

PERSPECTIVE

MAY 2024



**WHAT IF
I DON'T
LOVE MY
JOB?**

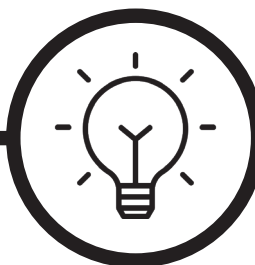
CONTENTS



ARTICLE 1
What If I Don't Love My Job
Kevin Vaughter



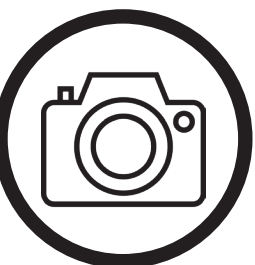
BOOK HIGHLIGHT 5
*Teach Them to Work: Building a Positive
Work Ethic in Our Children*
Written by Mary Beeke
Recommended by Garry Hill



BOOK HIGHLIGHT 6
Work and Our Labor in the Lord
Written by James M. Hamilton
Recommended by Jena Coen



BIBLE READING PLAN 7
Take Up & Read
May



NEW MEMBERS 8
*Nathalie Acosta, Ismael Alcantara, Luke
Dean, Christie Ewald, Jocelyn Heath, Lou
& Cheryl Lavender, Sebastian & Hellen
Parra-Diaz, Gabi Priolo*

What If I Don't Love My Job?

John Calvin famously penned, “The heart and mind of a man is a perpetual forge of idols.”¹ We see this truth at play throughout the Bible, whether in the form of a golden calf, power, money, sex, or even work. Yes, *work*. We can be tempted to make an idol out of our work. That’s certainly one extreme. On the other hand, we can also view work as a “necessary evil,” something we “have to do” until we can retire and enjoy life to its fullest. Both of these temptations share one thing in common: a *wrong* view of work.

Have you ever listened to a friend who seemingly has the best job in the world? He travels to exotic places, has a grand expense account, and appears to do what he loves, at least on the surface. I know of a famous sports broadcaster who covers college football games during the autumn months. Then, once January rolls around, he covers all the professional tennis majors—the Australian Open, the French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open. What a job! I don’t know if he is a Christian or not, but in a recent interview, it’s clear that he, at the very least, *enjoys* his job and considers himself “lucky.” That’s great. But is that what we are supposed to be aiming for? Or does the Bible call us to strive for something more?

In this article, I’m addressing a theme I hear with increasing frequency in conversations about work. “I’m not satisfied with my job.” “My job isn’t fulfilling.” “I’m finding it hard to be motivated.” These are just a few variations on the theme. It doesn’t seem to matter if you are a stockbroker, a stay-at-home mom, an insurance agent, a police officer, a teacher, or a sports broadcaster. The question that comes up often is, “What if I don’t love my job?” In what follows, I intend to take this question head-on.

But before I begin, I want to make one thing clear. The purpose of this article isn’t to focus on jobs that are harmful or consistently place you in compromising situations. If you are in a job like that, you may *need* to leave. I’m focused on the job you simply don’t “love” or one that feels like a grind (all jobs feel like this at certain points!).

So, “What if I don’t love my job?” Let me answer that question with three of my own: 1) Is my ambition godly? 2) Should I love my job? and 3) What is my purpose in my work? As I address each question, it’s helpful to remember that we can’t look at work in a vacuum. It’s part of the everyday Christian life (Rom. 12:10–13). We must let all Scripture guide how we think through the question, “What if I don’t love my job?”

IS MY AMBITION GODLY?

Have you ever heard someone climbing the corporate ladder described as “ambitious”? “Jack is a very ambitious guy!” Some may initially be skeptical of his intentions, but I would think most of us would typically think well of that person. After all, the textbook definition of ambition is “a strong desire to do or to achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work.” The Greek word for ambition, *philotimeomai*, means “to love or seek after honor.”² What’s wrong with that? In one sense, nothing is wrong with this “textbook” definition of ambition. I’d certainly be prone to hire someone described in this way. Unfortunately, the world (and our sin) has turned this definition into “be the best, have a bigger house, a better car, a more robust bank account, and post it all on social media.” Biblically, God has instructed us to be ambitious, but in a way that starkly contrasts the world’s idea of ambition. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11, we find Paul exhorting Christians to “aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands.” In Philippians 2:3, Paul states, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” Scripture should direct all aspects of how we work, especially our ambitions.

Let’s return to the Greek meaning of ambition, “to love or seek after honor.” To love or seek after honor is not necessarily wrong. The question is *whose* honor we seek, ours or the Lord’s. We all know the temptation to love and seek after our own honor. In my job, I can easily look up my results compared to the rest of my team. I want to honor God with my work, please my boss, and do what I can to help my team. However, it is easy to look at those numbers and think, “I’m stacking up pretty well compared to some of my coworkers.”

If you aren’t “loving your job,” you may think you have no ambition. That could be the case, but it could also be that you’re very ambitious yet not fulfilled. In a worldly sense, it is certainly easier to “love your job” when you are doing well, but that’s often not how life works in a fallen world. When we are driven by our results, we will frequently be disappointed because we are ultimately seeking to please and honor ourselves rather than God. Think about the mom who strives each week to complete her “to-do” list, only to feel like it’s an endless cycle that will never stop. If her ambition is in the results, she will be prone to frustration.

Ultimately, where our ambitions lie is a heart issue. Paul posed this question in his letter to the Galatians, “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or

am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). I hope you can see that ambition in and of itself is not bad. We've done a pretty good job of distorting ambition in a sinful, fallen world and even more so in a postmodern world that denies any objective truth or authority. In his book *Rescuing Ambition*, Dave Harvey notes how we rarely find books on ambition. Over time, the word has grown to have more negative connotations. He states, "Ambition needs to be set free and put back in play with biblical conviction and gospel clarity."ⁱⁱⁱ I think he is right. As Christians who are called to work, we should think rightly about ambition. Whatever our calling may be, in the office or the home, our first thought should be Paul's exhortation from 2 Corinthians 5:9, "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him." There is much more to be said about this topic, but whether you love your job or not, let your ambition be godly, shaped by God's Word, and bathed in daily prayer.

SHOULD I LOVE MY JOB?

Going back to the sportscaster—that is certainly a job I would love! It combines various interests of mine—college football, tennis, and travel. Yet, I'm sure the job involves much more than the glamour and glitz we see on the surface. It requires missing much family time, time away from church (if a Christian), hours and hours at various airports, fatigue, etc. The point I'm trying to make is that when we think about "loving" a job, we tend to think of jobs that seem fun, challenging, entertaining, or fulfilling. I'm sure there are three of you who love actuarial science, but for the rest of us, I doubt our careers are really *that* exciting. Imagine being Adam as God gave him instruction to "work and keep" the beautiful garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). I always picture the most beautiful scene, completely serene, stunning weather, working side by side with the person you love the most (Gen. 2:18). Wouldn't you love that? God's perfect creation and work without the effects of sin. It's always helpful to go back to the garden account in Genesis.

As I noted earlier, one temptation is to view work as a "necessary evil" or, worse, as punishment. Yet, God gave work before the Fall, and it was good! However, as we see a few verses later in Genesis 3:17–19, Adam's sin causes work to now be hard. Yet it's still good and intended for us. Because of Adam's sin, we are all born in sin with a selfish desire to please ourselves first and to do what makes us "feel good." Christians, by God's grace, aren't left in that state. God has given you a new heart and his Spirit (Ezek. 36:26–27). We don't have to succumb to our sinful flesh.

"Should I love my job?" We must once again check our hearts when we ask this question. Is it even the right question to ask? A better question would be, "Am I thankful for my job?" As we see in work after the Fall, it is challenging, demanding, exhausting, and often a struggle. We may not always be rewarded in the way that we think we should be. That may even include having a job you simply don't "love." Brothers and sisters, I don't want to discourage any of you who may be struggling in your work, but I want us to step back and check our motivations. When we think about the gospel daily, remembering what Christ has done for us at the cross, our hearts should sing out with overwhelming gratitude. We should be thankful—thankful for where God has placed us in our specific stage of life, thankful for his grace, thankful for our family and the church, and thankful for our job(s). You may love your job—praise God! For those who don't, pray that God will grow you in contentment and gratitude. Our work, whether we love it or not, is a gift from God (Jas. 1:17).

WHAT IS MY PURPOSE IN MY WORK?

Susie spends every morning getting her children fed, picking up piles of things left all over the house, putting the dishes away, cleaning the kitchen floors, and regularly realizing that she didn't start the laundry. Ugh! She often wonders, "What is the purpose of all of this?" Bob grabs his coffee, sits in front of his three monitors, and thinks about that hamster running on the wheel in the cage. "Is this all there is? What am I doing? If only I could have the life of that sportscaster!"

I imagine most of us can relate to these examples, at least in part. Even as Christians, we can be tempted to think even the most basic chores are meaningless. And, as we addressed earlier, we can be tempted to think if we have even the slightest bit of ambition, we are in sin. I would argue that we have lost a godly ambition to find our purpose while we work. In his book, Dave Harvey points out a concerning shift noticed by college professors as they compare students from the past to today. They saw that the drive to succeed was replaced by a drive for simple comfort. You could say that the purpose of their work was ultimately to make themselves more comfortable. He states, "The professor(s) related how many in this generation have drives and dreams reaching no further than their own ease. There's no cause griping them, no quest inspiring their imagination. It's not simply the loss of initiative. It's that ambition itself is on life support and gasping for breath."^{iv} I don't want to broad-brush the younger generation, as I think we can all be tempted to fall into this same category. We can tie "purpose" with a

comfortable life.

Let's say Bob has a different job. Bob takes a flight on the corporate jet to San Diego. He meets up with his colleagues at a 5-star resort, enjoys a wonderful meal and some wine, and then golfs the next day. Yet, Bob wakes up the following day and asks the same questions, "Is this all there is? What is my purpose?" You see, ultimately, we seek to find our purpose in whatever we make our idol, including our comfort. Any other "thing" we place on the throne, other than God, will always let us down. Always. Christian, where are you finding your purpose and identity? Is it in your work? We can certainly be tempted to find our identity in many things: music, sports, family, and even our jobs.

A few questions to ask yourself when contemplating your purpose or even your identity in your work:

1. *Is your work an idol?* Are you logging in early and logging off late, only to sacrifice time with your family or your church? Ask God to give you discernment and wisdom on when to shut down your laptop. Pray that work doesn't become so consuming of your time that it has become an idol.
2. *Are you more like the first Bob, simply "checking in" while being "checked out" each day?* Pray for godly ambition! As we learned, ambition doesn't have to be a negative word. Seek to honor and glorify God in your work, whether on an assembly line or a desk in the corner of your room (1 Cor. 10:31).
3. *Do you value your work?* What I mean is, do you see how God is using you in whatever He has called you to do? Follow Jesus' example in John 4:34, "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.'"
4. *Do you see work as simply a means to an end?* Take heart, brother or sister; God values your work. After all, He gave it to you to glorify him (Eph. 2:10). See Dustin's article from the March Perspective.
5. *Are you wrongly thinking about "work/life balance"?* We certainly see in the Bible that there is a time for everything (Eccl. 3:1-8). Yet, I fear we've taken a well-intentioned phrase (work/life balance)—intended to convey the idea of making sure we aren't over-working to the neglect of family and sleep—and made it mean something else. I know I'm treading on dangerous ground here, but be careful not to take the phrase to mean, "I need more 'me time,'" or "My work should never crowd out time for my hobbies." Most

jobs, when done well, require more than the arbitrary "40-hour" work week. Yet, some are tempted to think that we deserve more "downtime." I have certainly been tempted by this notion—just ask my wife. Yet, when I have felt this, I begin to feel sorry for myself, and any thought of thankfulness to the Lord is far from my mind. Guard against a wrong view of "work/life balance," brothers and sisters. We were made to work and then rest. We don't honor the Lord when we get the order backward.

Our work, whether we love it or not, is to be done to the highest quality for the glory of God. Let that be your purpose for and in your work.

CONCLUSION

So, brothers and sisters, what if you don't love your job? Start by praising God for it and seek to honor him through it! It's good to work, even when we don't necessarily love it. Our ambitions to succeed can be godly if our primary aim is to honor and esteem God through our work. Perhaps you have been placed in a job you don't enjoy in this season. What an excellent opportunity to display the gospel to coworkers who may not like their jobs either! They can see how you react, respond, and relate to others as you work for God's glory.

Psalm 90:17 is an excellent exhortation for us:

"Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!"

May God establish the work of your hands, and may you love Him more and more each day—even when work is hard!

— Kevin Vaughter

ⁱ John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:11.45

ⁱⁱ “Philotimeomai,” <https://biblehub.com/greek/5389.htm>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dave Harvey, *Rescuing Ambition*, 212.

^{iv} Dave Harvey, *Rescuing Ambition*, 214.

^v Dustin Butts, “All Work is Ministry,” *Perspective* (Feb 2024).

Teach Them to Work

Building a Positive Work Ethic in Our Children

Written by Mary Beeke

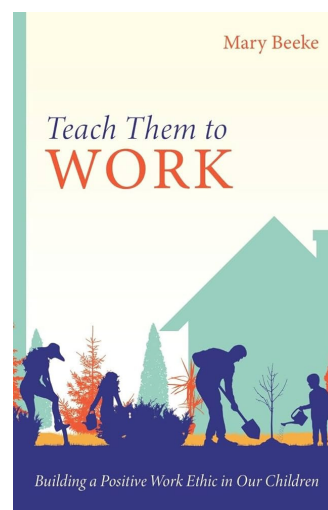
A quick search of parenting books on Amazon yields some pretty interesting results. The combination of “Best Sellers” and “Editor’s Choice” ranges from *The Simplest Baby Book* to *Good Inside*. While these books appear on the New York Times best-seller list and rank highly on Amazon’s list of books for “Popular Child Psychology,” I’d suggest that if you are looking for a biblically based parenting book, you pick up Mary Beeke’s *Teach Them to Work: Building a Positive Work Ethic in Our Children*.

Written just a few years ago, in 2021, I wish this book had been written back in 2010 when our children were toddlers. The title is somewhat misleading in that the book is filled with sound parenting guidance for more than just instilling a biblical work ethic in our children. Beeke’s 240-page book is divided into Parental Principles and Parenting Principles. She spends the book’s first half outlining why we are called to work. Not only did God create work, He was the first to work. Man was created in God’s image, and as such, we are called to work. As a result of Adam’s sin, work became a burden. However, by God’s grace, He has redeemed work, and we can enjoy the many gifts we receive from working.

The book’s second part contains practical tips and suggestions for parenting children. Beeke suggests, “We need to have our children do repetitive work. They need to develop mental stamina, patience, and perseverance to stick with a job until it’s finished” (p. 94). As soon as a child can reach a kitchen drawer, I’d suggest having them unload silverware from a dishwasher. They won’t get it exactly right, but the task is one they can handle. Beeke encourages the reader to celebrate with our younger children when they complete a task. What little one doesn’t love to be praised and cheered for helping?

Beeke summarizes the key point of the book well: “By requiring our children to work, we gift them with skills, knowledge, confidence, and problem-solving capabilities. They are learning to be dependable and responsible. They are equipped for adult life, wherever the Lord will lead. It’s a good thing worth working for” (p. 166). Expecting children to work is not discipline—it is for their good and God’s glory. If you have young children in your life, as an uncle or aunt, parent or grandparent, or volunteer in Little Explorers, I’d commend this book to you.

— Recommended by Garry Hill



Excerpts from the Book

1

Consistency is the key. Don’t let them make you dizzy with their circular arguments. Think hard about what you require of them, communicate it clearly, and stick to your guns.

– “Subdue Their Will to Set Them Free” p. 35

2

If the children ever ask if they can help, I always say yes, even if they do messy work. Kids love to play ‘pretend’ work. They are always copying Mom and Dad. Why not let them do real work instead? They love time together—why not do quality work time?

– “Time Together” p. 54

3

Clutter complicates our lives. We waste precious time looking for stuff. We can’t enjoy our things when we don’t know where they are or have forgotten we own them.

– “Take Care of Your Stuff” p. 131

Work and Our Labor in the Lord

Written by James M. Hamilton

My first job, when I was 14, was working for a veterinarian clinic as an assistant to the vet techs. I was responsible for setting up before and cleaning up after appointments, holding the dogs and cats during exams, and whatever else was needed. It became very clear to me, very quickly, that this job was not for me. Other than cuddling with the dogs, there wasn't much that I liked, and it was clear that I was not meant to be a vet. It wasn't as enjoyable as I thought it would be. So naturally, because I didn't enjoy this job, I concluded we were not meant to work and that we had to work because of the fall.

I'm sure it is no surprise, but 14-year-old Jena was wrong. Work has always been a part of God's good design; even before sin entered the world we were created to work. In *Work and Our Labor in the Lord*, James Hamilton breaks down God's design for work. In chapters one and two, Dr. Hamilton explores this design for work by looking at creation and the results of the fall. The story of the Bible opens with God working. God made man and woman in his own image and gave them jobs. They were to multiply and fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion. When the man and woman sinned against God, their jobs were made difficult. There was now pain and difficulty in their tasks.

But praise God, he didn't stop working when his creation fell. He continues to work. In chapters three and four, Dr. Hamilton looks at God's plan for redemption and restoration, calling us to consider what Jesus did on the cross to free us to work for God's glory. If I had read *Work and Our Labor in the Lord* at 14, would I be a veterinarian right now? No, absolutely not. But I believe my mindset would have changed. Dr. Hamilton shows us throughout the book what Scripture says about our work; though fallen and futile, it is an expression of our love for God. No matter our vocation, we are to work to please God, do it all for his glory, and do it in Christ's name.

— Recommended by Jena Coen

Short Studies in
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY



WORK

AND OUR LABOR IN THE LORD

JAMES M. HAMILTON JR.

Excerpts from the Book

1

God made man to work, and from the way Moses presents the whole scene, with man being in God's image and likeness, we know the man was to reflect the character of God in his work.

— "Fall" p. 44

2

We've seen that God created man to work, that sin has made fallen work futile, but that God's merciful instructions nevertheless enable flourishing. We now consider how what Jesus accomplished on the cross redeems and frees people to work for God's glory.

— "Redemption" p. 69

3

God's merciful instruction enables us to flourish in fallen futility, and the redemption God accomplishes in Christ frees us from idolatrous approaches to work and motivates us unto the Lord to adorn the gospel as our vocations become the arenas in which we love God and neighbor.

— "Restoration" p. 90

MAY

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

May 1	Matt 23; Rom 11:25-36	May 15	Matt 26:47-75; Eph 3:1-13
May 2	Eph 2:1-10; Matt 24:1-28	May 16	Eph 3:14-21; Matt 27:1-31
May 3	2 Chron 20:1-12	May 17	Deut 32:1-9
May 4	Ps 1	May 18	Matt 27:32-66; Rom 14:13-15:7
May 5	2 Cor 12:1-10	May 19	James 1:1-18
May 6	Rom 11:28-32	May 20	Rom 11:33-36
May 7	Matt 24:29-51; Rom 12:1-8	May 21	Eph 4:1-16; Matt 28:1-15
May 8	Matt 25:1-30; Eph 2:11-18	May 22	Rom 15:8-21; Eph 4:17-32
May 9	Eph 2:19-22; Matt 25:31-46	May 23	Matt 28:16-20; Rom 15:22-16:16
May 10	Deut 29:1-15	May 24	Job 42:1-6
May 11	Matt 26:1-25; Rom 12:9-13:7	May 25	Rom 16:17-27; Eph 5-6
May 12	Rom 11:28-32	May 26	Rom 11:33-36
May 13	James 1:1-18		
May 14	Matt 26:26-46; Rom 13:8-14:12		

*Sermons in bold

TAKE UP & READ

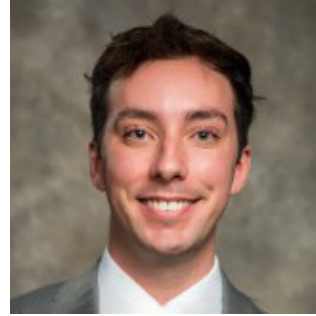
NEW MEMBERS



**Nathalie
Acosta**



**Ismael
Alcantara**



**Luke
Dean**



**Christie
Ewald**



**Jocelyn
Heath**



**Lou
Lavender**



**Cheryl
Lavender**



**Sebastian
Parra-Diaz**



**Hellen
Parra-Diaz**



**Gabi
Priolo**



MOUNT VERNON

BAPTIST CHURCH