

# SESSION 3:

## MAKING GOOD WORK

*'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'*  
Colossians 3:17

**Key Question:**

How might I make good work with God on my frontline?

**Aims of the Session:**

To see that there is dignity and value in the work we do on our frontlines and that this can be done with and for God.

**Core Text:**

Genesis 1-2

**Materials Required:**

Bibles

*Work is a gift God has given us so we can serve other people. So when we use the word 'work', we're not just talking about paid employment, but rather the tasks that we each do on a regular basis, which may include voluntary work, housework, childcare etc*

### Thinking Back (5 mins)

In the last session we looked at Modelling Godly Character.

- Where have you seen the fruit of the Spirit in your life on your frontline this past week? Does one person have a story to share that will encourage the group?

### Pre-Film Discussion (10 mins)

- In two or three sentences can you explain to the group the main tasks you have to do on your frontline in an average week? Try to keep it brief!





**PLAY FILM to end - approx. 9 mins**

### **Questions to discuss after the film (15 mins)**

- In the video, we saw how Keith the decorator came to view his work in a completely different light. No longer is it just about earning money for himself or even for the church; it's a way of serving God by serving other people. How does the story help you to see the significance of the tasks you do on your frontline? Think about ways that your work serves others both directly and indirectly.

**For example**, someone working in the finance department of a competitive pharmaceutical company may struggle to see how their work reflects God's purposes. However, God wants to alleviate suffering and promote health – he does this, at least partly, through medicine. In order for the company to run well and for new drugs to be developed, they need a good finance department to manage overheads efficiently and make sensible investments.

**For example**, a retired person may struggle to see how they can still 'make good work' when they are no longer in paid employment. Nevertheless, the lady who volunteers at the charity shop does good work by using her time and skills directly serving her customers and more broadly by raising funds to support the charity. Similarly, the man who visits his grandson and helps with his science project uses the knowledge he has acquired during his life so that his grandson might flourish.

- Often people can think that some roles are more important to God than others. For example being a missionary or a teacher may be valued more highly than being a business owner or a stay-at-home parent. Do we ever see attitudes like this in our own thinking? As Christians, why might we want to challenge this view?

*"The Church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables."*

Dorothy Sayers, 1942



## Bible Reflection - Genesis 1-2 (25 mins)

As this is a long passage, you will probably find it helpful to split into two smaller groups for the following questions, with one group looking at chapter 1 and the other at chapter 2. After you have looked at the questions, feed back your main points to the whole group.



The opening chapters of Genesis provide a rich picture of God who designed work to be good for the human race. We don't earn God's love by our works; rather work is a gift and opportunity to join in with what God is doing – to co-work with him to make the world a better place. It's only later in chapter 3 that work becomes frustrating, marred by the consequences of the Fall. By looking at this original purpose then, we can begin to see how our daily tasks on our frontline can be part of God's good purposes for the world.

- Having made such an impressive world, what is the responsibility that God gives to human beings (see particularly chapter 1:27-28 and chapter 2:15)? To what extent are you surprised by how much responsibility he gives us?
- In our work on our frontline, we can reflect some of the ways that God works in creation, for example by:
  - Bringing order
  - Bringing joy
  - Releasing potential
  - Making provision
  - Bringing beauty
- Which of the characteristics above do you most easily see in your own tasks?
- How might seeing your individual work as part of God's bigger plans for the world affect the way that you go about your tasks on your frontline?
- God reviewed his work and said that it was good (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25). What does 'good work' look like on your frontline? When are you ever tempted to give something other than your best?



## Praying Forwards (10 mins - in pairs)

- It's often easy to turn to God in times of crisis, but how might we develop a rhythm of prayer that invites God to work with us in our day-to-day tasks so that we are always working in his strength?
- Pray for an increased sense that God is with you on your frontline. Pray for eyes to see how your everyday tasks matter and play a part in God's big plans for the world.

*'Teach me, my God and King,  
in all things Thee to see,  
And what I do in anything  
To do it as for Thee.'*  
George Herbert, from the Elixir

## Takeaway Action

Take a minute at the end of each day to jot down one example of good work on your frontline this week to praise God for:

Monday

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Tuesday

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Wednesday

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Thursday

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Friday

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Saturday

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Sunday

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*You may find it helpful to remember some of the characteristics of good work you talked about together:*

- Bringing Order
- Making Provision
- Bringing Joy
- Bringing Beauty
- Releasing Potential





# FRUITFULNESS ON THE FRONTLINE.

## SESSION TRANSCRIPTS



# SESSION 3: MAKING GOOD WORK

One of the things I've had to do recently is to paint two of my kids' rooms, Vibrant Touch of Teal in one room and Cobalt Blue in the other. You might think them rather bright, I couldn't possibly comment. I'm just incredibly relieved they actually like them.

We all have things to do don't we? But why do they matter to God?

We all have things to do, whether we're employed or unemployed, whether we're students or retired, whether our frontline is our sports club or a charity shop. There are spaces to tidy, calls to make, as well as bricks to lay, goods to sell, machines to fix, reports to write.

Do you think any of this is actually important to God? Do you think any of that could somehow be part of his glorious universe-transforming purposes in time and eternity?

Get real.

But the Bible is crystal clear.

Here's Paul, writing to the Christians in Colosse and in chapter, 3 he says this to slaves:

"Whatever you do, whatever you do, whatever you do... whatever you do..."

What precisely has he left out?

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord. Not for human masters, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Now the Lord God the King of the universe would hardly ask us to do whatever we do with 'all our heart' unless it were of some significance to him – even if lots of the things we do day by day don't feel very significant to us.

But why is "whatever we do" significant?

Well, Paul gives us a reason in this verse. It's important because we are doing it for God: do whatever you do as working for the Lord. Whether we have a boss or not, whether we are paid or not it is the Lord Christ we are serving, which is a privilege.

How do we do things for someone we love? Enthusiastically, carefully, as well as we can.

And how might we do things for God whom we love?

Enthusiastically, carefully, as well as we can but also worshipfully, gratefully, humbly, prayerfully.

So we do whatever we do for God and for his glory. That's our motivation.

I wonder what's God's purpose in this? Why are these tasks important to Him?



How do all these little things that we do, fit in with His big purposes in time and eternity?

Keith is a decorator in Bolton, he's been self-employed for 25 years, changing rooms, changing houses. For the first ten years of his life I don't suppose Keith would say that he really involved God in his work much at all. He was just doing it to earn the money.

Then, one day he had a car crash – the car completely flipped over. That caused Keith to re-evaluate his relationship with God. From then on he had two aims: to earn money and to give money away to his church and to charities. And it was like that for twelve or thirteen years.

Then one day after a talk in church a light bulb went on in his head and he suddenly realised that when he's decorating he's helping other people lead the lives they need to lead.

He's helping a woman with a sick husband because she simply can't do the decorating.

He's helping an older man who can't do the DIY any more.

He's helping a family with a disabled child make the kind a home that really works for them. He's serving God by serving people. He's not really doing anything very different in the actual work but it totally changed his mindset.

As he said to me:

"I'm not working for money anymore. I'm not working to give money away to the church. I'm doing it for God. That's my service. And it's totally transformed my life."

Work is service to God. Work is a gift God has given us so we can serve other people – whether we're paid or we aren't paid.

You stack shelves with the label facing forwards so the right product is clearly seen – thank you; you empty our rubbish bins – rather tidily – so that we don't become a fast-food restaurant for the local foxes – thank you; you make a computer that's easy to use – thank you, thank you, thank you; you craft a guitar that sounds wondrous – thank you Mr Fender.

Every task we do has the potential to make other peoples' lives a little bit better or a lot better. And that's one of its primary purposes.

And we see the same thing in God's work of creation.

Why does God create Adam on the sixth day and not on the first? Why on day six and not on day one?

Answer: because if God had created Adam on day one it would have been dark and there would have been nowhere to stand.

The point is that by the time God creates Adam, he's got everything ready for him. There is air to breathe, water to drink, delicious nutritious food to eat, animals to look after, purposeful work to be done and the whole place is just gorgeous. What has God done?

God, who is love, has created a context for human flourishing. That was the big project.

God's work brings order, provision, joy, beauty. God's work creates a context for human flourishing just



