

Before the Lesson

Focal passages: Ephesians 4:1, 28 and Matthew 25:14-30

We all want to make a contribution. We want to do something that matters and is significant in this life. Have you ever thought to yourself, “If only I didn’t have to do this job, I could contribute to the ‘greater good’ and make a difference?” May I suggest to you that your job is your invitation to make that difference? Your job is your calling. It is your invitation to work on God’s behalf right where He has placed you.

That is a different perspective for some of you, I’m sure, but it’s true. If you begin to view your job as your calling rather than a pathway to personal success, you will begin changing lives for Jesus. You see, a calling gives meaningful direction, a God-centered perspective, and an assignment full of eternal worth.

Do you doubt that your career is your calling? Stop doubting! God has called you there at this time and for His purpose. You can *Be the Church* right where you are. Embrace your calling. Embrace your job. Your job is your life contribution!

Do you view your job as your life contribution?

Group Discussion

Consider this statement:

A career is about the pursuit of a personal pathway to success, but a calling is the way to discover how to maximize the contribution of your life. – David H. McKinley

- Do you consider your job a calling? If not, what could you do to change your perspective?
- What aspects of your job give you opportunity to help others, extend grace, display godly wisdom, encourage others, apply upright moral character, etc.?
- Is there someone at your job that does not know the Jesus that God has given you access to? Could this be God’s providential assignment in your life that would enable you to contribute?
- There are four principles that will help you maximize your life contribution. The first is the *Principle of Deliverance*. Read Galatians 1:4 and Colossians 1:13. Who has delivered you and what have you been delivered from? When you are delivered into the Kingdom of God a decision must be made: Who will rule my life? Have you made that decision?
- *Adonai* is a Hebrew name for God which is translated as “Lord” in the Old Testament. It means Lord, Master, or owner. Read Isaiah 6:1 and 8. Was Isaiah submitted to the rule and reign of Adonai in this portion of Scripture? How did He show his submission to the rule of God? What does Matthew 7:21-23 say about obedience and Lordship?

- When making the decision to allow God to be in charge of your life, you determine that life isn't about you; it's about Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 with Philippians 1:20 and Romans 8:9. If you are under the rule of Christ, what should your response be when He assigns you a job to do? Are you applying this principle in your current career (calling)?
- The *Principle of Deposit* states that God has imparted gifts, skills, talents, and experiences in your life that are unique to you. These gifts are *tools* that God intends for you to use in your calling to make your life contribution. Discuss Matthew 25:14-30. How does God intend for you to use your gifts and abilities to contribute to the lives of those around you? What does this passage warn us against? Are you using your tools or wasting them?
- God wants His people to be productive – not for what they will get but for what they can give, and the *Principle of Dedication* encapsulates this message. God wants us to be givers not takers. Read Romans 12:1 and discuss what it means to offer or dedicate your body as a living sacrifice.
- God looks at this type of dedication or offering as worship. When have you exercised the *Principle of Dedication* in your job as you gave of yourself with no expectation of personal gain? What were the results?
- God sends us out on mission with a purpose or deploys us into our communities to be salt and light for Him. Read Matthew 5:13-16 and Ephesians 4:1 and 28 and talk about the *Principle of Deployment*. What does it mean to be salt? What does it mean to be light? Are you walking worthy of your calling?

Further Study

The book of Esther is a book of divine providence, significant life contribution, and deliverance. Read Esther this week and think about the four principles we discussed, then answer these questions below:

- How do you see the *Principle of Deliverance* played out in Esther?
- What gifts or deposits did God give Esther that enabled her to succeed in the position she found herself in?
- How did Esther exhibit the *Principle of Dedication* as the story unfolded?
- Esther was deployed (sent on mission) for “such a time as this.” Did she fulfill her God-ordained purpose? Are you fulfilling yours and making your life contribution?