

The Lord's work opens up to us a whole new potential for joy and fulfillment

Much of the time we make the mistake of thinking that happiness is something we can “catch” as we “pursue” it. After all, we live in a land where we are constitutionally guaranteed the right to the “pursuit of happiness.” But having pursued it, why is it that we end up with so little of it? Why are the lives of so many in our society characterized by so little joy and fulfillment?

The fact is, of course, that the harder a person tries to be happy, the less happy he is. Happiness is not found when we pursue it directly. Instead, it comes as a by-product of other, and more important, pursuits. We find ourselves contented with happiness when we have unselfishly devoted our energies to productive, worthwhile work in this world. The most joyous people are those who know they have given their best efforts to the work that was uniquely theirs to do.

But therein lies the problem. Many people, if not most, live without any real idea of their significant roles in life. They don't know what they could do to render service and make a contribution. Consequently, they live unfulfilled lives, year after year wandering from one meaningless activity to another. At the end of life, they have little confidence that they've done anything worthwhile.

Writing to his fellow Christians, Peter spoke of this meaningless way of living when he said, “you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers” (1 Pt. 1:18). Compared to the deeply meaningful way the Christian can live, life outside of Christ is relatively aimless. The point is certainly not that the non-Christian is incapable of doing anything good, but that outside of Christ — and the eternal hope that can only be found in Christ — one's work can never be of any lasting significance. Jesus put it this way: “What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” (Mt. 16:26).

But Christ has redeemed us from that way of living. In Christ, there is the Lord's work to do, and *the Lord's work opens up to us a whole new potential for joy and fulfillment in life*. This week, let's spend some time reflecting on that blessing of being a Christian. Outside of Christ, our work would be of only passing importance, but in the Lord, our work is “not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Monday: Acts 20:35

Key Idea: Our joy in life requires a sense of profitability and usefulness.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean that givers are more “blessed” than receivers? Is there a principle here that defines the path to true happiness? Whom might we expect to be happier in life, the “producers” or the “consumers”?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 21:25,26.

Tuesday: 1 Peter 1:17,18

Key Idea: In comparison to our lives in Christ, our previous lives were aimless and without profit.

Questions for Family Growth: What are some other words that are similar to “aimless” (NKJV)? In what sense do these words describe a person’s life outside of Christ? What thought is contained in [Rom. 6:20-23](#)?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 21:27](#).

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 15:58

Key Idea: When we engage in the Lord’s work, we are doing something that is not “in vain.”

Questions for Family Growth: What does the word “vain” mean? What are some reasons why the Lord’s work is more permanent and significant than any other work? What does it mean to “abound” in the Lord’s work?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 21:28](#).

Thursday: Colossians 3:17

Key Idea: As Christians, all that we do is to be done in the Lord’s name.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean to do something “in the name of the Lord Jesus”? Does this give a deeper meaning and significance to our what we do? Does the principle in this verse apply only to what we do “at church” or does it apply to all our activity?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 21:29](#).

Friday: Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25

Key Idea: As Christians, all that we do is done unto the Lord.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul mean when he says that we are to do everything “as for the Lord and not for men” ([Col. 3:23](#))? When we keep this principle in mind, how does it help our work? What would it mean to do our work “heartily”?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 21:30](#).

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