



Lesson #2: Biblical Wisdom for Work

A right attitude toward work makes it more rewarding.

Study at a Glance: The 5 W's

KEY AREA	DETAILS AND SUMMARY
WHO (Author & Audience)	King Solomon is traditionally recognized as the primary author of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The audience includes God's covenant people—particularly young people, leaders, workers, business owners, and anyone seeking to navigate life's responsibilities with wisdom and reverence toward God.
WHAT (Core Message)	Biblical wisdom teaches that work is a gift from God, but it becomes destructive when marked by laziness or obsessive ambition. Meaningful labor occurs when people work diligently, enjoy God's gifts, and trust Him with the outcomes.
WHEN (Timing)	The Wisdom Literature was primarily written during Israel's united monarchy (approximately 970–930 BC), a period of peace, prosperity, international trade, and extensive construction under Solomon's reign.
WHERE (Location)	Written and compiled primarily in Jerusalem, the political, spiritual, and economic center of Israel.
WHY (Rationale)	God provides wisdom to help His people avoid the extremes of idleness and self-sufficient striving. Wisdom teaches believers to work diligently, enjoy God's

	blessings, and remember that ultimate meaning is found in God rather than achievement.
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Introduction

Imagine taking a road trip without a GPS, map, or directions. You might eventually reach your destination, but you'll likely make wrong turns, waste time, and become frustrated along the way. Life and work can be the same. Some people avoid responsibility and never accomplish what they could. Others work so hard chasing success that they become stressed, exhausted, and still feel unfulfilled.

God's wisdom gives us direction. It helps us find the right balance between laziness and overwork. It teaches us to work hard, honor God, serve others, and enjoy the blessings He provides.

The Wisdom Literature shows us that work is more than a paycheck or a way to get ahead. Work is a gift from God and an opportunity to use our talents, help others, and bring glory to Him. When we approach work with God's wisdom, it becomes more meaningful and rewarding.

Key Terms Defined

TERM	ORIGINAL WORD in Hebrew	DEFINITION (Contextual)	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
Wisdom	<i>Chokmah</i>		Ecclesiastes 2:21
Vanity / Vapor	<i>Hevel</i>		Ecclesiastes 1:3; 2:11
Penury	<i>Machsor</i>		Proverbs 14:23
Slothful	<i>Raphah</i>		Proverbs 18:9

The Preacher	<i>Qoheleth</i>		Ecclesiastes 1:1
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SECTION 1: About Work and Laziness

(Read Proverbs 14:23; 18:9; 23:4; 24:27, 30-34)

Godly wisdom places a high value on diligent labor while warning against the destructive nature of laziness and misplaced priorities. True success requires discipline, proper sequencing of tasks, and avoiding the trap of chasing quick wealth at the expense of our well-being.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text/Exegesis:** Read Proverbs 24:30-34. What physical evidence revealed the condition of the owner's character? What do the weeds, broken wall, and neglected field symbolize?
2. **Text/Exegesis:** Proverbs 24:27 advises us to "Prepare your outside work... and after that build your house." Why is setting the right order of priorities so crucial in business, career planning, and daily responsibilities?

SECTION 2: What Makes Work Vain?

(Read Ecclesiastes 1:3; 2:4-6, 11, 18-23; 5:12)

Solomon achieved more than most people could imagine. He built cities, gardens, palaces, and reservoirs. Yet after examining his accomplishments, he concluded that achievement alone could not provide lasting meaning. Work becomes vain when we expect it to provide identity, security, or eternal significance apart from God.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text/Exegesis:** According to Ecclesiastes 2:18-21, why did Solomon despair over all his labor?
2. **Text/Exegesis:** Compare the sleep of the laborer with the sleep of the rich man in Ecclesiastes 5:12. What hidden burdens often accompany wealth and possessions?

SECTION 3: What Makes Work Rewarding?

(Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-10; 11:1-6; 12:13, 14)

Work becomes deeply rewarding when we change our perspective. Instead of viewing labor as a means to an end, wisdom invites us to accept our daily tasks as gifts from God, to work with all our might in the present moment, and to trust God with the unpredictable outcomes of our investments.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text/Exegesis:** Ecclesiastes 9:10 commands us to do whatever our hand finds to do "with all your might." How does this outlook transform seemingly mundane or ordinary tasks into acts of worship and purpose?
2. **Text/Exegesis:** Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 encourages sowing despite uncertainty. What balance does Solomon teach between wise planning and trusting God with outcomes?

Conclusion

Being wholly devoted to God includes bringing a wise heart into every responsibility He entrusts to us. Wisdom teaches us to reject laziness, avoid making achievement our identity, and receive work as a gift from God. When we labor diligently, enjoy our God-given portion, and trust Him with the outcomes, work becomes more than a task—it becomes an act of worship. Meaning comes from God, not from accomplishments; therefore, we work faithfully, rest confidently, and leave the results in His hands.