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Three Sermons on  
*Work and Faith*  

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*Commit Your Work to the Lord*  
by Steve McCoy

*The  
High Calling  
of Our  
Daily Work*

*Making a real living connects you to a bigger picture,  
a grand design, an abundant life.  
Each of us has only a small part to play, but what a part!  
It's the high calling of our daily work.*

– Howard Butt, Jr., of Laity Lodge  
*TheHighCalling.org*

# *Commit Your Work to the Lord*

Steve McCoy

## *Introduction to the Series*

Most working people struggle to connect faith to their work. It's only natural. Church is our spiritual habitat. Work is a place to make a living. While no one will argue that the Kingdom of God is with us in every circumstance of life, for many, the art of making a living can prove particularly spiritually stifling. In their minds, work and faith rarely meet.

Certainly, we all desire to see the Kingdom of God reach beyond the doors of our churches and into the mainstream of everyday life. That's what Sermon Notes is all about. Its purpose goes beyond being a sermon resource. It takes aim at helping germinate the idea that the Kingdom of God is very much alive in any office or cubical. Such an idea sounds simple but can be so foreign to those in the daily grind of surviving the workplace. As Dr. George Cladis, a regular Sermon Notes contributor, writes, "There is a real need for preachers to help congregants find ways to experience God in the workplace and infuse offices with spiritual meaning lest they become a secular wasteland."

For those of us in ministry, this is at the heart of what we desire—to help guide people to lives thoroughly connected to God in all that they do. So, our prayer is simple: We hope this powerful resource will assist you to guide others to include God in their everyday lives, even, and especially, in their work.

## Sermon 1: Work and Wise Planning

**Text:** Various Proverbs. 10:3, 6:16–19, 112:20, 15:22, 20:18, 16:9, 19:21, 16:1–3, 21:5, 3:25–26, 27:1, 10:4, 12:24

**The Main Idea:** The high calling of our daily work is most productive and God-honoring when accomplished through thoughtful planning.

**Introduction:** The most productive people make plans: life plans, family plans, bucket lists, work plans, financial plans, and more. That means the maxim is true that says we need to work *on* our life and not just *in* our life. You make plans by working *on* your life, and you enact plans by working *in* your life.

If you don't make plans first, you will have to make plans later. If you make a financial plan, you can save for your kids' college fund, prepare for retirement, and more. If you don't make plans, it's much more likely you will overspend, get into debt, and then be required to make plans to recover financial health. If you make plans in your marriage, you may plan a regular date night to keep your relationship strong, or a conference, or a regular time of prayer and/or discipleship. If you don't make plans to do these sorts of things, your marriage may suffer and hearts will grow colder. Then you will be making plans to recover and restore your marriage rather than build it. The preacher may want to add other examples for other areas like health, parenting, etc.

Transition toward a message out of Proverbs.

**Context:** The Proverbs in Scripture are prudential wisdom and common sense. Many of the Proverbs are from Solomon but other authors are there too. These are brief but vivid and concrete sayings, which also makes them memorable.

It may be helpful for the preacher to engage the congregation to understand how well they already know proverbs of sorts. Start common proverbial statements and let them finish.

A penny saved is . . .  
A rolling stone . . .  
The early bird . . .  
People in glass houses . . .  
Look before . . .

**Key:** The biblical Proverbs state the normal results of correct behavior. These aren't absolutes or guarantees. We live in a sinful world full of inconsistencies and problems. The preacher may want to add an example from the Proverbs, such as 10:3 which says "the Lord does not let the righteous go hungry." God is our provider, but faithful Christians have died of starvation.

**Body:** The preacher may want to tweak the points as is helpful, but five points are given for making plans for your work.

## I. Seek Peace

The negative – The Lord hates wicked plans.

Proverbs 6:16-19: There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: <sup>17</sup> *haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,* <sup>18</sup> *a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,* <sup>19</sup> *a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.*

The positive – joy comes to those who plan peace.

Proverbs 12:20: *Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.*

Peace is social cohesion. Wicked plans bring social disintegration, but peaceful (shalom) plans bring goodness and joy.

The goal of making plans is an ordered life and accomplishment. To accomplish what we want in our work, we need to seek peace in our plans.

## II. Seek Godly Counsel

Proverbs 15:22: *Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.*

Proverbs 20:18: *Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.*

**Illustration:** On a tour for a book on George Washington, the author was both admiring and candid about the father of our country. He said, “Washington was 44 and had never led the military. He wasn’t a brilliant general, and he made horrendous mistakes. He was inept and had many defeats . . .”

But, Washington learned from his mistakes. He never gave up. He adapted quickly. He was courageous in the extreme. And his army of ragtag soldiers followed him to victory over a much-superior force. Passion, commitment, and willingness to learn from our mistakes: these can be just as important as formal qualifications in our daily work.

Refer to: <http://www.thehighcalling.com/Library/ViewMessage.asp?MessageID=225>

In order to make the right plans, we need godly counsel to help us in the process of forming and enacting our plans. Advice may take the form of:

- Knowing God’s will
- Steps of the plan
- Practical how-to
- Warnings against pitfalls
- Troubleshooting
- A form of celebration

If we want success, we need wise people advising us.

## III. Commit Your Work to the Lord

Proverbs 16:9: *The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.*

Proverbs 19:21: *Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.*

Proverbs 16:1-3: *The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. <sup>2</sup> All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. <sup>3</sup> Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.*

As we commit our work to the Lord, we must make sure we are doing what he wants us to do. It must be his purposes that we are planning for, because only they will stand. Our plans must be not only dedicated to the Lord, but he must get the glory from our success. It's crucial that we allow God to reshape all our goals, steps, purposes, and plans as he desires. He knows best what we need and how to accomplish our plans.

And our confidence is not in the plan itself, but in the Lord . . .

Proverbs 3:25-26: *Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, <sup>26</sup> for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.*

It may help the preacher to add something here about interruptions. Interruptions are really not interruptions as much as they are often God's better plans for you. It rarely feels that way, but we can trust that is the case because he is our confidence.

#### **IV. Don't Boast About the Future**

Proverbs 27:1: *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.*

It's an obvious thing when we talk about it, but less obvious in how we live. We have no idea what tomorrow will bring, or even if there will be a tomorrow for us. Over-confidence does not bring God's blessings on our plans. We can plan tomorrow, the next step on the ladder of success, the raise we expect, etc. But we should be humble and realize the events of each day are in the hands of the Lord, and we trust what comes to us.

**Biblical Illustration:** Ben-Hadad in 1 Kings 20:11, *Let not him who straps on his armor boast himself as he who takes it off.* Everyone can talk a big game before the game. But when the game is over, and the jersey comes off, everyone knows the score.

*The preacher may want to mention that "work and stress" will be covered in sermon #3. It will cover this and other topics in this sermon with more clarity.*

#### **V. Be Diligent to Complete Your Plans**

Proverbs 21:5: *The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*

Proverbs 10:4: *A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.*

Proverbs 12:24: *The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.*

At the end of the day, plans alone don't lead toward success in our work. Even as the Lord can shine on us and provide the best opportunity for success, it will still take hard work. Diligence is persistent effort.

**Conclusion:** What will your work look like in five years? Ten? What job do you want or need? What level of income? The best chance for you to accomplish your goals in your work is to make humble plans, run through the filter of wise counsel, honor God and recognize his supremacy in your plans and in the possibility of achieving them. And then, with all your might, work hard to accomplish your plans.