



Course 1, Session 1 Student Notes: Work Is Worship

The Theology of Vocation

Big Idea: Work is not a result of the Fall. It is part of God's original "very good" design, and your business can be an altar.

How to use these notes. These are yours to study on your own, before or after the session. Read each section slowly. Under every principle there is a **Notes** space to write what stands out to you, and a **Reflect** question to answer honestly in writing. Keep your Bible nearby. Take about 30 minutes, and end in prayer. Bring your notes and questions to the group.

Open in Prayer

Before you begin, pray this simple prayer, or your own: "Father, as I study, reframe how I see my work. Show me that what I build with my hands can be worship to You. Open my eyes to Your design. Amen."

The Scripture for This Session

Read these slowly, out loud if you can:

- **Genesis 2:15**, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."
- **Colossians 3:23**, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."
- **Exodus 31:1 to 5** (Bezalel, whom we study below).

Reflect: Before this session, how have you thought about the connection between your faith and your daily work? Be honest.

The Big Picture

Most of us were handed a quiet lie somewhere along the way. The lie says faith and work live in two separate rooms. God gets Sunday. Money gets Monday. Church is sacred, business is secular, and the two never meet. This session tears that wall down, because Scripture never built it.

From the very first pages of the Bible, work is God's idea. He is a worker, He made a world, and He made us in His image to build and cultivate and create. Your business, your trade, your daily labor is not a distraction from your walk with God. Done rightly, it is part of it. Over this session we will look at four truths that together form the foundation for everything else in this Academy. Read each one, write your notes, and answer the reflection.

Principle 1: Work Came Before the Fall. It Is a Gift, Not a Punishment.

Open to the very beginning. In Genesis 2:15, God places the man in the garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it.” Read that slowly. God placed the man in paradise, and the first thing He gave him in paradise was work. Not rest from work. Work itself. This is before any sin, before the Fall, before anything went wrong.

So here is the truth that should change your Monday morning: your labor is not the curse. The curse, which comes later in Genesis 3, made work hard, full of thorns and sweat and frustration. But work itself was a gift, handed to us inside a perfect world while everything was still “very good.” When you feel that work is beneath you, or merely a way to pay bills, remember that God gave work as a blessing, not a sentence.

Reflect: Where have you been treating your work as a burden to escape rather than a gift to steward? What would change if you believed it was a gift?

Notes:

Principle 2: The Creation Mandate Is Still in Force. You Are a Sub-Creator.

In Genesis 1:28, God blesses humanity and tells them to be fruitful, fill the earth, and “subdue it,” to cultivate and develop what He made. We call this the creation mandate, and it has never been canceled. It is still your assignment today.

This means something powerful for anyone who builds. When you start a business, solve a problem, make a product, or bring order out of chaos, you are doing the very thing you were made to do. You are a sub-creator, made in the image of a Creator. The entrepreneur who builds something useful and good is echoing, in a small way, the God who spoke a world into being. Your work is not random activity. It is you fulfilling an ancient, still-active calling.

Reflect: In what specific way does your work "cultivate and build"? Name the good you bring into the world through it.

Notes:

Principle 3: Skill and Excellence Are Spiritual.

Here is one of the most surprising facts in the Bible. The very first person Scripture describes as “filled with the Spirit of God” was not a preacher or a prophet. He was a craftsman. In Exodus 31, when God needed the tabernacle built, He called a skilled worker named Bezalel and filled him “with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” (Exodus 31:3).

Sit on that. God anointed craftsmanship, design, and skilled labor as holy long before He anointed a single sermon. That means the skill in your own hands, your ability to sell, to code, to cook, to build, to lead, to create, is a spiritual gift, not a worldly distraction. And it means excellence matters to God. The tabernacle was to be beautiful and well made. Mediocre work was never the plan. Doing your work with genuine excellence is not vanity. It is faithfulness with the gift God gave you.

Reflect: What skill has God put in your hands that you have treated as ordinary? Where have you settled for "good enough" instead of the excellence He may be calling you to?

Notes:

Principle 4: “Secular” and “Sacred” Is a False Divide. Your Work Can Be Worship.

Paul writes in Colossians 3:23, “whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Underline “whatsoever.” Not just preaching or ministry. Whatever. The spreadsheet. The sales call. The customer you serve at the end of a long day. Do it as if Jesus Himself placed the order.

When you work like that, the wall between sacred and secular simply disappears. There is no such thing as secular work done by a believer, there is only worshipful work and wasted work. The same task, done two ways. A plumber who fixes a pipe with excellence and honesty, treating the customer with dignity, is worshipping just as truly as someone singing on Sunday. Your desk can be an altar. Your shop can be a sanctuary. Not because you tape a Bible verse to the wall, but because you do the work with skill, integrity, and love, offered up to God.

Reflect: What would honestly change about your next work day if you truly believed your business was an altar and your work was worship?

Notes:

The Story: Bezalel, the First Man Filled With the Spirit (Exodus 31:1 to 11)

Read the passage. When God decided to build the tabernacle, the place where heaven would meet earth, He did not first call a priest. He called a craftsman named Bezalel, filled him with the Spirit for skilled work, and paired him with another craftsman, Oholiab, giving “all that are wise hearted” the ability to make what He commanded.

Notice four things in this story, and they are the four principles above, lived out. God gave the skill. God expected excellence. God worked through a team, not a lone hero. And the building itself was the act of worship, not a step toward worship somewhere else. These men glorified God by working with their hands, beautifully and faithfully.

Reflect: If God filled a craftsman with His Spirit for skilled work, what does that say about the work of your hands? Who is the “Oholiab,” the skilled partner, you need beside you, and have you asked them yet?

Notes:

Put It Into Practice

1. Write your Kingdom Purpose Statement. In one sentence, finish this: “Through my work, I serve God by ___ for ___.” The first blank is the value you create. The second is the people you serve. Messy and honest beats polished and vague.

2. This week’s assignment. Take one task you usually dread and do it deliberately “as unto the Lord,” with full attention and excellence, as if Jesus placed the order. Then write one sentence about what changed in you when you did.

The task I will do as worship this week:

What changed when I did:

Go Deeper (Optional)

- **Read:** *Every Good Endeavor* by Timothy Keller.

- **Listen:** the *Faith Driven Entrepreneur* podcast, any episode on calling.
 - **Study:** Genesis 1:26 to 28; Genesis 2:15; Exodus 31:1 to 11; Colossians 3:22 to 24.
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Close in Prayer

“Father, thank You that work was Your idea and Your gift. Thank You that the skill in my hands is from You, and that my labor, offered to You, can be worship. Help me this week to do even the small things with excellence and love, as unto You, so that my work becomes an altar where You are glorified. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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