

FOUNDATIONS FOR  
LAITY RENEWAL

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*Transforming Daily Life*

719 Earl Garrett Street  
Kerrville, TX 78028

Three Sermon Outlines on

*Work and Faith*

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*Seeing the Good Side of Work*

Rob Carmack

SERMON NOTES

*The  
High Calling  
of Our  
Daily Work*

*Making a real living connects you to a bigger picture,  
a grand design, an abundant life.*

*Each of us has only a small part to play, but what a part!  
It's the high calling of our daily work.*

– Howard Butt, Jr., of Laity Lodge  
TheHighCalling.org

# Seeing the Good Side of Work

## Introduction to the sermon series on *Seeing the Good Side of Work*

Many people feel that their jobs are tedious and dull. They have no real sense of purpose or higher value as it relates to their daily work. They sit in front of their computer monitors for hours on end, they wait until Friday mercifully arrives, and they dread Monday morning when they will have to return to their pointless existences.

This is not the way life was meant to be. We do not have to live this way. We were created for work, not as a punishment, but as a way to tap into our God-given nature. We work because it gives us the opportunity to engage something bigger than ourselves. Work is good, and we were meant to work with enthusiasm and vision.

Rob Carmack

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# Sermon 1: Seeing the Good Side of Work

## Colossians 3:23-24

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

**Theological Point:** Work is not meant to be something that we dread. Rather, our work can be good and redemptive. Our work can be a form of worship.

### **Introduction: I Hate My Job.**

**A. Has My Work Become Something That I Dread Rather Than Something I Love?**

**B. What Are My Skills/Strengths/Sources of Joy at Work?  
How Can I Invoke More of These Things in My Daily Routine?**

**C. How Can I Change My Outlook on Work?**

### **Conclusion: “With All Your Heart”**

**Introduction:** “Sometimes I fantasize about working at a bookstore,” I said to my friend over coffee. We were two youth ministers sharing a moment of reprieve from our otherwise hectic schedules of summer student ministry. I had returned from two weeks of youth camp only days earlier and was less than a week away from leaving again, this time for a high school mission trip to Mississippi. In the summertime, youth ministry is not merely a job; it is an all-consuming lifestyle.

“Not me,” he said. “I think I would work at a sporting goods store.” He looked up as if imagining a better world in which he had chosen to work in retail rather than in youth ministry. We were two guys in the midst of a long summer of work, and we were both exhausted.

For the most part, I really enjoyed being a youth minister. It was fulfilling work. There were times, though, that I wished for a simpler job with less emotional strain.

No matter what our jobs are, there will undoubtedly be times in which we long for something different. We feel our work is tedious and without lasting value. No matter how much we accomplish, there is always more to be done. Like Sisyphus pushing his cursed boulder up the hill, we continue to strain against our vocational fate.

Many people hate their jobs. They long for Friday afternoon like a high school student longs for graduation day. We think of our work as something we must do in order to get paid so we can afford the house, the car, the tuition, the groceries, and the vacation that we desperately need. Work, for so many of us, is nothing more than a necessary evil.

It doesn't have to be this way.

In the Scriptures, we are given a higher view of work. In the book of Genesis, after God has created all things and has breathed life into the first man, something very interesting happens: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Gen. 2:15). Keep in mind that this is a full chapter before sin enters the picture. No bad choices have been made, and no bad fruit has been eaten. This is still the ideal world in which God has created the man to live. And what does God tell the man to do? Sit around and eat all day, enjoying the benefits of nudity? Stroll through the vast forestry, smelling various flowers because they are pretty?

No. The man is given a job. In the most ideal setting we will ever see in Scripture, the first human being is given a job to do. He is tasked with working and taking care of the world’s first garden.

Contrary to some teachings, work is not a curse or a punishment. As a result of the Fall, it can certainly feel this way, but the original concept of work was actually a very good thing.

So, how do we engage this reality? If work is supposed to be good, why do so many of us hate it?

For the rest of our time, let us consider three important questions that can help us on our journey to learning to love our work . . .

**A. Has My Work Become Something That I Dread Rather Than Something I Love?** This first question is a gauge on our personal attitudes. To adopt a renewed paradigm, we must first acknowledge our current outlook. So, let us all take stock of our own situations: *Do I hate my job? Do I dread going to the office on Monday morning?* If so, what exactly do I hate about it? What causes my anxiety? Understanding the answers to these questions can point us toward a renewed perspective.

It is helpful to understand that the Bible confronts this perspective. In the book of Colossians, the writer Paul has this to say: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Col. 3:23-24).

When we work, says Paul, we are not merely working to earn a paycheck or trying to fill some meaningless quota. Rather, we are working for God himself. This is not merely for pastors and missionaries. This is a truth for bankers, lawyers, doctors, stockbrokers, construction workers, Starbucks baristas, and people who work for paper companies. Whatever work we happen to do, we are to do it with the mentality that we are working for Christ Jesus. This single idea should serve as a direct confrontation for our own perspective on our jobs.

**B. What Are My Skills/Strengths/Sources of Joy at Work? How Can I Invoke More of These Things in My Daily Routine?** Sometimes we hate our jobs because we lack the proper perspective on our work. Sometimes we hate our jobs because we feel our skills and knowledge are being wasted. We may spend eight to ten hours a day at our jobs, but we are only invoking our gifts for a fraction of that time.

For those of us who struggle in this way, I would recommend an intentional journey of self-discovery and restructuring of your daily routine, at least as much as it is in your power to do so. There are great books that can guide you and help you understand your own unique strengths (example: *StrengthsFinder 2.0* by Tom Rath and *The Truth About You: Your Secret To Success* by Marcus Buckingham). Don't waste your time by allowing God's design for you to go unused.

**C. How Can I Change My Outlook on Work?** Whatever our situations or daily routines happen to be, we cannot go through life hating our work. There is a deeply spiritual dimension to our work, and we must appreciate the value of that. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote about the importance of work:

Prayer should not be hindered by work, but neither should work be hindered by prayer. Just as it was God's will that man should work six days and rest and make holy day in His presence on the seventh, so it is also God's will that every day should be marked for the Christian by both prayer and work. Prayer is entitled to its time. But the bulk of the day belongs to work. And only where each receives its own specific due will it become clear that both belong inseparably together (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, Touchstone, 69-70).

Life is lived in an intentional rhythm of work and prayer. Both are important pieces to the spiritual whole. We must do whatever we need to improve our outlook. If this means seeing a counselor, then this is what we must do. If this means seeking a job at a company with a more healthy work environment, we must do that.

Work can be a beautiful, engaging act of worship. It is a way to devote our daily routines to God.

**Conclusion: "With All Your Heart."** To return to the words of Paul, we are called to do any and all of our work with all our hearts, because it is God we are serving. Ultimately, my employer is not the guy in the big office who signs my paychecks. It is the God who has created me to work, not as a punishment, but as a gift.

May we move forward as if our work matters to God.