

You were made for good work

A curriculum for men rehabilitating from prison and addiction

Contents

Lesson 1: Does God Care If I Have a Job?	2
Lesson 2: Do I have a calling?	5
Lesson 3: The Challenges of Job Searching with a Criminal Record	8
Lesson 4: Dealing with Boredom at Work	11
Lesson 5: Dealing with Bosses	13
Lesson 6: Resolving Conflict with Coworkers	15
Lesson 7: Money and God’s Provision	17

This curriculum was written for men rehabilitating from drug addiction and prison. More than any other population, these men deserve to know that God cares deeply about them and what they make of their lives. Over seven lessons, rehabilitating men will learn what God thinks of their work, how they can work well with others according to biblical principles, and how to reenter the workforce amidst the challenges of a fallen world. You are free to use this curriculum individually or in groups, or adapt it for different settings.

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Lesson 1: Does God Care If I Have a Job?

This class will help you find a job. But it's not just about finding a job. This class will also help you find the meaning and purpose behind a job, whatever that job may be.

Many people think of work as a curse, something terrible they have to do to make money. They may even ask God to save them from work. The great poet Langston Hughes once wrote, "I wish the rent was heaven sent."

Even though many of us feel this way, a curse was not God's original intention for work. God meant work to be fun and meaningful for people. God gave people important work to do, work that would make them feel productive and happy. Even though the world is polluted with sin, God's intention for work hasn't changed. In fact, God sent Jesus into the world to reclaim joy and purpose for his people. You may not think of joy or purpose when you think of work. This class will help change that.

Over the next few weeks we will talk about many problems people have with finding a job and keeping it. We will search the Bible for real life solutions. We will talk together about your past experiences with work, and your hopes for the future.

Discussion Question: What was the best job you ever had? What did you like about it?

First we have to begin at the beginning, by asking the question: *Does God care if I have a job?*

Work is very important to God. This is because God himself is a worker. In Genesis 1 God creates everything piece by piece. God made the earth when there wasn't an earth before, just like a construction crew turns a vacant lot into a building people can use. God "made the dome" of the sky (Genesis 1:7) and set the lights of the sun and moon there (Genesis 1:17), like a roofer and an electrician on a gigantic scale. And of course, everything that God created was good.

God's favorite piece of work was human beings. God created people to be like him, in his image. And just like God starts out the Bible as a worker, God created people to be workers too.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
(Genesis 1:26-27)

God creates people with a job description in mind: ruling over his creation. In fact, the first time God talks to people it's to give them instructions about their job.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”
(Genesis 1:28)

God tells people to do two things with his creation: rule over it and make something out of it. He wants people to take care of the world and also to make something of it. Just like God created everything out of nothing, God expects humans to create homes, buildings, and businesses out of the world he gave them.

Discussion Question: What do you think about these two Bible passages? Do they have anything to do with you today?

Because God created important work for people to do, working makes you feel important. Work makes you feel fully human. Work increases your self-respect and connects you with God who is a worker. If you feel good after you build something or fix something or clean something, it's because it's in your DNA to work. God made you that way.

But work isn't always fun or fulfilling. In the real world it can be hard to find a job, exhausting to do the job you have, and difficult to make ends meet with the money you get. That's because the world isn't perfect like God created it. Sin in people and in society creates problems.

When God created the world he also created limits. In Genesis 1:31-2:2 God put a limit on himself, working for only 6 days and resting on the 7th. God also gave limits to people. When God gave Adam the job description of farmer (Genesis 2:15), God also set a limit. “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.” (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam and Eve refused to follow God's limits, so work became more difficult for them. Adam's farming work, which had once made him a partner with God, became toil.

And to the man he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”
(Genesis 3:17-19)

If your work makes you sweat, or if it's hard to put bread on the table, it's because of this curse. Work itself isn't cursed. But the ground is cursed because of Adam's sin, and that makes work harder and less fulfilling.

Discussion Question: What is the hardest thing about working or finding a job?

In the fallen world we live in, finding a job, holding a job, and making ends meet can be tough. But Jesus offers hope. God sent Jesus to earth to cancel curses.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
(Galatians 3:13-14)

Jesus took on the curse of sin so that every person who comes to faith also receives “the promise of the Spirit”. That’s a big deal. But it’s not the only thing God wants to do through Jesus. God also wants you to be free from failure. God wants you to be free from discipline by the law. And God wants you to be free from poverty. God promises to “fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

Discussion Question: What would you like to be different in your life?

But God isn’t going to do this all on his own. Just like God made farming a joint effort between himself and people, God asks people to help with his plan for redemption. If work is going to be more fun, more satisfying, and more godly, you have to help make that happen. There are many biblical principles in this class. By learning these principles, you will learn how you can work with God to redeem work itself.

Jesus has high hopes for his followers.

“You are the light of the world. A city build on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:14)

Because you believe in Jesus, you carry God’s light with you everywhere you go. You can be part of God’s plan to fix the world of work. And God is ready to go out into the work world with you.

Discussion Question: What do you think, can work be redeemed for you? What would that look like?

Lesson 2: Do I have a calling?

Did you ever hear someone talk about his job as a calling?

When people use the word calling, they usually mean that God pointed them to a particular career. Mostly this is something that pastors say. Or you sometimes hear of doctors or artists talk about being called to their work. But not often. For most people, a job is a job.

According to the Bible, there is more than one way to be called. Everyone's first and most important calling is to belong to Christ. Everyone is called to this. No matter who you are or what you do, you're included.

Including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ
(Romans 1:6)

Discussion Question: What did it feel like when God called you to believe in Jesus? Did you ever feel the same way about a job?

Some people in the Bible got called to specific jobs. God called Moses to help free the Hebrew people from slavery.

God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ... Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey... So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."
(Exodus 3:4,7-8,10)

God called Moses to this job, which was part political, part military, and part spiritual.

This type of direct calling is exciting but rare, even in the Bible. Most heroes in the Bible didn't hear directly from God what they were supposed to do. Instead, they just did whatever work was in front of them. Some very faithful people in the Bible took care of other people's animals (Genesis 29:15). One of the saints waited tables (Acts 6:2-5), and another made tents for a living (Acts 18:3).

Discussion Question: What was the last job you had? Did you feel like your work was important to God?

God does not have a preference for any particular type of work, as long as it's an honest living. But he does care that everyone who can work should find productive work to do.

Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.
(2 Thessalonians 3:10-13)

It doesn't matter what job you do. You can be a godly stone cutter.

The Lord spoke to Moses: See I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with divine spirit, with ability, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft.
(Exodus 31:1-5)

Bezalel was called to cut stones and carve wood for God's purposes. In the Bible, there is not a competition between the work of ministry and secular work. Any job that faithful people do is important to God.

Discussion Question: Does anything surprise you from these two Bible passages?

If you're wondering what type of job to look for, here are three tips from the Bible on choosing a profession:

1) Pay attention to your unique gifts.

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us; prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.
(Romans 12:6-8)

2) Pay attention to the needs around you.

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.
(Matthew 25:35-36).

This includes the needs of your family. The Bible makes a special point that you should seek a job that provides for your family.

And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
(1 Timothy 5:8)

3) Pay particular attention to any job that gives you joy.

He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.
(Psalm 145:19)

Discussion Question: How did you find your last job?

Discussion Question: What do you think would be the perfect job for you?

Lesson 3: The Challenges of Job Searching with a Criminal Record

Discussion Question: What scares you most about looking for a job?

Looking for work when you have a criminal record has special challenges. Many employers are afraid to hire someone with a record. For Christians, this is extra frustrating. On one hand, you are a new creation. Any sins from your past were wiped away by Jesus' sacrifice (2 Corinthians 5:17). At the same time, you have a paper trail that follows you around. People are making hiring decisions based on this past information. How can you ensure you get a fair hearing? Should you be upfront about your history? Or hide it as best you can? This is an ethical dilemma.

An ethical dilemma is when you have two options that contradict each other, and you don't know what you should do. An ethical dilemma is different from a commandment. A commandment is a rule that you either follow or disobey. Exodus 20:16 gives a commandment not to lie. You can follow the commandment or you can disobey it, but at least you know what God is asking. An ethical dilemma, on the other hand, is when you don't know exactly what you should do. Sometimes the Bible makes good points on both sides. Like when Jesus gives instructions to his followers on how they should go about doing his work in the world.

“See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

(Matthew 10:16)

There seems to be a contradiction between being wise and being innocent. How can you be both wise and innocent at the same time? In your situation, it seems wise to withhold any information about a criminal past, since it often leads to discrimination. On the other hand, it seems innocent to be upfront about your past and hope for the best. Which is right?

That's an ethical dilemma. To work through ethical dilemmas, you can remember three Cs: Commandments, Consequences, and Character.

Commandments: What commandments apply to this dilemma?

Consequences: What are the consequences of each course of action?

Character: How does each action reflect on the type of person I want to be?

Let's use the three Cs to work through this ethical dilemma: What do you say to a potential employer about your criminal past? And when do you say it?

First think of any commandments that relate to this situation. Many Bible verses stress telling the truth, such as Leviticus 19:11 which says “You shall not lie to one another.” However, when

truth telling conflicts with doing something else that is right, the commandment doesn't apply. Many Bible heroes do the right thing by misleading someone else, like the Hebrew midwives who lie to save baby boys (Exodus 1:15-21), or Moses who tells Pharaoh the Hebrews are only going into the desert for a brief festival (Exodus 5:1), or David who lies several times to preserve his own life (1 Samuel 21:1-3, 12-15). To sum up, you're commanded to tell the truth, but with exceptions to do good for yourself and others.

Next think of the consequences of any action. If you reveal on a resume that you have a criminal record, you might not get an interview. However, if the interviewer asks you about past convictions and you don't fess up, you'll face bigger problems when a background check comes in.

Lastly, think about how your actions might reflect on your character. What type of person do you want to be? How do you want others to see you?

Discussion Question: How do you think commandments, consequences, and character apply to talking about your criminal record on your resume or in an interview?

Job search experts give these tips for being both wise and innocent when writing resumes and interviewing for jobs.

1. Don't reference your criminal background on a resume. The purpose of a resume is to get you a job interview. Criminal history is best revealed in an interview, when you can put a positive spin on what you've learned from your experience.¹
2. If a job application asks about a conviction record, you can't lie. But you can choose to explain yourself later. In the section that asks you for details on past convictions, you can write "will explain in interview."²
3. If you did any work or education in prison, you can put this on your resume. Use the name of the facility as the employer, and write any key skills you learned. Or, if your experiences in prison are unrelated to the job you're applying for, you can leave them off your resume.³
4. When you explain your criminal record in an interview, be brief and focus on the positive: what you learned from your experience and how it will make you a good fit for the job.

¹ "Resume Dilemma: Criminal Record" by Kim Isaacs, Monster Resume Expert. <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/resume-dilemma-criminal-record>

² "Resume Dilemma: Criminal Record" by Kim Isaacs, Monster Resume Expert. <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/resume-dilemma-criminal-record>

³ "Resume Dilemma: Criminal Record" by Kim Isaacs, Monster Resume Expert. <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/resume-dilemma-criminal-record>

5. You can use a 3-part model for explaining your past, one that shows creation, fall, and redemption. Example: The real me is a good man and a hard worker. I made some mistakes, but I paid for them and I learned from that experience. Right now I'm the best person for this job because nobody will work harder than me.

Discussion Question: What did you learn from prison or addiction? How are you different today from five years ago?

Discussion Question: What did you learn from your past experience that makes you the best person for a job?

Lesson 4: Dealing with Boredom at Work

Discussion Question: Have you ever had a boring job?

Even if you have a job and feel blessed to have one, work can be boring. Many people feel bored in their jobs. If your work feels routine or mindless, or if you feel like it lacks meaning, you'll likely feel bored. That doesn't mean you should quit or do your job poorly. Here are some ways to counteract boredom at work.

I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.
(Ecclesiastes 3:12-13)

If your work is repetitive, you're likely to get bored after a while. The writer of Ecclesiastes describes work as "toil" for this very reason. But he also says that it's God's gift to enjoy this toil. How does God give that gift? How do we get it?

One clue comes from Brother Lawrence, a seventeenth century monk. In his book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence describes how he learned to feel God's presence. While running errands or doing menial work in the monastery kitchen, Brother Lawrence thought about God and how much God loved him. When his superiors asked him why he was so happy, Brother Lawrence explained that thinking about God made him feel like God was present in his work. Brother Lawrence came to love his work, because he felt like it was something he and God were doing together.

If your work is repetitive, ask God to be with you in your work. When you're doing a repetitive task, think about God and what he's like. See if this changes your experience of your work.

Discussion Question: What task do you do over and over? How do you feel when you're doing it?

Sometimes boredom comes from the idea that your work isn't meaningful. There are several people in the Bible who probably felt like this. Joseph is one of them. He dreamed of achieving greatness, but he ended up spending years in slavery and then in prison. Only the passage of time made him see that his previous boredom was necessary.

And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

(Genesis 45:5-8)

Discussion Question: What do you think Joseph was trying to tell his brothers in this passage?

Your work may have a hidden meaning that you can't see now. Maybe it will be revealed with time. Or maybe you can ask your family or friends if they have any ideas about the meaning of your work. Or ask God to show you the meaning. This could short-circuit boredom with work.

Lastly, if your work is really unenjoyable, let yourself cry out to God about your boredom. The psalmist writes "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (Psalm 13:1) If you are really unhappy at your job, share it with God in prayer.

Discussion Question: How have you dealt with boredom in the past? How do you plan on dealing with boredom in the future?

Lesson 5: Dealing with Bosses

Discussion question: What kind of bosses did you have in the past? How did you feel about them? How did you relate to them?

Most everyone who works has a boss. But very few people know that dealing with bosses is a skill. Even fewer people know that you can get better at it by studying the Bible.

One difficult lesson from scripture is that you have to respect your boss and work for him diligently, whether or not he or she is a good boss.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free.
(Ephesians 6:5-8)

This verse encourages slaves to obey their masters and do good work, as if they were serving God and not people. The work of slaves was probably hard and uninteresting. But St. Paul tells them to do it with focus and enthusiasm.

Working diligently and happily for your boss, whether he or she is good or bad, helps you in the end. The verse from Ephesians says that if you work as if you're serving God, you "will receive the same again from the Lord." In other words, there are rewards for working well. Even if your boss doesn't plan on rewarding you, there will be a reward from God for your good work.

What's more, God has placed certain people in power for a reason, even if we don't know the reason. You should not retaliate against a bad boss because "it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another" (Psalm 75:7). David, for example, respected Saul as King over him, even when Saul acted dishonorably. Saul was out to get David, but David refused to take revenge, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to raise my hand against him; for he is the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel 24:6).

If you have a boss that makes work difficult, you should still act in a way that brings balance to your workplace, not instability. That means respecting people in power, even if they're bad bosses.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all goodness and dignity.
(1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Discussion Question: Why does this Bible passage say to give thanks for everybody in power? What is the result of praying for your boss?

Discussion Question: The result of getting along with a boss is a peaceful life, with goodness and dignity. What does a peaceful life look like?

Lesson 6: Resolving Conflict with Coworkers

Discussion Question: Have you ever had a fight with someone you worked with? What happened in the end?

The most common problem workers face is conflict with coworkers. You spend more time with your coworkers than you do with any other people. Sometimes you come from different backgrounds with different understandings of what behavior is okay. Or maybe you're in competition for a position. Whatever the reason, conflict with coworkers makes work miserable. And if you have a criminal record, a conflict with a coworker increases your chances of getting fired.

Jesus understood that conflicts happen. He laid out a model for conflict resolution when he told his disciples how they should relate to each other.

“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
(Matthew 18:15-17)

You can take several lessons from this verse for resolving conflicts with coworkers:

- Address the problem as soon as possible with the other person, face to face.
- Describe the problem without name-calling or self-justification.
- Listen to the other person's side of the story. Listening is so important that Jesus mentions it three times in this passage.
- If meeting one-on-one doesn't bring a solution, ask mutual friends or a direct supervisor to step in.

Discussion Question: Imagine that a coworker took one of your tools home without asking, and you couldn't do your job. What do you do? Imagine you are talking to that person the next day. What do you say?

Discussion Question: Imagine that one of your coworkers told you another coworker was talking about you behind your back. What do you do?

Jesus had to remind his followers to stay non-violent when they were threatened.

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.
(Luke 22:47-51)

Even the people following Jesus got angry when threatened. They wanted to respond to violence with violence. But Jesus said violence is never a good idea. The version of this story in the Gospel of Matthew adds this explanation.

Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”
(Matthew 26:52)

Violence isn't a way to solve problems; it will only get you into more trouble. You often hear people say: “Live by the sword, die by the sword.” This is what Jesus tells his disciples. If you use violence or threats of violence, there will be a negative consequence.

Discussion Question: Jesus gives a lot of advice about solving conflicts. Which tip will you try next time you're in a fight with a coworker?

Discussion Question: What part of Jesus' advice is hardest to follow?

Lesson 7: Money and God's Provision

Discussion Question: When you were growing up, how did your family talk about money? Was it a scary subject? Or something you worried about constantly?

God's original plan was for everyone to have enough. God gave people the whole earth with all its resources so that everybody could flourish.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."

(Genesis 1:28-29)

But in a fallen world, many people don't have enough resources. Sometimes poverty is caused by individual sin, as in the proverb: "A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich" (Proverbs 10:4). More often, however, poverty results from sins of society. The Bible recognizes that racism and other evil forces make it difficult for people at the bottom to get ahead.

The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.

(Proverbs 13:23)

Jesus yelled at powerful people who benefited from a system where other people didn't have enough.

As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

(Mark 12:38-40)

The powerful people that Jesus condemned took property away from poor people and spent their money on fancy meals and clothes. This was true in Jesus' time and sadly it is still true today.

Discussion Question: Do you see your life story in any of these Bible verses?

The good news is that Jesus came to change the order of things on earth and eventually make all things new.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.
(Colossians 1:19-20)

God is working to reconcile all things, including your personal finances. As with all of his projects, God wants you to work with him.

Three biblical attitudes will help you have a healthy view of money and make good financial decisions. These attitudes are: stewardship, gratitude, and contentment.

The biblical attitude of **stewardship** reminds us that God owns everything, and it is only our job to take care of it for a time.

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.
Psalm 24:1

You may own property or have money, and you certainly have a right to use them. But in the end, everything you own belongs to God. God created everything in the world and asked humans to rule over it. That doesn't mean people get to take everything away from God. Just the opposite. People have to take care of everything for God. That means you have a responsibility to use your time and your money wisely. One day God will ask you to give an explanation of what you did with everything he gave you.

“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents [about \$6,000,000], to another two, to another one, each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not

scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest.”
(Matthew 25:14-27)

Jesus told this story to show that God expects you to do something with what you’ve been given.

Discussion Question: What has God given you so far? What do you think he would like you to do with it?

The biblical practice of **gratitude** helps you break the bad habit of spending money on things you don’t need. Gratitude means thanking God for everything you get, whether it’s a lot or a little.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

When you’re starting to practice gratitude, it helps to remember key times to thank God for what you have. Thank God before you eat a meal, every time you get a paycheck, after you reach a savings goal or when you buy something that makes your life better.

The last biblical attitude that helps you reshape your relationship with money is **contentment**. Contentment means enjoying what you have right now.

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”
(Hebrews 13:5)

Discussion Question: What do you enjoy most in life? Is it exercise, a good meal, hanging with friends, or something else?

Whatever makes you happy, make sure you do it regularly and really enjoy it. If you are content in the present moment you won’t be thinking of other stuff you need to buy to make you happy.

If you have serious financial problems, please pray about them. God promises to work with people who pray.

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”
(Matthew 7:7-9)

God does not promise that Christians will escape every effect of the fallen world. Money troubles are real and frustrating. God does promise to provide for the things you absolutely need, and to make good things come from a bad situation.

And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:19)

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

(Romans 12:28)

Discussion Question: What are the biggest challenges in your finances? What do you want God to change?

Discussion Question: What would you call 'a good life'? What do you need for your life to be good?