

The Five Most Important Things In Your Life: Part 5

You may be seated. Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! I thank God and the Congregation for the opportunity to stand behind this anointed desk we call a pulpit. I'm grateful for this opportunity to bring to you the word of God, as the Lord has laid it upon my heart.

What I would like to talk to you about today, are the five most important things in your life: Part 5. I want everyone here to think about what the five most important things in your life are. Most of you have been here as I have presented my list during the first four parts, so you'll know where I'm heading. For those of you who've heard the first four parts, I would hope that you have fervently prayed over that list, and I would hope that you've made it your own.

As we have done in the previous messages, we will be discussing the prioritization of our lives. You see, we all need to prioritize whether we know it or not. We prioritize things in our minds, and we prioritize things in the physical; on paper, a computer, in an iPod, or some other kind of electronic or paper planner. Those who prioritize things in their mind only; are more apt to forget things, or the order in which those things need to be done.

As an example: Most people will not take the time to pray unless they plan for it. Neither will they take the time to read their bibles or study God's word. The people, who are most likely to do those things, are the people who prioritize God's work as number one.

People will make a list daily in order to accomplish the tasks of the day. If it's a mental list, what do you think is going to be the last thing that comes to mind? For most people it's the work of God, or enhancing their relationship with God.

If they will make a physical list with God at the top, more than likely they will do what they have tasked as number one first. Once this is done for a long enough period, it will become second nature to put God first and a person won't even have to think about it.

Today, we will discuss what I believe the prioritizations should be for each of us as a Christian. You have hopefully made your own personal list of the most important things in your life. I will now give you the list that I desire to live by. The five most important things in your life; in my personal opinion, are as follows: and I ask that you repeat them with me.

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The very first is:

1. Your personal, intimate, eternal, relationship with God.
2. Your personal, intimate, ‘till death do us part, relationship with your spouse.
3. Your personal, intimate, until they leave home, relationship with your children.
4. Your personal, intimate, ‘till the rapture, relationship with your local church.
5. Your personal, intimate, until you retire, relationship with your job.

Since this message is titled: Part 5. You’ve probably figured out that we’re going to be talking about “Your personal, intimate, until you retire, relationship with your job.” If you will stand and turn with me to our text today:

2Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

From the beginning, men have had to work. God gave man the job of “dressing and keeping the garden” in **Genesis 2:15**. Should any of you not think that gardening is a tough job, please feel free to come and clean my flower beds. You will find very quickly that it can be a very rough job.

Scripture is very plain that men should always have a job. Our text in **2Thessalonians 3:10** tells us that. We’ve shown the example from **Genesis 2:15**. We also have an example from **Genesis 3:17-19**.

Genesis 3:17-19 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; **18:** Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; **19:** In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

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Due to the sin of man, God has required that a man work all the days of his life. While in this day and age we look forward to what we call retirement, in those days it was not available. We work hard today to provide for our future, and if we are not successful enough, we must continue to labor until we die. That said, there is never any retirement from the house of God, but we'll get into that a little more later on in the message.

What I would like to do now is to show you biblical reasons for working. God didn't just give us work. He didn't just tell us to work, but God has a purpose; reasons if you will, for us to work.

1. To support your family

1Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

I do not believe that God has determined that a healthy man should live off of his wife's wages. I believe that a "healthy" man should have a job and provide for his wife. It may not be a great job at first, but he needs to work. He needs to fulfil the role God has given him as the provider for his family.

With the exception of your present employer engaging in illegal activities, you have no excuse for quitting your job before obtaining another job. You may not like your current job, you may even hate it, but scripturally I believe you're doing wrong if you quit your present job before getting another one. If you aren't working, you're not providing for your family and **1Timothy 5:8** says that's a sin.

If your job is preventing you from attending church on a regular basis; or if it's interfering with your family life you need to change jobs, but you don't quit the one you have until you have the new one. There is an old axiom that says, "It's easier to get a job if you have a job". Prospective employers will hire a person that has a job before they'll hire a guy who's quit his job.

Also, an employer will generally hold a person in contempt that is always changing jobs, with one caveat. They will almost never hold it against a man for changing jobs as long as each job was a step up from the last one!

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Many men today want to start at the top of the ladder instead of the bottom. As the military puts it, “You have to learn to follow before you can be qualified to lead”. When you climb a ladder, you start at the bottom and work your way up one rung at a time, the same with your job. You have to prove that you’ve mastered your current rung before you can move up to the next rung.

In many jobs, you have to prove you’ve mastered the next rung before even being considered for that rung. That requires extra work. If you want to be considered for a higher position than you currently occupy, you can start by going above and beyond the norm required by your boss.

2. To support the church.

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Those who are intimately familiar with the workings of a church know that a church needs funds to exist. Without funds you can’t have lights, air-conditioning in the summer, or heat in the winter. You also don’t have sound systems, or pianos, or organs, or drums, or pews, or song books, or any of the other things that we as individuals have come to expect of a church in this day and age.

If the church needs funds to exist, and you aren’t paying tithes and giving offerings because you’re too lazy to work, shame on you! Now I realize that some are not able to work due to injury or age. But those men who are young enough; and healthy enough to work, who won’t because they don’t want to; are sinning just as bad as the liar, or the murderer, or the adulterer.

1Corinthians 9:14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

The bible is specific that ministers are to be employed by the church and not man. This isn’t always possible because a church might be too small to pay a Pastor what he needs to support his family. When this is the case, the man of God has to work a day job and that takes away from his study time, his

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prayer time, his visitation of the sick time, and from other areas of his ministry. I believe that a church will always be benefited by having a Pastor that works full time in the ministry as soon as it's economically possible for him to do so.

Does this mean that a man can't be effective as a minister if he's working full time? No, as there are examples of men who were full time in the ministry that were very successful. Let's see what the bible says about them.

2Thessalonians 3:8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Let's take a closer look at Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, and their circumstances. They were in a line of business that allowed them to instantly compete anywhere they went, with anybody else in the same business. They were tent makers, and tents were a common form of home in those days.

Those who were involved in this ministry were not Pastors. They were what we would call Evangelists, or perhaps Missionaries in this day and age. One of them was even called an Apostle, that person was Paul. Paul could start a church, or convert a synagogue to Christianity, or train up a church and then leave. Those who are left behind are the ones who build the church and sustain it. Those people had to work as well to provide for that one who is the shepherd of their flock.

Let's look at the difference between a Pastor and an Evangelist. An Evangelist can preach the same batch of messages all year because he's going to a different church pretty much every week. A Pastor has to write around 150 messages a year in comparison to 14 to 21 messages a year for an Evangelist.

If you wonder why an Evangelist sounds so smooth with his delivery, it's because he's had lots of practice. He may have preached that same message thirty times already in the last year. He has it completely memorized. A Pastor is lucky if he has an hour or two to go over his message before preaching it, and most of that time is spent praying over it.

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If you provide for a Pastor to be full time in the ministry:

- He has more time to study.
- He has more time to pray.
- He has more time for visitation.
- He has more time for his family, which is something a young Pastor is always in need of!

Just think, if the Apostle Paul did so much while working full time in those two cities where he did so, how much more could he have accomplished if he had been able to devote all his energy to the ministry? If you intentionally aren't working, and you know you should be, how many people might be lost because you're lazy?

3. As a witness.

If there is one thing you can do to make Christianity look bad, that's be unemployed. If you claim to be a Christian and you're healthy, and you're not actively looking for a job, you're bringing reproach to the kingdom of Christ. Unless of course you're independently wealthy, and thus are retired, even then you should consider working fulltime for the church.

1Corinthians 3:8-10 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. **9:** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. **10:** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

There are too many people out there that want to have fine things in life, yet they won't work for them. They complain that others have things they can't afford, yet they won't do what's necessary to get a job that pays well enough for them to purchase such items.

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If it takes a degree to get that type of job, and you want those things that badly, then do what you need to do in order to get that degree. Take night classes, apply for a student loan, or join the military so the military pays for your education. Quit griping and get to work! If you won't put out the effort, then quit your complaining!

God has said that you will reap the reward of your own labor. What do you want to accomplish in life? God has said that He will help you. It's up to you to set those priorities for your life, and then to work to accomplish them.

One other thing to consider; everything that you do has a reflection on God and your walk with God. How are you representing the Lord? Will others in your line of work want to be like you? Or do you scare them away from Christ because of your attitude? Are you butting into other people's business at work? Or do you take care of your job and wait for them to ask you if they need help. Let's read **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12**

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; **12:** That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

The bible plainly tells us that we are to be quiet and do our own work. There are times you may see a person struggling to take care of a problem, and you want to help them....Don't!!!! Let them ask you for help first. If you walk over and offer them a solution, most people will not appreciate it. They will label you as a "know it all". If you wait for them to ask you for help, they will think of you as a resource.

This is something that I struggle with at times. I know my job, and I know it well. When I hear one of the guys in my work group, or even someone in another work group struggling in an area in which I have expertise, I have to bite my tongue and wait until they ask me for help. If you can form that habit you'll be more highly thought of by most people. The less ego a person has, the easier it is to help them, but it seems like most people have rather large egos these days....

I believe that verse 12 speaks of you putting in a full day's work. Are you putting in a full day's work or are you doing just enough to get by? As

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Christians, we should be setting the standard for hard work on our jobs. No one else should be able to outwork us! As a man once said, “Can you look your boss straight in the eyes when you pick up your paycheck, or do you have to walk up to him backwards in order to get it?”

Now let's look at **Colossians 3:22-24**

Colossians 3:22-24 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: **23:** And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; **24:** Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

We need to keep in mind who we really work for. We don't just work for a man; we're working for the Lord! Any job that you're working on, you're working on for the Lord. You need to work at it hard enough, and do a high enough quality job that Jesus can brag on you for it! You sure don't want him mad at you for doing such a sorry job on it, especially if you're being lazy. Remember, your inheritance from the Lord is in large measure derived from the labor you put into your job.

I'm not talking about your salvation; I'm talking about the rewards over and above that greatest of rewards which we know to be salvation. Do you want your mansion in heaven to be a pile of hay behind the outhouse on the back 40?

Personally, I'd rather have several large rooms, well furnished for entertaining guests like King David, the Apostle Peter, or maybe the Apostle Paul. I'd like to have a couple of angels to do all my housework. You know, make the beds, do the dishes, clean the shower, take out the trash.

By the way Men, if your wives are doing those things for you, you'd most definitely better treat her like an angel!!!! If you don't, you have no right to complain when she's up in the air harping at you.....

Now, let's look at our opening text again, only we're going to add a couple of more scriptures along with it.

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2Thessalonians 3:10-12 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. **11:** For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. **12:** Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Again, we are exhorted not only to work, but to work quietly, earning our keep. **Verse 11** tells us what happens to people that don't work when they should be. It says they're busybodies. Busybodies are trouble makers, gossipers, the folks who complain the most and do the least. In my opinion, you don't have the right to complain if you aren't heavily involved in the work.

If you don't think enough outreach is being done, try doing some yourself. If you don't think the preaching is good enough, go start your own church, and do your own preaching.

Now, not everybody who leaves a church and starts a new work is leaving because they didn't like the preaching where they were. They should only leave and start a new work because **"God"** has called them to preach, and they should only start a new work if **"God"** has called them to do that as well.

Now let's look at **Ephesians 4:28**

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

At any given time there may people in a congregation that made their living on the wrong side of the law. They stole, cheated, and robbed their way through life. But through the blood of the lamb, they have been forgiven of those trespasses and given eternal life.

What better witness is there to a lost world than the person who might at one time have been considered the scum of the earth, who is now holding down a full time job and living as a responsible citizen? The change in that

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person's life is undeniable! The presence of God is manifest in that individual and it's a huge testimony to the power of God to change lives!

If the musicians will come at this time:

Today we have learned that one of the top five most important things in our lives is working on a job. Whether for the church or a secular employer, it makes no difference to God. I've laid out three reasons why that's so important for you.

- 1. To support your family**
- 2. To support the church**
- 3. As a witness for God**

I want to ask everyone here today a few questions. I'm not going to ask you to bow your heads and close your eyes as I normally would do. I'm not even going to ask you to raise your hands if the answer is yes to a question. I just want you to answer these questions honestly in your heart.

1. Does your work ethic glorify God?
2. Are you working hard, or hardly working?
3. Is there something you can do better than you have been on your job?
4. Do people at work respect your output and the quality of your work?
5. Would Jesus be proud of "how" you do your work?

I would like for everyone to think about those things while on the job tomorrow. WWJD is an acronym for "What would Jesus do?" How do you think Jesus would handle your job? You might want to consider that as you perform your daily duties at whatever job you may have!

If we could all stand at this time. Pastor, would you end this service with a prayer....