

Chapter 2: Do Good Work

What to expect today:

Icebreaker Questions:

What is your dream job?

What was your first job?

What is the most ridiculous thing you have had to do for a job? (For example, dancing while holding a sign and singing, etc.)

Class notes: Teaching Time

For Post Grads – we start at A and want Z

It's difficult to work when you feel like no one is looking

Group Discussion Questions

In 2012 a study of college graduates revealed 52% of graduates were working jobs that did not require a college degree. Another study found that only 36% of graduates had what the researchers called “good non-college jobs” — paying around \$45,000 a year. (Source: Pew Research)

Your first job will test your patience. For Post Grads – we start at job A and we want job Z. God knows exactly what job you are in. And that job, no matter how ill-fitting it may seem, is the one He will use to transform you. For most of us, we believe our circumstances are the indicator of our success in navigating our life. We secretly believe in the depths of our hearts that we are worth what job we land post grad. This is a lie! Do not fall into believing your job defines your worth. It is so far from His truth.

As Christians, we know that God has big plans for us. Many post grads believe there must be spiritual shortcuts to success. In God’s economy, there are no short cuts. There are only opportunities to work. The jobs He provides you with are not often glamorous. It’s easy to graduate and think you deserve the life you have worked for. It’s difficult to see it now, but graduating is just the first step on the ladder. And the ladder has a lot of steps.

Lili’s Experience

When I was 22 years old, I was working as an assistant to the CEO of a technology company. I was a fresh graduate, using my degree to order whiteboards and markers. I was sent on missions to pick up lunch, coffee, bagels, and dessert. I was setting up meetings, and organizing lunches daily. I didn’t love it. One afternoon I was sent on an assignment to find the rarest type of bourbon for a big meeting. Known as one of the finest bourbons in the world, any bottle of Pappy Van Winkle is a rare find. What’s unknown is how many cases are available each year. I searched around town for days. I called over 50 stores. I did not find the bourbon... but I did feel like I was losing my sanity.

I wondered if God would ever give me a job I was made for (Writing! Creating! People!) I had no idea how to get from A to Z. God saw my efforts, and He is still moving me from A-Z. While working as an assistant, I was presented with the opportunity to edit a book for my boss.

I worked with the book publisher, other writers, and with my boss directly on the project. It was a gift to have that experience. My job (that I hated...literally despised) presented me with the opportunity to see the inside process of developing a manuscript. Patience is so hard when you can't see the finish line. But there is always a finish line. Six years later, I am a freelance writer and social media ad designer. God is surrounding me with daily opportunities to interact with clients and co-workers for His glory. My "row" of cubicles at work is for Him. The opportunity to help local businesses achieve their goals is one of my "alphabet letters" along the journey.

It's not about what you have right now; it's about working what you have right now. It is so difficult to work when you feel like no one is looking. It's easy to feel every hard emotion (frustrated, mad, sad, irritated, and annoyed). Why should YOU get coffee? Why should YOU clean toilets? Why should YOU be wearing a costume on the side of the road? Well post grads, you should/can do these things because you're a graduate now, working towards your future, and paying for rent. God is using you, right where you are.

Moving From A-Z

He sees your efforts. He knows how to get you from A-Z. He is molding you. He is hoping you will work with passion and energy in whatever it is He has given you. God sees everything. He uses everything. God promises that our work and effort will not go unrewarded.

It's ok if you don't know what your letter Z is right now. Your first job allows you to try out different roles, responsibilities and different types of work environments. Ephesians 2:10 says, "for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." There's a lot of worldly pressure to find your dream job. What's more important is trying and figuring out what God is working on with you, and identifying what lights your soul on fire. He will start you at A and move you to Z, even if you don't know what Z is! He is working! Faith in Jesus allows us to stop striving to earn approval and proving our worth. You are worthy, just as you are. He is preparing you to do a work that is His. He is inviting you into His plan.

Group Discussion Questions

What is something you love to do that makes you lose track of time?

How would you describe your work ethic right now?

What areas can you improve your work in your current job/role?

What have you learned thus far about being “faithful with the little” in your life?

Reflections

What gives you energy? What makes you cry? What makes you smile? Listening closely to these indicators is like following an alert light in your car– it's a prompt that can light the path to what you are passionate about, and revealing what sets your soul on fire.

What do you feel passionate about changing in the world? What are you drawn to?

What are you interested in learning more about?

Describe your current reality. What would you like to change in the future?

How do you think God could be using your present situation to prepare you for the future?

Romans 8:5

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Genesis 2:15

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters

Proverbs 12:11

Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense.

Proverbs 16:3

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

*Lord, remove the control from our hearts. We give you permission to enter our hearts and shift our intentions towards you and your kingdom. We pray that as we enter jobs and careers, that we do them not for our glory but for Yours. We pray for all the dreams you have placed in our hearts. May they come to fruition in your time and not ours. Thank you for the season we are in now.
Amen.*

Chapter 3: The Boss [Authorities]

What to expect today:

Icebreaker Questions:

Who is someone that you look up to?

Class notes: Teaching Time

Authority structures are a God-ordained system.

Your Post Grad years are an excellent time to learn how to honor authorities.

Group Discussion Questions

We are all a mess. So, we are bound to work with messy bosses. This isn't a popular thing to say, but it is the reality: how you treat your authorities will have a direct influence on where God takes you next. Your boss can be fun and supportive, or they can be challenging and incompetent. Or they can be somewhere in between. The crucial point is this" their behavior towards you matters less than your behavior towards them. The way you treat your boss and honor your boss will translate into how well you do in navigating the wide-open sea as post grads.

It's hard to work for a boss that micromanages you that is impatient, difficult and has a temper. He or she might not do things the way you would. However, how we feel about this man or woman above us doesn't matter as much as we think it really does. How do you keep working hard when your boss is mean or even criticizes you? To begin, we need to first stop thinking about our boss as the main supervisor, and start working for the Lord. Our bosses are human. Our problem usually isn't our bosses. Our problem is the ways we decide not to honor them. Bosses matter. Your crazy disorganized boss matters. All work and every action that we do is seen and rewarded by God.

The question is this – how do you move from a place of "I have a boss issue," to "He/she is not perfect, but I will honor them anyway." Romans 3:23–26 says "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." To honor your boss, you first need to understand what your authority issues are, and how you can be aware of them, and move away from them. Let's take a look at three common authority issues and see if you can identify with any of them.

Authority Check #1

How do you handle critiques? Most people aren't big fans of it. God says it's important to allow this type of evaluation. In Proverbs 12:1 we read, "Whoever loves discipline loves

knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.” Being wrong is an action. Being stupid is a lifestyle. Critique is a good and beautiful thing. Painful, but glorious.

It’s super hard to believe – but most bosses truly do just want to help. Of course, there are bad and mean-spirited apples. But typically, all bosses want what is best for the team. And even if they don’t do it well (or the way that you would do it) they are working towards the same end goal that you are. Finding that common ground is important but it isn’t easy.

Lili’s Experience

I’ll never forget the first big mistake I made while working at an agency. I sent a blast of news out to 100’s of reporters with a typo in it. My (harsh and less than perfect) boss called me in to her office and told me, “you messed up, you were not attentive to details, and you shouldn’t have missed that mistake.” I was hurt, mad, and frustrated... but the message in her critique was a game-changer for me. God used that situation to improve my skills. He used my professional mistake to help prepare me for my future positions. If I had walked out and said “I quit! Forget this!” What would I have really learned? God also used critique to help me develop thicker skin, and taught me how to manage my emotional reactions more productively. Emotion/response awareness is such a gift for my sensitive soul.

Proverbs says, fools hate correction and wise people receive it. Wise people pay attention. They move forward with that correction. The wise work for the Lord and respect the boss that the Lord has selected for them.

Authority Check #2

Do you think you’re smarter than your boss? We all are guilty of this. We think, “For real, this is what we are doing?” It’s a human thing to think we know better. Remember the Garden of Eden? Adam and Eve get tempted into believing that THEY knew best. It’s human to want to be the boss.

Paul says that our work should be done as work for Christ, not for any human supervisor. The Lord desires for us to resist the urge to “be smarter” and to submit. Post grads,

this is the time to learn from the people who have gone before you. You can speak your mind, but understand that the decision-making-power is not in your hands.

Authority Check #3

Have you job hopped based on your boss issues? If you're always unhappy with authorities, there's a chance you have a problem here. Do you consider yourself to be working WITH your boss, or FOR your boss? There is a big difference in that perspective. When you play on the same team as your boss, it's astounding and powerful for your outlook and attitude. Matthew 5:16 says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." How can you work with your boss? How can you appreciate your teamwork?

The Paradigm Shift

God knows your situation. He knows what your boss is like because He is God. First, you need to accept that your boss is not the problem. Authorities were put in place by God. Second, authorities were put there by God for your good. Third, life is better in submission. According to Romans, those who struggle to honor others themselves won't be honored. However, God honors those who do right. (Romans 13:3).

The tough reality is that sometimes your authority will not feel worth honoring. They can be rude, domineering, selfish, plain mean. At that point, you must focus on honoring them because you are honoring God.

Zach's Experience

I started work for a small mom-and-pop advertising agency and although there were a lot of transferable skills from my last job, I needed to learn up and train from one of the current account directors. At first, it was easy. They showed me a lot that I already knew and the conversation was flowing well. But when I ran into something I had a question on, I received a

cold remark under their breath. I brushed it off as something I had interpreted incorrectly, but when I had another question, it was followed by another angry remark.

I was shocked, confused and began fuming internally. In school and in other work situations I had never been insulted for asking a question, and plus, I thought I was in training! Isn't that what you're supposed to do when you're learning a new way of work?

After weeks of training and snide comments, I wanted to give up. I had no support from my trainer, I couldn't learn because I became fearful of asking questions, and I was boiling with animosity toward the company overall. I realized that either I needed to quit (which I knew God did not want me to do), or I had to find another solution. I leaned on God and began shifting my thoughts.

I began praying for my trainer, that they would receive my questions with grace and answer with joy. I prayed that when they would snap at me, that I would remember I was being obedient to God's will and not theirs. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't an easy shift in thought! It took many weeks of trial and error, but by the time I left that job my trainer was welcoming, my heart was full of joy, and my relationship with God was stronger.

Culture of Honor

Honoring others should be a way of life. When you have a heart of honor towards others, particularly those in authority, you will quickly see this is something that delights God. Honoring those who have gone before us is a powerful action. Post grads, the principle is clear. Authority might not always be perfect, but we can shift our thought process and find a way to honor them, to appreciate them, and to follow their brightest qualities.

The leaders of the Bible were often tested and tried under difficult authority. David was one of the greatest Kings Israel had ever known. But he followed first. He honored as best as he could. If you can learn to honor, and still be yourself, and still hold your passions, it's only a matter of time before God promotes you.

1 Peter 5:6 says "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." This season with a challenging boss will teach you to apply your talents

and stay humble under power. It will teach you how to referee your feelings. Remember this:
The best leaders, for a season, were the best followers.

Group Discussion Questions

What is your favorite attribute of your current supervisor? What attribute is difficult?

What are some tangible examples of ways that you could work to make your supervisor's job easier and more efficient?

What is the hardest part for you to honor your boss and authorities around you?

In the Garden of Eden, we see the desire to be the boss. Can you relate to this feeling?

Reflections

Read Romans 13:4. How are you honoring authority right now? Where are you not honoring authority? How are you treating your boss?

What “authority check” are you personally struggling with?

How can you shift your perspective from working for your boss to working for God? Write out a few examples for how you can honor your boss.

Read Ephesians 4:29. Are you letting anger impact your attitude towards your boss? How can you build up those around you with grace and encouragement?

How can you ask your boss for productive feedback and direction? How can this help resolve unclear goals and objectives? How can you develop trust with your boss?

Ephesians 2:8–10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 6:7–8

Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Genesis 2:16-17

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

*Lord, thank you for the bosses you have placed in our life. We pray for patience, wisdom and peace as we continue to learn and grow from them. We pray that You show us how we can better serve them. We pray that you reveal to us where we need to soften our hearts toward them. Lord, we pray that we are lights of your kingdom to them. Bless them and bless our relationships.
Amen.*