

# Does God Care About My Work?

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Preacher: Walt Alexander

[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [TrinityGraceAthens.com](http://TrinityGraceAthens.com).

1 Corinthians 7. It would be our privilege to dive into God's Word again this morning. So 1 Corinthians, we're going to pause songs for one week to kind of finish some of my thoughts from last week and take up another passage of God's Word.

So 1 Corinthians 7, beginning in verse 17, if you'll look there with me. 1 Corinthians 7, beginning in verse 17. Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him.

This is my rule in all the churches. Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision.

Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.

[ 1 : 14 ] Verse 20. Each one should remain in the condition to which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Don't be concerned about it. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.

For he who is called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freed man in the Lord. Likewise, he who is free when called is a bondservant of Christ.

You were bought with a price. Don't become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

Verse 25. Now, concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that in view of the present distress, it is good for a person to remain as he is.

Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you've not sinned.

[ 2 : 19 ] And if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles. And I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers.

The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none. And those who mourn as though they were not mourning.

And those who rejoice as those who they were not rejoicing. And those who buy as though they had no goods. And those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it.

For the present form of this world is passing away. That is the word of God. The only infallible and inerrant word you will hear this morning.

And it is a wonderful passage. I told the story last week of Martin Luther interacting with a young man who came to the Lord. And he became a Christian. Desiring to serve the Lord with his life that had been given back to him by the Lord.

[ 3 : 26 ] He asked Luther, what should I do now? That I'm a Christian. Luther asked, what is your work now? He said, I'm a shoemaker. He said, well then make a good shoe and sell it at a fair price.

Now, we may laugh at something like that. Although nobody laughed. Maybe it's because last week I used it. That's probably what it was. It wasn't me. But, you know, we used to laugh at something like that.

But that type of question is quite common to new believers. When many people come to Christ, there's an appropriate amazement about what Christ has done. And often, regardless of how long they've worked in a certain job, they say, what should I do now?

That I've come to Christ. I know I immediately began asking that question as a young believer in 2001, 19 years ago. And I've worked with many people over the Lord who asked that question after they were saved.

And in many ways, the background of what's going on in the city of Corinth, or the background of our passage this morning, is this question. The city of Corinth was known for its wealth, diversity, and immorality, not its godliness.

[ 4 : 33 ] Not its gospel centrality. There was no Bible belt in the city of Corinth. It was a rather wild, cosmopolitan city. And when Paul preached the gospel there, and Aquila and Priscilla preached the gospel there, many were getting saved.

And some were Jews, and some were Greeks. Some were married. Some were single. Some were slaves, as you saw in the passage we read. Some were free.

Some were wealthy. And some were poor. And the gospel invaded their lives and changed them. And they began to ask a number of different questions. But they all boiled down to one. What should I do now?

Throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul is answering their questions. So, in fact, our chapter, our book of 1 Corinthians, really should probably be called 2 Corinthians. Because it's a response to what they've already written, Paul.

And if you notice, if you go through, he says, Now concerning. Again and again to earmark the questions that he's answering throughout. But in chapter 7, he gets very specific. Paul answers questions about everyday life, about who you marry, about what do you do, about work, and marriage, and all these things in specific.

[ 5 : 47 ] In so doing, Paul answers many of our questions about life, and as we'll see this morning, and specifically, work. Questions like, now that I'm a Christian, what does my faith have to do with my work?

Is work just a way for me to provide for my family, for my kids, or something like that? Or is it just a way for me to be honest and evangelize others, to take the mission to work? Is that the meaning of work?

Is it just a way for me to serve other people? I mean, if I'm not a pastor or a missionary, does God actually care about my work? We might be led to think, should I quit my job to do something more important, more valuable, something that truly matters for the kingdom?

We're going to spend 80,000 some odd hours at work, and so we should think about it. This Labor Day weekend, I want to pause Psalms to give another look at work, because Paul's answer is a bit surprising.

In a word, what he says is, work with all your might where you are, for God is there with you. Work with all your might where you are, for God is with you there.

[ 6 : 57 ] So we're going to break this out in three points, and this is a little bit of a... I can't go through every detail of this text this morning, so I'm just focusing on work, and I trust you'll understand why.

First point is, you are more important than your work. First point is, you are more important than your work. You know, one of the first questions we ask somebody when we meet somebody, ask somebody outside this morning, what do you do?

What's your name? Where are you from? And what do you do? Without realizing, we leave the impression that what you do is the most important thing about you. But, when Paul sets out to answer questions to these new believers about work, he doesn't begin there.

He begins in a very different place, and we have these passages out there for you. He begins powerfully reminding them of their calling in Jesus Christ. Look at this, 1 Corinthians 1, 2.

He says, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all who confess Jesus Christ. He says, God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[ 8 : 08 ] You can imagine him getting this letter and saying, Paul, what's the deal with this emphasis upon calling? We know we're called. That's why we wrote you. Right? We had questions. We know who we are now.

That's why we wrote you. But, Paul wants to underline something powerful that's very powerful for us to see about the nature of their calling. What he's trying to underline here is that calling is not the moment you heard the gospel.

As wonderful that moment is. Calling is not the moment you walked down the aisle. Not the moment you responded to the invitation. Not the moment you prayed the prayer to ask Jesus into your heart.

Whatever that means. It's not that moment. And even in the end of 1 Corinthians 1, when Paul tells them to remember their calling, as he does at the end of that chapter, that you're not wise, you're not wealthy, you're not prosperous, or any of these things.

He's not telling them to remember the day they prayed the prayer, the day they were baptized. As wonderful as baptism is. Calling here and throughout the New Testament in the Bible is the moment we hear the good news and respond because the Spirit of God has awakened us and drawn us to Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 22 ] Calling alerts us to the idea of a calling. You know, there's something about a telephone that my kids will never understand because we carry it everywhere with us. But have you ever been waiting on a phone call?

You know, that feeling that you can't leave the house because there's a phone call coming in. Perhaps from, you know, an update from a job interview. Or test results from a doctor's visit. Or an update on a family member's trip.

I remember even when my dad was older and I was in his home, we'd go on a trip. He would call his dad after traveling throughout the day to assure him they were okay. Maybe you're waiting on a phone call from a potential boyfriend.

No amount of concentration or wishful thinking will make the phone ring. And so you wait. That's the picture of our conversion.

It wasn't our seeking or finding or calling that made the difference. It was his call. His call was not merely this invitation.

[ 10 : 25 ] His call was something that awakened us and brought us to Jesus Christ. Theologians call this the effectual call. The idea is many are called but few are chosen is what Jesus our Lord said.

Even though we don't like that word, you know. Many are called and few are chosen because there's this idea that there's an invitation that goes out broadly. And yet not all respond. And the idea is that many hear the gospel and are called and invited to come to Christ.

But mysteriously, the Lord effectually calls some to life, awakening them and drawing them to Jesus Christ. And so this word calling is littered throughout the New Testament to describe what a Christian is and to underline the work of sovereign grace.

Sinclair Ferguson says it like this. One of the New Testament's most frequent one-word descriptions of the Christian is that he is called. Dr. Ferguson tells a story of interacting with a seminary student from the Far East, perhaps from China.

And as they got to know one another, well, he was interacting with this young man. He said, Timothy, what is your real name? Timothy, he replied.

[ 11 : 42 ] Yes, I said, referring to his native language, but what is your real name? Once again, he replied, Timothy.

Realizing he was leading me on, I tried again and asked, what is the name that your parents gave you? Timothy responded with an oriental name. So I concluded, that's your real name, right?

Timothy? Timothy, you chose Timothy just so it'd be easy for all of us Westerners. And he replied, no, Timothy is my real name.

That's the name I was given when I was baptized. Dr. Ferguson said, I found his words deeply moving.

The name he was given at his baptism was his real name. It was the name that reminded him who he really was. And these verses at the outset of this letter, which Paul's going to answer a number of different questions about a number of different things, he's reminding them that they are the ones who have been called.

[ 12 : 52 ] In a word, they are the ones who have been acted upon by God. God has intervened their helpless estate and rescued them. And the same is true of us.

God reminds us that we're called not to announce something we've done, but to announce something he's done to us and to announce to us again and again who we really are.

But you may be tempted to ask, what does this have to do with work? Everything, I think.

At a foundational level, it means work must not define us in a way that Jesus doesn't. Work must not define us in a way that Jesus doesn't.

Our culture pushes us to form our life around our work, to make a name for ourselves, to pursue success that can be managed, measured, and maintained for all to see, to be the guy everybody can count on and look up to, to buy the house and the cars that prove it.

[ 13 : 52 ] And if we succeed, we're riding on the clouds. But if we fail, we're lower than a snake's belly. But here's the deal. Your calling is meant to liberate you from the rat race.

Not by telling you don't have to work. That's not the point. But by telling you you're more important than your work. Your life and your word are about more than you.

It doesn't matter what you do. C.S. Lewis has this neat little phrase talking about feeling better than somebody next to him. And realizing, you know, in the economy of God, his person next to him who has a day job and he has an academy job, that he's not worthy to clean off his boot because of who God has called that man.

In so many ways, that's what it's doing. Work with all your might for God is there with you and you've been set free. Point two, you're called to specific work now.

You're called to specific work now. If you remember the context, all these people were radically getting saved. And they were saying, what do I do with my life? And Paul dives into the specifics in chapter 7.

[ 15 : 06 ] And when he does, he picks up this idea of calling again. So it was there in 1 Corinthians 1, three times. And 2 and 9 and verse 26. And through that section.

And now he picks it up here seven times. He refers to calling or called. You probably noticed it as we went through that passage. And when he answers their questions, he urges them to view their present circumstances, all that's going on in their life, as God's calling.

Look in verse 17. He says, Only let each person lead the life to which the Lord has assigned and to which God has called him. Only lead the life that the Lord has assigned.

Your life flows as the Lord has assigned. Your present circumstances and all the details of them have been providentially arranged. I think Paul is essentially saying, or what he could say in this context is, Your present situation doesn't need to change in order to be for God.

You don't need to do something more sacred. You don't need to go to the mission field or become a pastor in order to live for God. You can live for him right where you are.

[16:16] But he takes it a step further. So he said, Your details of your life have been providentially arranged. But at the end of that verse, he says, To which God has called him. In verse 19, he says, Not verse 19.

Verse 20. Each one should remain in the condition to which he was called. Verse 24. Again, in whatever condition each was called. Let him remain there with God.

The idea is that when you come to Christ, Paul is trying to give us a radically new way of looking at our lives, that the details of our circumstances and relationships are not merely providentially arranged, but directed by his call.

So Paul applies that principle in some radical, counterintuitive ways by saying, If you're married, stay married. If you're single, stay single. And this is why people think Paul is a little crazy.

He doesn't seem to agree with the Lord on the value of marriage. Who created the institution. If you're an unbelieving spouse who wants to separate, let her separate.

[17:19] If she wants to stay together, stay together. And that's been befuddling pastors for a long time. If you're a slave, don't be concerned about your slavery. But if you have opportunity to take advantage of it.

The idea is your providentially arranged circumstances are your calling. I'll never forget being in seminary years ago with this rather eccentric seminary professor.

I think all Old Testament seminary professors are a bit eccentric. He would wear actually ties that fit the day that he was teaching. So if we had, you know, the tie of creation, he had all these planets on it.

But obviously, you know, Genesis 3, when he had the fall, it was a little bit of a dark tie. And not quite as joyful and wonderful. And so this Dr. Schwab, who was a wonderful teacher, I remember talking about it.

And talking about young men. Talking about all these young men going around. And I was a young man in that class. I was an unmarried man. All these young men going around saying, I'm called to be married. I'm called to be married. It's so hard. I'm called to be married.

[18:17] And he said, if you're not married, you're not called to be. If you were called to be married, you'd be married. That's exactly the way Paul's applying it here.

But the same thing goes with work. Now, we only use, the church historically has basically only used the word calling in reference to vocational ministry.

Full-time ministry. But 1 Corinthians 7 says that should not be so. God calls every Christian to specific works. Often to the providentially arranged circumstances in.

And so we're to lead the life that has been assigned to us. And to do our work is something we are called to do. You can be called to any work.

So a couple points of application. Your work right now is a calling from God. Your work right now is a calling from God. Our culture pushes us to ask the question, what do I want out of life? But the Bible pushes us to ask the question, what does God in my present situation want out of me?

[ 19 : 22 ] Where has God placed me? That's what this text is asking us to ask. Where has he given me? What place has he given me to? What people has he placed next to me?

Sometimes we fail to do what we're called to do because we're waiting for what we feel like we're called to do. Like when I felt like I was called to be married. I failed to live a godly single life.

Some of the worst workers are those who claim to be called to full-time ministry or missionary work. Before they enter the mission field, they fail to serve God with diligence and joy.

After all, they're called to be missionaries. So what do we do? I think the idea is receive your work now as a calling from God. Where God's placed you is a calling from God.

There's a story that's been told a number of different ways to illustrate this point. There were two stone cutters working on a building. Perhaps they were working on St. Peter's Basilica that took 144 years to erect.

[ 20 : 24 ] How about passing that job on to your children? You know, you're just going to have to raise the flag for 25 years, 30 years. It probably won't get done, but best of luck.

Each stone cutter was asked what he was doing. And one responded, I'm cutting a stone into a perfectly square shape. Cutting a stone into a perfectly square shape. I'm just cutting this out.

The other responds, I'm building a cathedral. The first brick layer has a job. The second has a calling.

And that's the massive difference. Your work can be received as a calling from God if you choose for it to be. Tim Keller says it well in this one sentence. Our daily work can be a calling only if it is reconceived as God's assignment to serve others.

It must be received as God's assignment. It must be received with the awareness that God has placed you there. In a place where he has placed no one else. But you might say, well, why would God place me in a job stocking shelves or making computer code or managing construction projects?

[ 21 : 33 ] Wouldn't God want me to do something more spiritual? More purposeful. And I think what this text would say is receive this work as your spiritual duty. Martin Luther says it well, who we quoted last week, and I'll quote twice right here.

It's pure invention that post, bishop, priests, and monks are called to the spiritual estate, princes, lords, artisans, and farmers, the temporal estate. And he applies it really well in this statement.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to give us this day our daily bread. And he gives us our daily bread. He does. And he does it by means of a farmer who planted and harvested the grain, the baker who made the flour into bread, the person who prepared the meal.

The idea is this merging of spiritual and temporal. When you make a spiritual prayer to God to give you your daily bread, God fulfills that prayer through the temporal work and means of human labor.

You get that? You know, you get what's going on there. So there's no greater purpose, per se, in sacred work. So if you're a student, receive your studies as a calling from God.

[ 22 : 46 ] Don't fritter the time away. If you're a teacher, throw your heart into the children. Set the bar high and help them get there. Don't cruise on the same lessons plans.

Work like the Lord called you there and become better. If you're a third shift stocker, walk into work with the confidence that the Lord has placed you there and is with you. Fill the shelves, especially the toilet paper.

Fill the shelves and anticipate the joyful destruction that will come in a few hours. If you're a mom, there may be nothing more spiritual than making PB&Js.;

You don't need to lead a Bible study to make a dent in the kingdom of God. Keep your eyes on sticky fingers and smiling faces before you.

Also, your work may change, but in so many ways, this attention to calling does not have to, you know. Most people would say we're going to change jobs 10 to 15 times over the course of our career.

[ 23 : 47 ] And so our work will change, but this attention to calling should not. We should view our circumstances and our work as providentially arranged. Walk in there with the certainty that God is there and has deep purpose for us.

Yeah, I think John Calvin says this so well in this quote from his institutes. It says, God has ordained particular duties to each one in his station in life. And so that no one should overstep his bounds.

He's identified various stations in life as callings. Everyone's rank in life, and that's not the way we think about it. Ranked like a pegging order, one person better than the other. But everyone's station, everyone's position, everyone's position on the football field or something like that.

Everyone's rank in life, therefore, is a kind of post assigned to him by the Lord to keep him from rushing about rashly for all of his life. I love that because I'm so vulnerable to rushing about rashly.

And yet calling is a wonderful gift to keep your feet planted in what God has called you to do.

[ 24 : 53 ] We'd be remiss if we didn't say in this calling heading that your work is one of several callings.

Several years ago, I read a book called Choosing to Cheat. The premise of the book was that we all cheat something, our soul, our spouse, our family, our church, our health, our work.

And the book argues that if you're choosing to cheat, cheat work. Now, don't go announce that to your manager tomorrow morning. I've made a choice.

The idea is we're all choosing. The idea is that our lives are a number of callings. You know, if you have a family, you're called as a husband or a wife, as a father or a mother.

Now, you have a family. If you were born in this world, so you're called as a son or a daughter. In so many ways, these calling, it begs the question, what do we cheat most?

[ 26 : 01 ] Do we ever cheat work? Work is one of several.

So, don't let it crowd out the others. On your deathbed, you won't wish you spent more hours at the office. Work with all your money, for God is with you there.

Point three, your work in this life will soon be over, so live like it. Point three, your work in this life will soon be over, so live like it.

You know, this passage, like I said, has been befuddling pastors because it says some things about divorce and remarriage. It's been befuddling pastors because it says some things about marriage and singleness. And then it ends with this kind of really weird thing, like live like you're not married, mourn like you're not mourning, rejoice like you're not rejoicing, work like you're not working.

In so many ways, you're like, Paul, what's going on? Indigestion? I mean, where did this stuff come from? I mean, where? In so many ways, it looks like at first glance, Paul's saying the end of the world is coming. Clean up your act and focus on the main thing.

[ 27 : 06 ] Like it would throw out everything we just said. And I don't think Paul's thinking that. I don't think he wants to live like the end is tomorrow.

I think he's urging us to have a radical, Christ-centered view of this world. We live in the in-between. The idea is Christ has come. He's suffered in his death and resurrection.

He's brought us into the kingdom of God. He reigns from heaven, possesses all power in heaven and on earth. And he summoned us in our calling from death to life. And yet this world remains.

We were not whisked away to heaven when we trusted in Jesus Christ. And all its allurements continue to entice. And so we're walking in so many ways, like we're walking through a minefield to try to live in this life.

In so many ways, what he's saying, live in this world, but don't live for anything in it. Live in this world, but don't live for anything in it. I think it's another reminder to watch out for the lie.

[ 28 : 03 ] You know, often our problem with work is not the work, but the work under the work. It's not the actual checklist. It's not the actual task.

It's not the actual duties. It's not the actual clocking in and clocking out. It's the work under the work. It's the desire to be seen and admired. The desire to be the one that everyone counts on in the office.

You know, that guy who can always change a light bulb when you need that help or something like that. Or maybe it's just, you know, the work under the work. It's just having more in that nest egg.

You know, having more in that Dave Ramsey approved emergency of fun. Where you just think, if I just get that number to this number, then I'll be satisfied. Just get that number to this number, then I'll be satisfied.

And you know what, we never find that this number, you know. Or maybe it's just to own more stuff. I'll only be happy when I have a boat like the person next to me. Or even to be the best. And there's no end to the work under the work.

[ 29 : 01 ] And it comes in so many different varieties. Because maybe you're not a money person. But maybe you are a respect person. It warns us.

A couple weeks ago, I read a story about Jim Carrey. Everybody remembers Ace Ventura and Dumb and Dumber. You know, I might get a tomato thrown at me for mentioning those movies. But actually, I do not approve those movies.

I haven't watched them in 20 years, but still don't. But you know, at the Golden Globe several years ago, he was the host. And actually, he wasn't the host.

I should have read my notes closer. He got up there to announce the nominees for something. And you know the charade. You know, the nominees for this one. Such and such. For the best motion picture.

And in his introduction, he began to kind of muse aloud at what drives him. He was at the Golden Globes at the time. And he said, when I dream, I don't just dream any dream. This is Jim Carrey.

[ 30 : 03 ] This is Lloyd. No, sir. No, sir. I dream about being a three-time, already a two-time. I dream about being a three-time Golden Globe winning actor Jim Carrey.

Because then it would be enough. It would finally be true. And I could stop this terrible search for what I know ultimately won't fulfill me.

Nobody's going to the Golden Globes tonight. But that search still haunts us too much.

In so many ways, that search for significance and meaning is meant to draw us to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel where the Lord substituted himself, the righteous for the unrighteous.

That he might bring us to God. He might justify us and declare us accepted and righteous in his sight by virtue of his death and resurrection.

[ 30 : 58 ] In so many ways, we're meant to be set free by the gospel and not living in this search and pursuit. In so many ways, I would invite you, if you have not trusted in Jesus Christ, or you're kind of wondering about this thing, or you find yourself in the rat race or caught up in the work under the work.

In so many ways, God wants to invite you to salvation through Jesus Christ. To set you free from the terrible search that will never fulfill.

So watch out for the lie. But put it all on the line. Put it all on the line. I think that's what this passage is getting at.

Work hard. You know, the diligent will rule. Work hard. Work skillfully. Several years ago, I watched this video on YouTube, and it's talking about... I mean, it's kind of a popular...

Not Abercrombie. What's that store? I can't remember. One of those home decor stores that's outrageously expensive. So this YouTube video was just kind of talking about what were designers doing back then.

[ 32 : 05 ] They said, well, just put a bird on it. And that's what would make it sale, because there were birds on everything. And so whether it was a pocketbook, we'll just put a bird on it. Or a blanket, we'll just put a bird on it. Or a couch, we'll just put a bird on it.

And then it would sell. Sometimes we think that's the way we work as Christians. We just put a cross on it. We're not going to sell you a cup of coffee. We're going to sell you a coffee with a cross.

You know, in some ways, we can think that way and think that's what skillful work is. And I don't think it is. I mean, you know, sometimes that cross is used as an excuse for not doing skillful work.

Martin Luther hit the nail on the head when he says the Christian shoemaker does his duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes. Because God is interested in good craftsmanship.

Now, I'm not saying deny the cross, but I'm saying the cross doesn't need to be on the shoes. And I love that. Work skillfully. God loves skillful work. He filled people in the Spirit to build the temple because He loves skillful work and skillful men.

[ 33 : 05 ] So work skillfully. Work eagerly. Work eagerly. Work ambitiously. Money is not the root of all evil. The love of money is. So work eagerly and try to succeed.

Work in a way that you hope will bring success. There's no applause for someone who doesn't work eagerly. In the Scriptures, they're to be pitied in Proverbs.

Don't be afraid of making money. Try to make more. Give to the kingdom. Yes. Provide for your family, all that stuff.

But be eager. Be ambitious. Work joyfully. Titus 2, 1 and 10. Paul's teaching about the church is a wonderfully succinct letter that we just read in our Bible reading.

He says, teach what, of course, is sound doctrine. That's the pattern of sound words is literally what that means. And he says, teach that. And so he teaches it to older women, younger women, older men, younger men, so that they may adorn the gospel.

[ 34 : 12 ] Work in a way that adorns the gospel. The idea is the gospel is not merely something to be confessed with our lips. To be visible in our lifestyle.

At one point in our marriage, my wife wanted to put a fish on the car. And I just said, I don't know that I drive in a manner worthy of the gospel yet. So let's not put the fish on the car, you know. Because you might be having me rip off that fish at a rest area somewhere along the way.

But in the same way, our work. Our work is meant to create interest. Like, why would you work so hard and yet live in that house and give in that way?

And we give a hearing to the gospel. We adorn the gospel. Work faithfully. In so many ways, the ground's biting back is what Genesis 3 says.

The curse is real. The waiting room is full tomorrow morning. And Tuesday morning. And Wednesday morning. Problems create.

[ 35 : 27 ] I mean, problems just keep coming again and again and again. And the work that you did yesterday, often in so many ways, seems to just slip through your fingers. And so you've got to work to the end.

Cornelius Plantinga says, The hardest task for people who believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ is in living the sort of life that makes people say, Ah, so that's how people are going to live when righteousness takes over the world.

The hardest task is simple, persistent faithfulness in our work and our attitudes. It's, that's the hardest task. It's the thing that matters the most in the end. True success will be marked by faithfulness.

Work with all your might. Where you are. For God's there. One day, Our work won't be over.

I'll never forget hearing a sermon right after I got saved about work in heaven. I never thought of that. I wasn't so happy about that. I didn't want to do the harp thing. You know, float around on a cloud and play harps all day.

[ 36 : 36 ] But also, I was not that excited about work. But when he comes back, our work in this world, And often the toil and trouble and the work under the work that drives us nuts will be over.

On a sunny day in 1780, the Connecticut House of Representatives was in session in Connecticut. But the delegates were doing their work by the natural light of the day.

They didn't have fluorescent, annoying fluorescent bulbs over their heads. And suddenly something happened that no one expected while they were doing their work and their deliberation. Right in the middle of the debate, there was an eclipse of the sun, and the delegates found themselves in darkness.

Many thought it was the second coming of Jesus Christ. And so a great clamor broke out. You can just imagine it.

Well, forget this. I'm not deliberating about any more laws. Jesus is here. You know, they wanted to adjourn. They wanted to pray. They wanted to run, check on their families and get ready for the Lord is coming.

[ 37 : 45 ] They didn't want to be raptured, or they didn't want their neighbor to be raptured while they were, or something like that. But the speaker in the house had another idea. He rose and spoke in wisdom and good faith.

And he said, We are all upset by the darkness, and some of us are afraid. But the day of the Lord is either approaching or it is not. And if it is not, there is no cause for adjournment.

And if the Lord is returning, I for one choose to be found doing my duty. I therefore ask that candles be brought in.

That's what it means to work to the end. To work where you are, all the way. That's where God is.

[ 38 : 54 ]    Father in heaven, we thank you for the privilege of considering your word and considering all that you've done for us and Jesus.

I pray that you would set us free from the lie that we are the measure of what we do. That we might receive the gospel of Jesus Christ and work unto you, rendering up wherever we are and whatever's on our hands to you as an act of worship but also as a way to love and serve those you've placed in our lives.

Raise up our discouraged hearts to press on for the upward call of Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
We thank you.

[illegible]