

INSIGHTS

Daily Office

Your Life,
Your Calling
and Your Work

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March 2009

Day 1—Morning/Midday Prayer

“Your Calling is Your Whole Life”

INSIGHTS

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2minutes)

Scripture Reading—Colossians 3:22–25

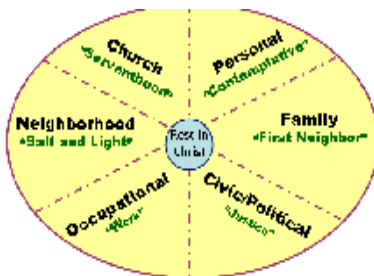
Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Those who do wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

Devotional

Throughout history, calling has been narrowly defined with our occupations (e.g. careers), our place in life (e.g. singleness, marriage), or exclusively for people in professional Christian service (e.g. missionaries, pastors). As a result, we often think: “Whatever was my calling, I missed it. I’m not trained. I’m just a lay person. I’m just working, waiting for my calling.” Scripture teaches, however, that every Christian is called by God at the moment of conversion, and that calling encompasses the whole of our lives. Recovering this biblical truth, as Colossians says, is like discovering a new continent!

Question to Consider

As you look at the circle (right), what area(s) have you considered unrelated to your calling and disconnected from your spiritual life? Invite Jesus as Lord into that area.



Prayer

LORD, next time I hear someone say that they are called to full-time ministry, I will remember that I am called also by You to be a full-time servant (i.e., minister) in every area of my life. Thank You for the privilege of representing You at work, home, neighborhood, church, and in the larger society. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 5—Midday/Evening Prayer “Working from Our Rest”

Question to Consider

What is one step you can take today to work from a place of rest?

Prayer

Well, LORD, this is a radical concept — work flowing from rest. I need your help to STOP. Grant me the power to get off the treadmill of busyness in order to follow You into life-giving rest. Teach me to develop rhythms in my days, weeks, months and years in order that the qualities of Sabbath might infuse all of my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 1—Midday/Evening Prayer “The Spirituality of Your Work”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2minutes)

Scripture Reading—Genesis 1:27–28

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living Creature that moves on the ground.”

Devotional

God worked in creating and shaping the world. We, as human beings, are to image Him in creating and shaping the earth. We create and shape when we prepare a meal, clean our offices, set goals for our day, care for the environment, raise children, produce goods and services for others, steward our possessions, write a business plan for work, etc... Because of sin, however, our work is now marked by frustration and failure (Genesis 3:17–19). Part of Jesus’ work on the cross is to restore God’s original purpose for work. Now all of our work is spiritual. We are now invited to operate as close to what God intended as possible, creating and shaping in every area of our lives.

Question to Consider

Every moment of every day we either create or shape in the chaos of the world, or we tear down and contribute to the world’s chaos. How can you be intentionally creating and shaping today?

Prayer

LORD, every day confronts me with difficult choices to create and shape or ignore and quit the challenges around me. Help me to see my work as central to my calling and my relationship to You. Empower me with Your Spirit to work like You in creating and shaping the world around me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 2—Morning/Midday Prayer “The First Commission”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading—1 Corinthians 7:17–23

Nevertheless, each of you should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to you, just as God has called you... Each of you should remain in the situation you were in when God called you. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you — although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For those who were slaves when called to faith in the Lord are the Lord's freed people; similarly, those who were free when called are Christ's slaves. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.

Devotional

We often speak of the Great Commission in the church (Matthew 28:18–20). It refers to the mandate to go and make disciples of all nations. Yet, it is more accurate to speak of this as the Second Commission. The First Commission, found in Gen. 1:26–28, is our calling to do four things at our work— commune with God, create and shape, build community and resist demonic powers. This means your work has great value, even if you are unable to directly share Christ. Both commissions form part of your calling as a follower of Jesus.

Slaves had, perhaps, the worst jobs in the Roman Empire. Nonetheless, Paul states that it is our calling that gives us our identity, not our jobs. This new identity informs our status and our jobs. You may leave your job or change your position at work, but your identity always remains being a called follower of Christ. And all of us are in a position to participate in the restoration of the world as God originally intended it to be.

Question to Consider

In what way(s) are you tempted to see your work as second class rather than something holy before God?

Prayer

LORD, grant me a deep sense, as you granted to Joseph in his work at Pharaoh's court, as “being sent by God.” May I increasingly discover and rediscover the depth of my calling even when my job/work may appear meaningless and worldly. And may your will, not my will, be done in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 5—Midday/Evening Prayer “Working from Our Rest”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2minutes)

Scripture Reading—Ecclesiastes 3:1–11

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throwaway, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace... He has made everything beautiful in its time.

Devotional

One of the things that makes us unique as followers of Christ is that we work from our rest, versus resting from our work.

As the wise author of Ecclesiastes notes, life is lived in rhythms. We observe this in the rhythmic passing of the seasons and our days and nights. As Wayne Mueller has written: “We are hard-wired to live in rhythmic awareness, to be in and then step out, to be engrossed and then detached, to work and then to rest.” The central biblical rhythm we are invited to follow is that of Sabbath-keeping, setting aside a 24 hour period each week to stop, to rest, to delight and to contemplate God. When we are anxious, rushing, hurrying, driving fast, over committed, not present with people, and irritable, we miss God's very goal for us—that our work be infused with the qualities of Sabbath rest the other six days.

We are not God. We cannot impose our wills on life. We can stop because He is running the world just fine without our help.

Day 5—Morning/Midday Prayer “Work in the New City”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading—Revelation 21:2–4, 24-27; 22:3–4

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them... The kings of the earth will bring their splendor in to it . . . The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will enter it... No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Devotional

Scripture gives us glimpses that our work will continue into God’s kingdom. We will not simply spend eternity in worship but will also work, “ruling over cities.” The curse on work will be reversed and we will serve him joyfully.

Heaven is described in Revelation as both a garden and a city. The work of creating and shaping will no longer be difficult, but fulfilling. There will be innovation as the nations bring their glory to the city. There will be a heavenly banquet, beautiful art, exquisite music, culture, wonderful gardens, natural wonders and even animals. The heavens and earth, as we know it, will experience an “extreme makeover”.

In light of this vision, Paul exhorts us: “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Question to Consider

How does a vision of your work continuing and contributing to the glory of the “new city,” help you persevere in your work today?

Prayer

LORD, You know sometimes my work can feel meaningless, mundane and irrelevant. Grant me a vision beyond my limited earthly perspective. Fill me with a vision of the new earth and new heaven! May I exude the hope of this coming Kingdom. In Jesus’ Name.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 2—Midday/Evening Prayer “Daniel: Called to Resistance”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading—Daniel 1:3–8

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king’s service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility — young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king’s service . . . But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

Devotional

Many of us have the mentality of simply going along with what is required of us at our places of work. We do what they ask and in return we get a paycheck and security. As followers of Jesus, however, we have been called to liberate our workplaces and institutions. Like Daniel living in corrupt Babylon, we are to be proactive in serving as a blessing wherever we are.

Daniel was charged by God to creatively and boldly engage his work environment with integrity and not be passive. All of us have the ability to influence our secular work environments as teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, insurance salespeople, managers, cooks, janitors, small business owners, actors, students, and administrators - in for-profit or non-profit institutions. God is alive in these places as He was alive in Babylon. And He sends us into these challenging environments to both commune with Him and engage the powers of evil for the sake of His kingdom.

Question to Consider

What does it mean for you to not “just go along” passively with things at work?

Prayer

LORD, I need vision and courage to approach my work like Daniel. Rather than just passively doing what I am told, help me to be mindful and wise. Help me discern when opportunities present themselves for me to speak, act and live truth and love in my workplace. Thank You for being the source of my life. Help me to be a link of You as the Source of life for others.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 3—Morning/Midday Prayer “Let Your Work Transform You”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading—Nehemiah 4:6–14

So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, “The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.” Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, “Wherever you turn, they will attack us.” Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. After I looked things over, I stood up and said..., “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

Devotional

Nehemiah worked in the palace of the Persian king Artaxerxes. He then takes a leave of absence in order to take a new job to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. We learn from him a valuable lesson: we are called not only to transform our work environment, but to let our work environment transform us. He faces circumstances and crisis beyond his control. External enemies and internal discouragement threaten to overwhelm him. Yet Nehemiah remains anchored, prayerful and non-anxious in his work.

In the same way, God allows our work places to purge and purify your hearts, forming Christ in us. When we find ourselves in the midst of great difficulties and challenges at work, we too are called to be anchored, prayerful and non-anxious. Our work becomes a vehicle for transformation and deeper communion with Him.

Day 4—Midday/Evening Prayer “The Inner Journey of the Desert”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading—Luke 4:1–11

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’” The devil... said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” The devil... “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Devotional

Life is filled with desert experiences where we find ourselves tempted by the evil one. These events and experiences can be quite painful, difficult, uncomfortable, and disorienting. Yet Jesus models for us the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us to these places so God can do a profound, inner work in us. Every spiritual journey takes us into the hardest realities of our lives. We are invited by God to surrender to this process and meet the darkness within ourselves. If we don’t, we tend to project it outwards, making others our enemy. Desert experiences have a way of getting the truth of Scripture into us so that, like Job, we can declare “my ears had heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You” (Job 42:5). Remember, if you skip your inner work, your outer work will suffer.

Question to Consider

Where and when are you tempted to rely on external validation for your sense of importance and success?

Prayer

LORD, help me to live in the experience of your love and to hear over and over again Your words to me: “You are my daughter/son, whom I love. I delight in you. You don’t have to prove you are lovable — you already are!” May every desert in my life and work make these words more real to me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

Day 4—Morning/Midday Prayer

“The Call to a Generous Life”

Take the following generosity inventory. Score yourself (1 being “rarely” and 5 being “usually”).

1. One of my favorite things to do with family and friends is to spend time with them.
2. I am intentional about using my abilities and talents to help others.
3. When I talk with someone, I focus my full attention to them.
4. I enjoy giving a way at least 10 percent of my money faithfully, consistently and systematically “off the top” when a pay check arrives as my “first fruits” offering to God.
5. When one of my possessions is lost, broken, or stolen, it doesn’t take me long to let go of it emotionally.
6. I don’t quickly judge people or write them off.

Question to Consider

How is God coming to you through the inventory above? What might be one areas you want to work on?

Prayer

LORD, I can easily cross the line from grateful daughter/son to be a self-serving, judgmental Pharisee. Help me to remember the joy that filled my life when I received your generous salvation. What compassion you loved me with! May Your love fill me so I have eyes to notice those around me, and may my life today be marked by a generous spirit.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 3—Morning/Midday Prayer

“Let Your Work Transform You”

Question to Consider

When you think of your workplace, how do you hear the words “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight...”?

Prayer

LORD, I am prone to discouragement when the going gets rough. Fill me with your Spirit to look beyond external circumstances like Nehemiah.. May I remain anchored and connected to You in the midst of every challenge and trial today. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 3—Midday/Evening Prayer “Prudence and Your Work”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading—Luke 16:8–12

“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?

Devotional

At the end of the parable of the unjust manager, Jesus tells us that people in the world are sometimes more shrewd or prudent than Christians. Proverbs says: “The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways” (Proverbs 14:8). Prudence involves careful thought, wise judgment and a long-range perspective. It is not hasty, impulsive, passive or lazy. In Luke 16, Jesus teaches us the importance of prudence to all areas of our life — in our speech, relationships, decision making, our workplace, and especially in the arena of money. Mature followers of Christ are characterized by the ability to pause and think things through.

Question to Consider

When is it most difficult for you to pause and give thought to your ways?

Prayer

LORD, it doesn’t come naturally for me to stop and think through my actions. Prudence is hard work. Fill my mind and heart with grace that I might learn patience, thoughtfulness, wisdom, and the great benefits that come with prudence. Help me be still now before you and prayerfully think through the rest of my day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)



Day 4—Morning/Midday Prayer “The Call to a Generous Life”

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading— Luke 16:19–26

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.” The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’”

Devotional

The rich man in the parable represents the religious leaders of Jesus’ day. They were hard-hearted, critical and unkind towards the poor and needy. Most importantly, they lacked a generous spirit, the fruit of true faith and an indispensable quality to our life, our calling and our work.

Most of us are only generous to our family and friends, or those who we think deserve it. Biblical generosity is the giving of ourselves to others. It is not based on performance or what others have done for us.