



Lesson #3: Guidance for Work and Rest (New Testament)

Both Work and Rest are ordained of God.

Study at a Glance: The 5 W's

KEY AREA	DETAILS AND SUMMARY
WHO (Author & Audience)	The New Testament teachings on work and rest come primarily from Jesus and the Apostle Paul. Jesus speaks to disciples, crowds, religious leaders, and all who labor under spiritual and physical burdens. Paul writes to believers navigating daily labor, persecution, household responsibilities, and witness in a pagan culture.
WHAT (Core Message)	Jesus modeled diligent labor in fulfilling His Father's mission while also withdrawing for rest and renewal. Paul taught believers to work honestly, responsibly, and wholeheartedly as service unto the Lord.
WHEN (Timing)	Jesus' earthly ministry occurred approximately AD 27–30. Paul's missionary journeys and epistles were written between approximately AD 49–67 during the expansion of the early church throughout the Roman Empire.
WHERE (Location)	Jesus taught throughout Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. Paul's instructions were written to churches across Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome.
WHY (Rationale)	Work and rest are not abolished in the New Covenant; they are re-ordered around Christ. Jesus offers rest for the soul, while Paul teaches that Christian labor reflects the gospel, strengthens community, and honors God.

Introduction

Imagine watching a skilled farmer during harvest season. He rises early, works diligently throughout the day, and carefully tends his fields. Yet even the best farmer understands that crops do not grow because he works twenty-four hours a day. He must stop, sleep, and trust God to provide the rain, sunshine, and growth that only He can give.

Many people struggle with one of two extremes. Some avoid responsibility and neglect the work God has entrusted to them. Others become consumed by activity, believing their value depends on constant productivity. The New Testament offers a better way. Jesus and the apostles teach that work is honorable, necessary, and God-ordained. They also teach that rest is not laziness but a gift from God that renews the body, refreshes the soul, and demonstrates faith in His provision.

As followers of Christ, we are called to work diligently, serve faithfully, and rest confidently in God's care.

Key Terms Defined

TERM	ORIGINAL WORD in Greek	DEFINITION (Contextual)	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
Ordained	<i>Tasso / Diatasso</i>		Romans 13:1; 1 Cor 9:14
Work / Labor	<i>Ergon</i>		John 9:4; Eph 4:28
Rest / Refresh	<i>Anapauo</i>		Matt 11:28; Mark 6:31
Food / Meat	<i>Brosis</i>		John 6:27
Heart/Soul	<i>Psuche</i>		Matt 11:29; Col 3:23
Quietness	<i>Hesuchia</i>		2 Thess 3:12

SECTION 1: Jesus on Work and Rest

(Read John 5:16-17; 9:4; 17:1, 4; 6:26-27; Mark 6:30-31; Matt 11:28-30)

When Jesus lived on earth, He constantly met people who were completely exhausted. In this section, we will look at how Jesus dealt with the heavy stress of His culture—including the 39 *Melachot* (the long list of strict religious rules about what people could and couldn't do on a rest day). By looking at how Jesus talked to the religious leaders, spent time with His tired disciples, and spoke to the crowds, we will find out how He completely changes the way we look at our own busy lives and our need for real recovery.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text Focus:** In John 5:17 and John 9:4, Jesus says God is constantly working and that we need to do the work of God "while it is day." What do you think He means by working while it is day?
2. **Text Focus :** In John 5:10 The religious leaders were furious with Jesus because He healed a man and told him to carry his sleeping mat on the Sabbath—violating one of the 39 traditional laws against "carrying" objects. Why do you think the religious leaders cared more about a rule than a person being healed?
3. **Text & Application:** In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus invites the "weary and heavy laden" to come to Him for rest. In your own life right now, what is the biggest thing making you feel tired or weighed down?

SECTION 2: Paul on Christian Working

(Read Acts 20:33-35; Eph 4:28; Col 3:22-24; 1 Thess 2:9; 4:11-12)

In the ancient world, regular hard labor was often looked down on and left for slaves to do. But when the Apostle Paul started planting new churches, he challenged this idea completely. In this section, we will look at Paul's letters and his own personal example to see how being a Christian changes the way we should look at our jobs, our daily chores, and the underlying reasons why we work.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text Focus:** According to Ephesians 4:28, what is the main reason a Christian should do honest work with their hands? How is this different from the reasons most people in the world work?
2. **Text Focus:** Read Colossians 3:22-24. Paul tells workers to do their jobs honestly from the heart, even when their boss isn't watching. According to verse 24, who are we *actually* working for every single day?

SECTION 3: The Christian Work Ethic

(Read Eph 6:5-9; 2 Thess 3:6-13)

As the early Church began to grow, the first Christians had to learn how to live out their faith in the real world. In his letters, Paul set up strong guidelines for how church members should behave, how they should treat their bosses, and how they should manage their daily schedules. This section looks at the high standards Christians are called to hold in their everyday relationships, and the problems that happen when people stop pulling their own weight.

Discussion Questions

1. **Text Focus:** In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, Paul says we should work in quietness and gives a very strict warning against idleness and being a "busybody." Why is laziness so damaging to a church or a community?

Series Conclusion: Wrapping Up Work and Rest

Over the last three lessons, we looked at God's great plan for how we handle our jobs and our downtime:

- **Lesson #1: Laws for Work and Rest (The Law)** showed us that work and rest are built directly into how God made the world. God set the example by resting on the seventh day. He later made it a commandment to protect us from working ourselves to death and to remind us to trust Him.
- **Lesson #2: Biblical Wisdom for Work** taught us how to have the right attitude toward our daily responsibilities. God's wisdom helps us avoid the two big traps: being lazy, or turning our job into an idol by working too much. Instead, we learn to accept our daily tasks as a gift from Him.
- **Lesson #3: Work and Rest (New Testament)** brings it all together by showing that both work and rest are **[Ordained]** by God. Jesus freed us from strict, legalistic rules about rest. At the same time, Paul showed us that when we do our daily jobs honestly and for God, our regular work becomes a way to worship Him.

Our worth does not come from how much we get done, and our security does not come from our bank accounts. Because of Jesus, we can work hard, treat people fairly, and rest deeply without feeling guilty. We leave the results of our labor in His hands.