beyond the signals of your body.

Don’t beat the tired horse!

Wrong quote: “*I can do all things!*” (Phil 4:13)

Context: ... *to abound and to abase ...*

Overtime work may bring more money;
but in the longer run, what you save by overwork
will be spent on medical bills! (Prov 23:4,5)

Timely meals: Jesus (Mk 6:31,32)

Enjoy eating: Jesus (Mt 11:19)

He was even called a “*glutton!*”

■ Need to rest

God’s prescription: Ex 23:12 ... *rest ...*

31:17 ... *rested and refreshed ...*

These were the concluding words of God to Moses
on Mount Sinai! (v18)

How Japan tried a 10-day week schedule and failed!

Too many accidents/output not proportionate/etc.

Relaxation/Recreation a must —

Music, general reading, etc.

This is “unwinding” the body machine.

Physical exercise: walking/bicycling/games ...

— Not a waste of time;

you will actually work better!

A Nursery rhyme:

“Work while you work;

Play while you play;

This is the way

To be happy and gay!”

■ Delegation of responsibilities helps us escape
early burn-out:

eg) Jethro — Moses (Ex 18:14,18, 22,23)

Moses exhausted from “*morning till evening*”

He was even justifying his work (v16)

Advice: Select rulers of 1000s, 100s, 50s, 10s

“*great matter*” vs. “*small matter*”

How not to Work

9. Do not underestimate the importance of small things.

- Discipline in life usually begins with small things
like folding of bed in the morning!
eg) Bro. Joshua Daniel (LEF), London-Chennai flight, 2006,
folded the shawl given in the aircraft,
before leaving the plane!
I was ashamed I didn't do it!
- Youth! Throwing of socks, night dresses in all places.
Leaving the bathroom untidy.
- Personal appearance:
Daily shave/Periodic haircut/ ...
Dress: smartness & neatness
Dress well: (Eccl 9:8) ... *garments white ... oil ...*
Even while fasting! (Mt 6:17) ... *wash ... anoint ...*
- Be meticulous in work —
eg) King James Version Bible printers
Oh, how many mistakes in our songbooks & periodicals!
I was challenged by this —
 - Proofreading of "*Good News of Deliverance*,"
a tract written during my student days in 1966.
 - 333 issues of *Blessing* magazine in English & Tamil
(Even while in the Ward following heart surgery, 1996)

■ Why?

Faithfulness in small matters ► bigger issues

Lk 16:10 ... *faithful in least ... faithful in much*

19:17 ... *faithful in very little ... 10 cities*

Lack of diligence in small matters can cause
chaos and disaster—

Eccl 10:1 ... *dead flies ... “little” folly*

Personal Testimony: Folding tracts
Affixing stamps
Packing parcels

Today — A growing literature ministry —
even after my retirement!

■ Usually God tests us by putting us responsible
for “small” things —

□ Joseph:

— faithfully feeding the flock (Gen 37:2)

— obediently went to enquire about his brothers (vv 13,14)

— sincerely working in Pharaoh’s house (39:4)

Finally, exalted to become the Governor over Egypt!

i.e. “*If you see a man diligent (meticulous) ...*” Prov 22:29

□ Similarly, David:

— faithfully keeping sheep (1 Sam 16:11)

“Anointed” **at that time** (v13)

— Carrying bread & grains to his brothers (1 Sam 17:17,18)

That’s when he met Goliath! (v23)

Therefore —

Do not despise “*the day of small things*” (Zech 4:10)

- Not only Bible history but also world history:
 - William Carey — a faithful cobbler became the
Father of modern Missions!
 - Shakespeare — who was holding horses outside theatres
became the greatest Dramatist!
- In Christian ministry —
 - a) Start with personal witnessing/tract distribution.
 - b) Start with small group praying with “two or three”

Anything in the “Kingdom” of God begins small —
Mk 4:30-32 ... *mustard seed ... large branches*
- Another aspect —

Wrong interpretation of Mt 23:25,26

People say, only the “*inside*” is important!
Jesus did **not** say so!
He just pointed out what was more important!
Then He told about “*the outside also*”

Don’t leave one for the other!
— Utility as well as Beauty!

eg) “Cooking” & “Serving”

Taste for the tongue
Looks for the eyes
Eat with “joy”
Eccl 9:7 ... *joy ... merry ... “works”*

How not to Work

10. Do not ever lose enthusiasm in work.

- Enjoying the work is a must for excelling in work.

That's why the Bible calls us to do

everything "*heartily*" (Col 3:23)

Every morning, we must pray the prayer of David —

Psa 51:12,13 ... "*joy ... free spirit*"

We work better when there's "joyfulness"

Neh 8:10b ... *Joy of the Lord ... your strength*

- Let's look at some of the "joy-killers" in work —

a) Humdrum/routine/repetition

Ask these questions to yourself:

- Why do I do this?
- Who is glorified?
- Who is benefitted?
- Did not God put me here?

Answers to these questions will keep our perspective right.

- Our internal organs are not tired of doing
the same thing again and again!
- Similarly, seedtime and harvest; winter and summer
Gen 8:22 ... *shall not cease ...*

In any work or activity, because of its routine and monotonous nature, we do tend to lose enthusiasm.

That's why the Bible exhorts us —

Heb 6:11 ... *“same diligence ... till the end”*

Rom 12:11 ... *“not lagging ...”* (or sagging!)

We must “stir” up ourselves each day;

and don't wait for something exciting to happen.

The next joy-killer in work —

b) Frustration due to failures

Jesus had more reasons to be frustrated in His time,
concerning His works, than anyone else —

eg) Mt 11:20 ... His campaign in several cities not successful

eg) *Chorazin ... Bethsaida ... Capernaum*

But He did not turn “bitter” —

rather “praised” the Father for the positive things (v25)

It is at this time He invited others to Him to enjoy “rest” (v28)

This was prophesied concerning Him —

Isa 42:4 ... *“till” He established justice*

□ God compares Himself to a potter who works on the clay
again and again (Jer 18:3-6a)

□ Thomas Alva Edison (18th century)

Inventor of electric bulb —

So many failures, but he said,

“I've found out how many elements are

not suitable for the filament!”

Use every failure/disappointment as a stepping stone;

do not consider it as a stumbling block!

Maybe there's no sense of accomplishment —

Do your best and leave the rest in the hands of God —
you will have “quietness” (Eccl 4:6)

c) Difficult coworkers

□ Non-cooperative colleagues

eg) James + John — “*Sons of Thunder!*”

Even in the coming Kingdom,
others would have to work together with them!

Envy is all too common —

Eccl 4:4 ... *all toil ... skilled work ... envied*

Simply ignore it, as Daniel did (Dan 6:4)

□ Hard taskmasters

1 Pet 2:18,19 ... *Unreasonable men*

□ Rebellious subordinates

Eph 6:8 ... “*Whether slave or free*”

Keep on doing good!

Mother Teresa to her coworkers: “Wear a smile always!”

Pray regularly for coworkers.

d) Injustice in the workspot

— especially in the matter of promotion

Understand, promotion is from GOD only —

Psa 75:6,7 — **Not** *from East ... West ... South ...*

No one can lift you to a place not ordained by God for you;
no one can bring you down from where God has placed you!

Promotion is an immediate benefit —

from the one on the “chair”

Reward is the ultimate blessing —

from the One on the “Throne”

Don't we rejoice when we get an unusual promotion?
We call it God's "favour" — Others may say, God is "unfair!"

■ **Conclusion**

□ If you follow the principles presented in these 10 chapters—
Work will not be a burden, but a blessing!

You won't feel bad that Monday is coming!
Rather, you will rejoice that Monday is coming!

Sing everyday: "*This is the day ...*" (Psa 118:24)

*This is the day, This is the day,
That the Lord has made;
We will rejoice, we will rejoice,
And be glad in it!*

□ When we finish our race,
Heaven will sing for us — Rev 14:13

*"They may rest from their **labours**,
and their **works** follow them!"*
