

## Q4 L11 - **The Christian and Work** - 2020-12-12

Carlos Munoz: Maranatha and happy Sabbath to everyone. Welcome to our Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh-day Adventist Church for our "Sabbath School Study Hour." So today's an exciting Sabbath because it's going to be our first Sabbath school from our new Amazing Facts and Granite Bay sanctuary. So I want to welcome everybody that's watching on Amazing Facts Television, on our social media, and on all the different networks and TV networks that are following us. And as most of you know, we're here in the Granite Bay Roseville, Sacramento area. So if you're ever in town, we invite you to come join us once the restrictions are over. Amen? So thank you for being here with us.

Today we're on lesson for education as we're going through our Sabbath school quarterly. We want to remind everybody that if you do not have your Sabbath school lesson, you can go to [amazingfacts.org](http://amazingfacts.org) or you can also go to [granitebaysda.org](http://granitebaysda.org) and you can download the lesson for free so that you can join us when--during this lesson. And so before we start, we want to have a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this opportunity. We thank You for the blessing and for the guidance and for Your love and Your patience, and we thank You, Father, for this opportunity also where we can come together on Your holy day to celebrate and commemorate that You are our God and study Your Word together. So thank You, Father, for this opportunity. I ask a special blessing for Pastor Doug, and may Your Spirit speak in him and through him so that we can have a good, joyful study of Your Word. Thank You, Father, for this opportunity, and we ask and beg these things in Jesus's name. Amen.

Pastor Doug Batchelor: And good morning, friends. I want to welcome those who are watching on television right now. You might be watching on Amazing Facts TV or you're watching on Facebook or YouTube or one of our outlets. This is sort of our inaugural class of Sabbath school here in the sanctuary. And, you know, because of the shutdowns in California--varying degrees around the country, but at least here in California, we just have a handful of people here because we're having a baptism today. But the majority of our folks are worshipping from home.

We want to send you greetings to all of our members online. We're continuing with our study on the subject of education, and today we're in lesson number 11 and the title is "The Christian and Work." And, you know, sometimes when--in the context of Christianity when you talk about work, people talk to you as though you are legalistic, but work is a good thing for a Christian. And to be a Christian with good works is actually a blessing, as long as it's done from the right motive. We have a memory verse, and the memory verse comes to us from 1 Corinthians 15, verse 58. This is in the New King James Version. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain." Talking about the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain.

Well, we have a lot of information to cover on this subject, and I'm hoping that I'm able to teach the lesson objectively because I'll tell you I do have a bias here. I think sometimes that there's such an emphasis on grace and Christianity that work almost becomes a dirty word. And so I could--I'm at risk of leaning or letting the pendulum swing too far to the other side because I think work is such a blessing and some people view it as a curse.

But first, it might be a good idea to start with a definition. Work: the expenditure of effort to accomplish a task, to perform or fulfill duties regularly for wages or salary, to perform or carry through a task requiring sustained effort or continuous repeated operations; to exert oneself physically or mentally, especially in a sustained effort for a purpose or under compulsion or necessity. So some of the definitions of what is work.

Now, you know, I found it interesting as I looked up the definition of work. They've got a definition of work in botany. There's a definition of work in physics. I mean--so work is talking about activity with hundreds of different definitions. You know, I was interested; the wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, he says this in Ecclesiastes chapter 1, verse 5. Basically, the whole universe is full of work. Says, "The sun also rises and the sun goes down, and it hastens to the place where it rose. The wind goes towards the south, and it returns towards the north. The wind whirls about continually and comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place from which the rivers come, there they return again." Goes through evaporation. "All things are full of labor. Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing."

In the world around us, everything from the neutrons and electrons that are always spinning to the atomic level; everything is constantly in motion. And unless you get out in space and you can find a place where you realize what they call absolute zero, whenever there is heat, there's movement and there's life and there's activity all through God's cosmos. The planets are moving. Everything is moving.

So under the first section in your lesson dealing with the Christian work, it talks about the many sides of work. Work was part of God's original plan for creation. You have to admit that if God first made man and put him in a paradise and the idea was he was to string a hammock between two good trees and just swing back and forth in those trees, life would get pretty boring pretty quick. God is a creator. God is a worker, and He made us in His image; and we are designed to work, be productive, and to create. It says in Genesis 2, verse 15, "Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and to keep it." God gave man work.

Now, the work in the Garden of Eden before sin and even before the flood was probably very different from what we think of now. I heard a--I heard about up a prison warden. I think it was San Quentin. And he was asked, you know, "What kinds of different people have you had in your prison?" He said, "You know, I can tell you that we've had every kind of occupation in our prison." Said, "We've had doctors and dentists and lawyers and common laborers and," he said, "businesspeople and accountants." And he said, "We've had just about everything." He said, "I was struck one day that I can't remember us ever having a horticulturist." And it's interesting that God made man originally to be a gardener. And the leader of the San Quentin prison said, "I don't think we've ever had a gardener in our prison."

So God gave man an original job to dress and to keep the garden. And it says here He put them in there to tend it. I think he was training vines. Maybe he was creating hybrids from the different plants and flowers. And, you know, he must have had an infinite number of opportunities of things to do.

A young person asked me a question during our "Revelation Now" program. "Were there bananas in the Garden of Eden?" And I said, "Technically no." Because the banana is a hybrid of two Asian fruits that by themselves are not very tasty, but somehow when you cross them and you create the banana. You ever try and plant a banana seed? Bananas have no seeds, and the way they plant them is they take shoots. But those two Asian fruits by themselves are not very good, but together they created the superfood. I also understand pineapples are a hybrid that is very unique. And I think that God maybe wanted Adam to do some creating through the horticulture and training the vines and making houses out of living things. It's just hard for us to comprehend what his work was, but work was a delight.

Now, I don't know about you, but sometimes I get involved in a project and I am so excited about it. I like making and working and fixing and building. And a little while ago, you can ask Karen, I just--I replaced a shower door that was in our house. It came with the house and it was not in very good shape, and I got so excited and involved. I actually woke up excited to work on it, and I think at the Garden of Eden man was excited about his work that he was to do. Ecclesiastes 3, verse 12 and 13: "I

know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice and to do good in their lives, and that also every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all of his labor."

God designed us to enjoy the good of our labor. This is what Solomon said: "All the days of their life." But after sin, was work still part of God's plan? Yes. I'm asking our local handful here. It was, but it did change. Look in Genesis 3, verse 17. "Cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil of it, you shall eat all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it will bring forth to you, and you will eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground."

Now, it is true that the earth was cursed because of sin and work became more difficult. But was work a curse or was work designed to still be a blessing? The ideal of work was actually be a blessing to man and keep him out of trouble. You ever heard the expression "idleness is the devil's workshop?" Anyone know what verse that's in? It's not in the Bible. It's probably had been Benjamin Franklin, but the principle is in the Bible. It talks about the sin of Sodom. Everyone thinks about the sins of the flesh when they think of Sodom, but in Ezekiel, I think it's chapter 16, it says, "This was the sin of your sister Sodom. Idleness and fullness of bread." Things were so abundant there in the Vale of Sodom before it was cursed with fire and brimstone that they scarcely had to work. It was back like the Garden of Eden, the Bible says. And because they had all that leisure and they had sinful natures, they got into a lot of trouble.

But so many people would be saved from trouble, especially the young people, if they were given tasks and kept busy. Work is a good thing in that respect. And you look in John 17, ultimately a Christian is made in the image of God. Is God a worker? What does Jesus say? John 5, verse 17: "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.'" And then you look in Ecclesiastes 7, verse 13, Solomon says, "Consider the work of God." There's a lot of verses we could point to that make it pretty clear God's a worker; and He is constantly involved in not only supplying, but creating and sustaining the things that He makes.

God is very busy. Heaven is a busy place. Let me give you a quote from the book "Maranatha" page 350. A matter of fact, I've a few quotes from the same page. "Maranatha" page 350 says, "God is a constant worker. The angels are workers. They are ministers to God for the children of men. Those who look forward to heaven in inactivity will be disappointed, for the economy of heaven provides no place for the gratification of indolence. But to the weary and heavy-laden, rest is promised. It is the faithful servant who is welcome from his labors to the joy of the Lord." God does not say, "Well done, good and lazy servant. Enter into the joy of the Lord." It's the diligent servant that will enjoy the rest, but it's not constant rest.

You know, some of the ideas people have of heaven is that, you know, folks are going to be floating on clouds with their hands behind their head and just, you know, enjoying eternal nothingness. But no, heaven is going to be a busy place. What does it say we're doing in heaven? God makes a mansion for us, but you know that other verse. I think it's in Isaiah 11. They will build houses and inhabit them. They will plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. My elect will long enjoy the works of their hands, the labor of their hands. So even in heaven--God created us to be busy. So it's certainly part of his plan here.

Now, you know, like anyone else, I enjoy the times of rest, but God wants us to be productive. I told my kids when they were growing up, and I suppose my father hammered this in me, there's two kinds of people in life. You've got producers and consumers. Now, everybody consumes. We can't live without consumption, whether it's for food or energy or clothing or whatever. We are always consuming the results of somebody's labor.

But the question is, at the end of your life, have you done more consuming or have you produced more than you consumed? I believe one of the keys is you want to leave the world a better place than you found it and be putting more in than you're taking out. And so I think God wants us to be producers. And so I always told my kids, you know, it's okay to enjoy a gift and enjoy the fruits of someone else's labor, but make sure that you are producing in life, that you are contributing to life. And whatever your gifts are--everyone's got different gifts and the way they--you know, their occupations and their callings, how they use those gifts in the work of God. So God wants us to be producers.

All right, let's talk a little bit about work and nurture. Now, one of the things I think is interesting is when we talk about the Sabbath commandment, what does the Sabbath commandment say? Says rest. Is that all it says? What's the first part of that? Six days you shall-- Do you notice that there is a command to labor as well as a command to rest? And how many of the 7 days are we to rest? How many of the seven do we rest? One. How many of the seven do we work? Six. But the emphasis on the fourth commandment is always on the one to rest. That's because most people, you know, probably have a struggle resting in the Lord the way we're commanded, but really it's a command that also involves, "I created you to be productive. Six days you shall labor."

It doesn't say if you're in the mood. God says six days you should labor. Depends on what your work is. You know, Jesus was a carpenter, and some people are shepherds and fishermen and there's all different kinds of work. And God gives people their respective gifts, but God wants to be--us to be productive and He wants us to be busy six days. Deuteronomy 16:15: "Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord Your God in the place which the Lord chooses because the Lord Your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands so that you shall surely rejoice."

Few weeks ago, Karen and I took a trip up into the hills and this was, you know, following the fires, and we had a long day and a lot to accomplish in very little time. You ever had a situation like that? We had to travel a long way. We had some tasks. Going up to the ranch, we needed to set down this horse trough and plumb some water to it to provide for the animals up there. And it was, you know, 4-hour drive from Sacramento to get up there. And a tree was in the road and we had to walk 4 miles to get a chainsaw and walk 4 miles back to cut the tree out of there. I think we rode back on our quad to cut the tree out of the road. That's right.

But I kept thinking, "Oh, dear--" I said, "This is what I'd like to see get accomplished today, but it's going to really take the blessing of God to get this all done." The fires--trees were falling after the fire because the roots were burnt out, and we had to cut a number of trees out of the way. And I said, "Lord--" We prayed. We said, "Lord, we need You to bless our work today. Because unless You bless, this whole trip's going to be a waste and it won't get done." And, you know, we had a few roadblocks, but God blessed, and we were able to get everything done. At the end of the day we're driving around saying, "Well, praise the Lord. We got our tasks done today. God blessed our work." You ever have a day like that? You just say, "Wow, everything really went well today."

Now, how many of you had the other days also, where you said, "I may as well go back to bed because nothing is working out today." So it's nice when we pray. God says here, "And the Lord Your God will bless you and all your produce and the work of your hands so that you will surely rejoice." There's a verse you want to underline and claim that promise, say, "Lord, please bless my work today, that I can be productive for Your honor and glory." But yeah, we all know what it's like when our work is cursed. We want our work to be blessed, and I guess one of the keys is make sure you're doing His work and He'll bless it.

You know, I always enjoy reminding our evangelists in the Amazing Facts team that we are doing what God told us to do so we can count on His blessing. You know, Jesus said, "Go into all the world and

preach the gospel." And that's what we do as a pastor in evangelism. And if you're doing what God commands you to do, is He going to help you do it? I say that again. It's a simple truth, but I think profound.

If you're attempting to do what God has commanded you to do and you ask for His help, why would He not help you do what He's commanded you to do? So one of the big challenges in life is make sure you're doing what God called you to do. Proverbs 21:25: "The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hand refuses to labor."

You know, it's actually downright convicting if you go through Proverbs and read everything He says about the lazy. I'm not going to read them all, but He talks about the lazy man who turns in his bed. He says, "I can't work. There's a lion in the street." And he's got 100 reasons not to do anything. But says those who are doing God's work, He will bless them. Ecclesiastes 5:12: "The sleep of the laboring man is sweet." God said to Adam, you know, "You're going to work, and you're going to work in the sweat of your brow. And it might be uncomfortable, but there are rewards to that." For one thing, you will really enjoy your breaks and your food and you will really enjoy your sleep.

All right. In Jeremiah 1:16 it says, "I'll utter My judgments against them concerning all of their wickedness because they've forsaken me. They've burned incense to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands." Now, we're to--whatever we do, whether we eat or drink or work, we're to work for God's glory, but I think we all know some people work for their own glory. So that kind of work, God says He can't bless. And some people worship the works of their hands. They make an idol and they pray to it. They're really worshiping the works of their hands.

What was the problem with Babel when they were building the Tower of Babel? Is God against building buildings? No. He--God told them to build the ark. He told them to build the temple. I mean, God's not against building. They were building something to make a name for themselves. They said, "Let us build a tower, that we might make a name for ourselves." They weren't interested in the glory of God, they were interested in worshipping their own works; and I think that's probably still true today, that there are places in the world where men are building massive monuments to themselves for their own glory. God says He can't bless that. They're worshiping the works of their own hands.

John 9:4. Do you know we are saved by a work? People think, "Pastor Doug, you just spoke heresy." We are saved by work, a work. You know what the work is? Jesus tells us. John 9:4: "I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day. The night is coming when no man can work." And then Christ says, "This is the work, that you believe on the one whom the Father is sent." So there's a work for us all to do in believing. Amen? Work and excellence.

Let's talk about this a little bit. In Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you're going."

Now, this is an extreme example, but in the Marines during basic training, you'll hear the drill instructor shout out, "Work now. You'll get plenty of time to sleep when you're dead." That's what they tell you in the Marines. I know. That's not good theology for us because you don't want to work yourself to death. There's a good place for rest. But, you know, Solomon said, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might for there's no knowledge or wisdom or activity in the grave where you're going." And it's a good practice in life that whatever you do, do it as well as you can.

How many of you had fathers or mothers that said if you're going to do a job, do it right? You heard that before? If you're going to do it, do it right. And I remember some old timers I greatly respected. One of them named Bill Rome, and he talked to me about wood cutting. He said, "If you're in the wood business, you need to make every lick count." What he meant by that is sharpen your axe, sharpen your

saw. You don't want to keep swinging and swinging and swinging with a dull axe or saw because you're wearing yourself down, you're using your energy up. He said, "Make every lick count. Whatever you do, do it with all of your might," and I've always tried to remember that.

If you read also in Colossians 3, verse 23 and 24, we're talking about working with excellence. "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you'll receive the reward of inheritance; for you serve the Lord Jesus Christ."

I had a friend. I don't know how we ended up being friends. I think I met him hitchhiking. I can tell you his name because it was a nickname. His name was Red Band John because he always wore a red bandana, but he was one of the laziest people I ever knew. And he was young and healthy. Like me he was in his 20s, but he would go down and he'd complain to the post office if his welfare check wasn't there on time. He just figured the world owed him everything.

And one day he was all out of welfare money, and I'd found a job and they needed two people. I said, "John, why don't you come with me?" And we were working for the pastor's wife who is in her 80s at this time, and she wanted us to shovel some gravel. It was something real basic. Cut some boards and shovel some gravel, working on a garden fence. And I was out there working best as I knew how. John was eating a donut with one hand and sawing with the other with a handsaw. And she sat--Mrs. Phillips, she stood there in amazement. She watched John for a little while, and she put her hands on her hips. She said, "I've never seen anybody so lazy in my whole life." She said, "I--when I was your age, I could work five times as fast as you."

Now, that's not a reputation anybody wants. What does that do for a Christian if that's the kind of worker you are? Is that a very good witness? No. You know what? Jesus said if someone asks you to carry their armor a mile, what do you do as a Christian? Take it the second mile. So what is the reputation of a Christian? Do it with excellence. If you're going to paint something--you know what? Michelangelo was painting the Sistine Chapel. He was way up on the scaffold. And he was up there with a very fine brush and someone from down below said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I'm painting the little pollen dots on the flower." And he said, "You realize from down here nobody will ever see that." He said, "God sees it."

And so whatever you do--Christians, we're not sweeping this under the--don't look both ways and sweep it under the rug thinking, "Well, no one will ever know, or at least not while I'm alive." You always want to be doing it because angels are watching, God is watching, right? Whatever you do it, do it with all of your might. Do it as unto the Lord.

So if you knew that you were doing a project for God, how hard or how well will you want to do it? Exodus 25, verse 40. Now, it's talking here in this passage about building the temple. And, you know, I just want to remind our friends that are watching, normally what we're going to be doing when we move into the sanctuary when the pandemic is over; we want our Sabbath School class to be a little more interactive, but today it's a little more like preaching because of circumstances. So I just feel like I'm just kind of going through the lesson and preaching, but I hope you're being edified.

In Exodus 25, He's talking about building the sanctuary. At first, He gives them a design. He says in verse 40, "And see that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." So one of the things you'll learn about a Christian is, work with a plan and stick to the plan. I know that--I've got a friend, and whenever he's putting something together--you know, sometimes they'll provide instructions. It's like you get a swing set for your kids and they've got these instructions. And he says, "Whenever I get done, there's all these spare parts." I said, "Joe, those weren't spare parts. Those are parts you just left out because you didn't look at the plan." He always--he hated instructions. He called

them destructions. He says, "I don't want to look at the destructions." He says, "Yeah, I always end up with some spare parts. I wonder what they're for." [laughing]

Well, when you're building for God, you want to follow the plan. Did God give a plan to Noah? God gave a plan to Moses for the sanctuary. God gave a plan to David for the temple, and that he passed on then to Solomon. And when--and then God empowers with wisdom. Notice, reading here from Exodus 31, verse 2 through 6: "See, I have called my name Bezalel the son of Uri, and I filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting of jewels for setting, in carving for wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship."

And jumping down verse 6, it says, "And indeed I have also appointed with him Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, and I put in him wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you." God gifts different people differently and gives them abilities.

Now here's a question. Does God sometimes give people gifts for work and then they use that gift selfishly? Can God give a person a gift of music? They can sing for the Lord. They can sing for money and Hollywood or the record industry, right? God can give a person building skill and they can build things for the glory of men. They can build a casino. They can build a church. And so God gives the--different people different gifts.

The question is, are you using your gifts to the glory of God in the best way you can? So He gifted these people and He gave them the different gifts, and they were following the plan. All right. And, you know, there was something I was going to read here, yeah, about work being a blessing. Let me read this to you. "To the dwellers in Eden--" This is from the book "Patriarchs and Prophets" page 50. Work is meant to be a blessing. "To the dwellers in Eden was committed the care of the garden, to dress it and to keep it. Their occupation was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. God appointed labor as blessing to man; to occupy his mind and strengthen his body, to develop his faculties.

In mental and physical activity, Adam found one of his highest pleasures of his holy existence. And when, as a result of disobedience, he was driven from his beautiful home and forced to struggle with the stubborn soil to gain its daily bread, that very labor, although widely different from its pleasant occupation in the garden, was a safeguard against temptation and a source of happiness. Those who view work as a curse, attend it though it be with weariness and pain, are cherishing an error. The true joy of life is found only by working men and women. The angels are diligent workers. They are ministers of God to the children of men. The creator has prepared no place for the stagnant practice of indolence."

So good reminder that work is to be a blessing. And then John talking again about excellence, John 20, verse 6 and 8. This is at the Resurrection. I always thought this was amazing. So, you know, Mary comes to the tomb, and then she goes tells Peter and John the tomb is empty, and she saw an angel there. Then John and Peter run to the tomb. "Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around his head not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came from the tomb first, went in also and he saw and believed."

Now, what was it that he saw that made him believe that Jesus's body wasn't stolen, but that he actually rose from the dead? A folded handkerchief. If someone is stealing the body and they unwrap it, are they going to take the time to fold the handkerchief? But they knew Jesus; and they knew that Jesus, that was his temperament.

And so Karen and I get up--depends on who's the last to leave the bed. We always make the bed. Sometimes we make it together. Depends on timing. But if you go to our household, we make the bed. I learned this in military school. I'm sure Karen learned it growing up. And my grandmother used to always say, "You make your bed, you sleep in it." You ever heard that one before? Anybody ever heard that one before? Okay, good. I wanted to make sure my grandmother wasn't that different from yours. And so Jesus, he taught faithfulness and order in even simple things like that, and that always struck me as amazing. He folded the handkerchief.

All right. Work and spirituality. I'm going to begin with a verse in Matthew 5:16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Now, when we talk about good works as a Christian, what comes to your mind? You know, so often we're thinking about, you know, doing Christian things. You know, feeding the poor, visiting the sick, going to the prisons, doing Christian works. But I think that when it says when they see your good works, I think that it means also that when a person looks at the Christian--if you are an employee and you're a Christian and your non-Christian boss is going to look at you and say, "They do good work." And by that you are glorifying your Father in heaven. And the Bible says even to the slaves.

In Bible times Paul said, "Do whatever you do heartily as to the Lord." And you would think, "Well, man, you know, if--why would I want to make things easier for my slave master?" You've read the story of Joseph. Joseph was a slave. He decided, "Look, I've been sold by my brothers. If I'm going to be a slave, I'm going to make it as difficult for whoever buys me as possible." Is that what he did? Joseph said, "Lord, if I'm going to be a slave, I'm going to be a faithful slave." And he worked hard. And what did Potiphar do? "Boy, the Lord is blessing everything this guy does." And he exalted him. He promoted him, and God blessed him.

Even in prison, Joseph said, "Well, I'll do the menial duties in prison faithfully." And the leader of the prison said, "This guy's faithful. He's a good worker." His light was shining even in the prison. He said, "I'm going to promote him." Until pretty soon he was in charge of everything in the prison. So whatever Joseph did, because he was faithful in doing the little things well with excellence, he kept moving up. Until what happened in the end of the story? Joseph is the ruler. He's the prime minister of Egypt.

You know, it started with faithfulness in little things. What does Jesus say? "He that is faithful in that which is least is also faithful in much." So whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord. Not only Joseph. You know, I think about the servant of Naaman's wife. We don't know her name. Certain maid. Kidnapped out of the land of Israel, forced to serve in the house of Naaman. She said, "Well, if I'm going to be a servant, I will be a good servant." And she was interested in the welfare of her master. Because of her faithfulness, Naaman gets the word. He ends up getting healed, and hopefully she got a raise or set free. I don't know. Trusting her life was better after that because she decided not to be hateful and drag her feet and kick around and pout and say, you know, "You stole me from the land. I'm going to be--make your life difficult."

I heard once about a farmer that was--oh, wait. Let me read this to you first. Acts 20, verse 33 to 35. Paul says, "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities and for those who are with me. I have shown you in every way by laboring like this that you must support the weak. And remember the words of Jesus. He said, 'It is more blessed to give than receive.'"

Paul was not a prosperity preacher. You know what I mean by that? Paul did not say, "Send money to my ministry as I fly my Learjet." Paul went out and he worked with his own hands. He underworked. He underpaid or supported his own ministry.



You know, when I first got involved in ministry, I was self-supporting. I was doing not only firewood, doing carpentry and auto mechanics, and that was really good experience, and I was paying to do evangelism. When I later found out that there was a conference that was going to pay me to do mission work, I said, "You're going to pay me to do what I'm doing for free?" I said, "Thank you very much." But, you know, I think really every believer should be something of a self-supporting missionary, right? If you love the Lord, whatever your work is, it's to subsidize your mission work. That ought to be the priority. Can I get an amen out there? Big old hollow building need some help.

Okay. I was going to tell you a story about a farmer. He was a little irritated. He had an apple orchard, and there was a carload of teenagers every day that would stop and they'd hop over the fence and they'd eat his apples on the way home. And he walked up to the fence as they were there one day all picking through the trees, and he looked at them and one looked back sheepishly and said, "Oh sorry, sir. We hope you don't mind that we took a few of your apples." He said, "Not at all." He said, "I hope you don't mind. I let some air out of your tires." Some people are willing to just take, but they don't give. Galatians 5:22.

Now God gives everybody different gifts. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." So we should be using our different spiritual gifts, showing the fruits of the Spirit in whatever our work happens to be.

There is a great quote in the book "Our High Calling" page 222. This is not in your lesson, just one of my own study on this. "However humble the occupation might be, if only honorable, if the humble duties are done faithfully, he will not lose his reward. Industry is essential to health. If habits of industry were encouraged, a door would be closed against 1,000 temptations. Those who lounge away their days, having no aim or object in life, are troubled with dejection and tempted to seek an amusement in forbidden indulgences, which innervate the system and tax the physical powers ten times more than the most taxing labor. Indolence destroys more than hard labor. Many die because they have not the ability or inclination to set themselves to work." [whistling]

You know, there's a whole generation now. If this was true back then, what about today when most people now because of industrial mechanized farming we have so much food, not as many people need to work, and a lot of people sit at desks or they fiddle around with their computers and their phones, or they watch television and sometimes the only exercise a person gets is the index finger on the remote control or texting? And a lot of people are depressed, and I think a lot of depression--they say one of the keys to depression is activity, exercise. Have a purpose in life. I couldn't believe it. "Many die because they have not the ability or inclination to set themselves to work."

You know, I've got a theory. An old pastor told me this. People have a tendency to live as long as they're needed. I remember talking to a friend. He was in his 80s. I think his name was Stanley. He worked for my dad in a hotel. He was the custodian of the hotel. And I asked him one day, I said, "You're plenty old enough to retire, Stanley. Why do you keep working?" He said, "If I retire, I'll die." That was the first time someone explained to me that people live about as long as they feel like they got a purpose in life. You want to stay busy and useful. Amen?

Work and stewardship. 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 7 to 13. "But they worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden." Paul said we work so we would not be a burden to the church. And Proverbs 31, verse 10 says, "Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies." If you want to talk about is it okay for a woman to work, how many of you have read Proverbs 31? I'm not going to read the whole chapter to you. Boy, I tell you that is superwoman. It talks about her waking up

early and going to the market and buying and weaving and harvesting, and she's just--this woman is just very busy. I think she's sort of a--an allegory of the church. And Karen, of course. Yeah. [laughing]

In 1 Corinthians 3, verse 9 to 13, "For we are called God's fellow workers. You are God's field. You are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master builder, I've laid the foundation and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, each one's work will become clear; for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test everyone's work of what sort it is." Now, this is an important lesson right here; is that everybody's building, whether you like it or not. You're building a life, and your life is going to be measured. At some point there'll be a judgement day. What kind of building did you build with your life? Were you using hay, stubble, straw?

You know, years ago when we built the first cabin up in the mountains, and I was in my 20s, and--we needed some foundation piers. I went to the woods with my chainsaw and I cut some oak because I knew that oak would last 15 years. I said, "Jesus will come. We don't need concrete." And so I put these oak piers underneath the house. And then after 10 or 15 years with the rain and everything, didn't even treat them, they started to rot. Well, the house had other problems, too. It was built from kind of recycled materials and an old bridge that fell down and parts here and there. Well, at that point--we finally burnt that down. We're paying taxes on it. It just wasn't even worth it. It was--it had kind of just started to fall in on itself while I was working in another state. Built the other house. I said, "I'm not making that mistake again."

Now, Jesus may still come in ten years. I didn't know, but I said, "When Jesus comes, I want him to say, 'Doug, before I burn up your house, it was a good job.'" Right? Here we just finished building this church. People have said, "You build such a nice church. Don't you think Jesus is coming?" Yes, I want him to be impressed when he comes. Actually, when Noah built the ark, how good a job did he do? How much life on earth was saved through Noah? You can raise your hand. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the job that Noah did building the ark. How long was the ark in operation? About one year, right? Yeah, it rained 40 days and 40 nights, but it was floating for about 1 year. But aren't you glad he did a good job building it? So whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord, right? Because every man's work is going to be tested.

I remember hearing a story about a carpenter. He worked for years for this man that was very wealthy. And he was a very skilled carpenter, and he did good work. And the millionaire, he paid him fairly, but the carpenter began to bother him. He said, you know, "This millionaire is always building this and that. He built guest cabins for his friends." And he said, "He doesn't--you know, he could have given me a Christmas bonus or something. He's got so much money." And he started resenting that he wasn't getting more. And sure enough one day the millionaire said, he said, you know, "Fred, I know you're going to be retiring." He said, "I bought this piece of property. There's one more building I want to build. It's got a lake by it." And he said, "I want to build this guest home." And Fred, he said, "Okay, last house." And so he started building.

Fred was the chief carpenter and contractor, but he did something he had never done before. He said, "You know, I've worked for him. He's gotten richer and richer." He says, "I don't have very much for retirement." He said, "This time I'm going to save a little of this for myself." And he started skimming from the expenses for this house he was building for himself. When the order called for a certain quality of wood, he bought cheap, twisted lumber. And he put the money in his bank, but he charged the millionaire for the expensive lumber. When he had to buy rock for the fireplace, he bought the cheapest brick and rock. And just all of the work, the glass in the building--all the work he said, "I'm not--I'm going

to save this." He put in the bill for the most expensive material, but he bought the cheapest and he put it in his bank. He was skimming. He was embezzling.

Finally, he got done with the building, and he walked up to the millionaire. He said, "Okay, we're all done. Your house is here." He said, you know, "Here's your keys." He said, "I want my check." And the millionaire handed him a check and he said, "And I'm giving you back the keys." He says, "That house is for you." He said, "I wanted to do this for you as a gift before you retired." And Fred thought, "Oh, I could have used the very best materials and built the very best house, but because I thought it was for someone else and I wanted to keep it--" He says, "Now I'm ending up having to live in and live with my own extortion." All of us are going to have to meet up with the materials that we send on to heaven.

You heard about the butler. He gets to heaven, and the angels bring him to his mansion. And the wealthy Duchess the butler worked for, she makes it to heaven. She's a good woman, but she's got a very small hut. And she says to her angel, "I don't understand. How come Oscar my butler, he's got this mansion up on the hill and I've got this hut?" And the angel said, "Well, just a minute. We'll check the records." And he looked in the records, he says, "Oh, evidently he sent a lot more materials ahead than you did. He was in church every week, and he was giving 50% of his income. You were giving 1% of your income." "But I gave more than him." He said, "Well, you may have given more, but you gave a smaller percentage." Like that widow that gave her last two mites. You know what I'm talking about?

So we'll be surprised how we're rewarded in the future based on our faithfulness to do God's work in this life. But we need to do it because we love the Lord, right? We don't do it to be saved.

Well, thank you very much for studying with us today, friends. And don't forget, we have a free offer. I'm hoping in the studio they'll put that on the screen because I forget what it is. There it is. It's the book called "The Ultimate Resource." And if you want, ask for offer number 728. When you call, call 866-788-3966. You can type in 866-Study-More. That's available in North America. You can also get that book for free if you go to the Amazing Facts website, and you can download "The Ultimate Resource." Tells you about just the importance of the Bible and being acquainted, especially as we're going into the new year. We want to have good rooting in the Word of God. Amen? Well, God bless you, friends. We're so thankful that you could join us today. We look forward to getting together again next week and studying the Word of God with you.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select a digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want and, most important, to share it with others.

announcer: Amazing Facts-- changed lives.

Justin: Growing up as a kid, my mother was on drugs and alcohol. Lots of fighting in the home. My mom would be abused mentally, verbally, physically. Went from California to Oregon. Spent some time in Oregon and it was just the same cycle of drugs, alcohol, violence. My mom's boyfriend would go to jail at times. She would wait until he would, you know, get out of jail and it was back to square one. The drugs and the alcohol escalated to a lot harder drugs: crystal meth, cocaine, and lots and lots of alcohol.

So I started using the alcohol to--as a medication. It was like to--the misery and the fear that I had, I wanted to drown all that misery. At times I would just grab, you know, a bottle of beer and go out into the desert and just drink until sometimes I just pass out in the desert somewhere and wake up the next morning and, you know-- and I just couldn't find rest. My stepdad had got me a motorcycle. And so I

started riding motorcycles. I'd drink a lot of beer, get on the motorcycle, ride into the desert. Do donuts and just throughout--you know, just ride on private property. People would chase me off. And I was just causing--stirring up dust and rocks and just causing chaos. And the adrenaline rush that I had was so exciting, and the feeling of it was so intense that I loved it and it--I forgot about all my problems, you know, at the moment, and I thought that material things would make me feel so good, you know.

And so I started working, started making money, had a responsibility. But as time went by, I had more money. So I would, you know, use my money that I made to buy drugs and alcohol. Got pulled over drinking and driving, ended up going to jail for a couple of days. I lost my job because I missed work for a few days. Lost my girlfriend, lost all the money that I had. So once again I was empty. No money, no drugs, no alcohol, and that was a turning point in my life.

At this time I was living with my grandfather, and as I was flipping through the channels on the satellite system I found Amazing Facts. Pastor Doug Batchelor was telling his--sharing his testimony about how he was living in a cave, and he was--he struggled the same struggles of alcohol and drugs. And I continued to read the book, "The Richest Caveman," and it really impacted my life and really related to the things he was struggling with and all the events that took place in his life. And when I started reading the Bible, Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

I recognized that I had no strength. I was weak and I was wretched, and I needed help. So I just asked the Lord. I said, "Just help me, Lord." And the Holy Spirit convicted me, and I decided to be baptized and to give my life to Jesus Christ. Few years after the Lord took the temptation of drinking and doing drugs, He gave me a beautiful wife I met at church. Now I have a beautiful baby boy, 2-year-old baby boy. Just exciting to see, you know, what God is doing in my life and in my family. I met with some friends from my local church that I was attending, and they had told me about Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism training seminar.

The AFCE to go program really inspired me and motivated me to tell young people about, you know, the same struggles that I was struggling with, to help these kids give their life to Jesus Christ, and there's nothing else that you could ask for. I'm Justin, and God used you to change my life.

Doug: What can be more irresistible than a kitten? These guys might look cute now, but some of their ancestors have grown into man eaters. [roaring] We're here in a lion park in South Africa now where we can view these creatures in relative safety, but there's a reason they're known as the king of beasts.

So, what is it that people find so enchanting and frightening about lions? Is it their speed, their claws, their sharp teeth, or all of the above? Might also be some of the stories about man-eating lions. Like in 1898, right here in Africa, they were building a bridge over the Tsavo River in Kenya, and two brother lions terrorized the construction process, eating 135 workers.

Did you know lions are mentioned in the Bible over 100 times, and you can find them all the way from Genesis to Revelation? It's usually in reference to their ferocity and how dangerous they are. Of course, Samson killed a lion with his bare hands. David killed a lion. There are man-eating lions in the Bible. The way that they punished criminals was by throwing them in the lions' den, and early Christians were even fed to lions, but, amazingly, as the Bible mentions, not all lions are to be feared.

There have been a few friendly lions in history. For example, in the 1950s, a couple, George and Margaret Westbeau, who lived up at a ranch near Seattle, Washington, adopted an abandoned lion cub. They named it Little Tyke because they felt sorry for it, but they discovered as they tried to feed her she refused to eat any meat at all. They were concerned, thinking there was no hope for this little lioness to survive, and everybody told them the same, because we know in the wild lions survive on almost an entirely meat diet.

Then someone showed the Westbeaus that verse in the Bible that talks about in heaven the animals are vegetarians, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. That encouraged them, and so they began to feed Little Tyke a purely vegetarian diet. Not only did she survive, she thrived, growing into a lion that was over 352 pounds and over 10 feet long. In fact, zoologists that examined Little Tyke when she was full-grown said they have never seen such a perfect specimen of a lioness in their life, a pure vegetarian.

You know, when we hear incredible stories about that, of Little Tyke, it reminds us that God's original plan was to make a world of total peace. He describes it here in the Bible in Isaiah chapter 11, verse 6. "The wolf also will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child will lead them."

Nothing is going to hurt and destroy in the new heavens and the new earth that God is going to create. Wouldn't you like to live in a kingdom where there's perfect peace, where there's no more death or killing or pain? God says that He wants you in that kingdom. The Lamb of God made it possible for you to have an encounter with the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Wouldn't you like to meet Him today?