

HOW TO BE SMART

A STUDY OF PROVERBS



Week 5 “Wisdom for Work” Discussion Notes

1. It is probably a reasonable assumption that most of us work alongside non-believers. Have you ever discussed your theology or philosophy concerning work with your workmates? As a believer, is your perspective on work different from your non-believer work associate? If so, how is it different?
2. There are several references to diligence in Proverbs. (See Proverbs 10:4, 12:24, 12:27, 13:4, 21:5; See also Romans 12:8 and 1 Timothy 4:15). How would you define diligence? Are you a diligent worker? What distinguishes a diligent worker from a non-diligent worker?
3. Read the Parable of the Vineyard Workers in Matthew 20: 1-16. How does this parable speak to our possible misconceptions of kingdom work? Do you think this parable of Christ has anything to do with our conceptions of “fairness” in the workplace? Do you regard your 9-to-5 job as kingdom work or is your kingdom work primarily focused on evenings and weekends?
4. What would be some of the signs in someone who has lost the balance in diligent, productive work and has slipped into an obsession with work? What are some of our internal drivers for work obsession? How can the fear of the Lord, mentioned so often in Proverbs, speak to these unhealthy drives?
5. Aaron noted in his sermon that one of the characteristics of work is creativity and he cited God’s creative work in the cosmos as an example. Will you be working in heaven? If so, can you imagine what heavenly work might look like? (What was the nature of Adam’s work before the fall?) How might heavenly work differ from earthly work?
6. It is often noted that males in Western culture, find their primary personal identity in their 9-to-5 jobs and that “retirement” is a difficult transition for many. Would you agree with this observation? Should Christian men be different in their source of identity or is this just the way that men are “wired”?
7. How did you answer the question: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” when you were young? How would you (truthfully) answer it now?
8. Read Ecclesiastes 8:15. Is this sound advice? Are you following it? Would others close to you say you are following it?
9. Does God work? What is the nature of His work? Consider Ephesians 2:10, 3:20, 4:12 and 4:16 as you discuss this question.
10. The fall of man, described in Genesis, introduced the “toil” factor in our work. (See Genesis 3:17) Describe the toil factor in your work environment. To what extent has Christ’s redemptive work on the cross redeemed the “toil” in your work?