



Reset

Part 4 – Reset Your Work

Pastor Ted Cunningham

This is Labor Day weekend! We're very excited about that. I'm going to ask these questions. You did so good in answering a few weeks ago on marriage; let's see how you do with this. **What's the least stressful job out there today?** Agricultural engineer. See, she goes to all the services. I love it. What's the least stressful job out there? Pharmaceutical sales. I don't think any sales job would be less stressful. Librarian? Actually, they're pretty stressed. A pro fisherman? I don't think so. Here's what the least stressful job in America is: Diagnostic Medical Sonographers. Do we have any of those here today? I don't even know really what they do. Would you care to explain to me what that person does? Ultrasound on babies! Of course you're always happy. That's fantastic. Are you stressed? Nah.

What's the most stressful job? Pastor. Nope, only during this transition, I can tell you that. Police officer? Close. President. Air Traffic Controller is on the list, but not the top. Teacher. And all the teachers said... Amen. It's actually Enlisted Military Personnel. So, let's thank them this morning for the job that they do.

Now most stressful is different than most dangerous because most dangerous they take all of the people in that field and figure out injury and death... **What's the most dangerous job?** Farmer. Fireman. Game Warden. That is a good one though. I didn't see it on the list, but you're right. Police officer? Fisherman? Fisherman is number two and it's across the whole industry with crabbing and all that. No, the most dangerous job in the county is Logger.

This is the good part. **What's the best job in 2018 according to US News and World Report?** Don't Google this stuff. We're having fun. The best job? Trump would say, "Me." It's definitely being president. Just so you know, the methodology behind figuring this out, I'm not even getting into the unemployment rate and all of that that they used to calculate, but it's travel, career growth potential, physical demands, environmental conditions, hazards encountered, meeting the public, working in the public eye, deadlines, immediate risk of another's life, risk of death or grievous injury. So, what would be the best job in 2018? Pastor at Woodland Hills. Amen. Retirement, yes. It's actually a Software Developer, according to US News and World Report.

I'm going to give you their methodology, how they came up with the best job in 2018. It starts with good pay and everyone enjoys good pay. It goes on to it's challenging. It actually allows me room for growth. It fits my talents and my skills. It's not too stressful. I don't mind a little bit of stress, but I want

to make sure I have the moments where I'm able to unplug. Room to advance and then – this is key to especially the younger generations – satisfying work-life balance.

It's not a core value at our church, but we say it quite a bit. When people come to town and they're looking for the perfect job... Is there anybody in here right now looking for the perfect job? We say this around here: **"Work any job until the best job comes along."**

If you have your Bibles, turn to 2 Thessalonians 3. In this text today, we're going to see Paul be very clear about the foundation of work. Today, we're talking about having a great job, but having a great job may mean that you can stay in your current job. You don't need to change jobs, you need to change attitudes. And all God's people said... Amen.

Paul's going to take us back to the foundation of work as he explains to us why we work. The context is interesting because in 1 Thessalonians, in his first letter to the Church at Thessalonica, he tells them, "Don't be idle and disruptive." Have you ever noticed how idle people tend to be disruptive people? Those two things go together. If you have someone at work who doesn't work as hard as you do, they tend to be a distraction to the work and the productivity you're trying to do. He's already warned them... and it was short in 1 Thessalonians 5. It was a warning against idleness and disruption.

Now when you get to 2 Thessalonians, obviously there are some Christians in Thessalonica who did not heed his advice. They didn't take the warning. So, now he's going to talk to Christians who are productive, Christians who are working, and he's going to give them instruction on how to deal with those who remain idle and disruptive. He's going to talk to those about the foundation of work and why we even work in the first place. I love this text. We talk about work in a lot of other familiar passages that we'll see this morning, but in this passage, he's really coming at Christians who desire to be productive and provide for their families.

It says this in 2 Thessalonians 3: ***6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you... This is not just a warning, this is not just a suggestion, this is a command. This is how you are to proceed in your work. ...brothers and sisters... They were Baptist in Thessalonica. See, I'm hitting them. I'll hit the other two before the end of the message, you just wait. ...to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.***

Now this is going to sound harsh because he's going to say stay away from them. Most believe that what Paul is speaking to here is don't invite them into your meetings if all they're going to do is be disruptive. You work hard all week and then you gather together as the church. When you get together as the church, you're worshipping, you're fellowshiping, you're serving one another, you're learning what we have taught you. He's saying when you're trying to do all of that, those who are idle are often disruptive. He's going to tell them to stay away from such a person. Don't let your life be brought down by that individual.

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you... We were busy working. 8 ...nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. Now, this is the Apostle Paul, he's telling them when we were with you, we worked hard, we were diligent and it's not

because we didn't have the right because ministry, those who teach and those who lead and start out in churches... He's saying it's not that we can't take a free meal... Maybe you've been around pastors or church leaders that that's all they want is free. They're never grabbing for the bill. They're always letting someone else take care of it. I've just seen this in ministry too often and it kind of makes me feel icky that they're always looking for the pastoral discount. Some of you know what I'm talking about in this town. You're like, "I'm a pastor, so won't you give me the good or the service that you provide for cheaper or, better yet, free. It's not that we can't go and visit someone in their home and have a meal, but it shouldn't mark it. That's what he's saying. We don't eat anyone's food without paying for it. We want to provide for ourselves. ***On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.***

9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help... You should want to support the ministry of the apostle in this day. ...but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." And some of you are going, "Oh, he's going republican." The word here... It's very important to see this word. The word is *unwilling*. This is the word we are focusing on. There are those who cannot work and those will not work. This is what we're talking about today. Those who can but won't.

We even say it around her too, "Just because the government says you can't work doesn't mean you are unable to work." You have to wrestle with this as a personal conviction. Are you one who is unwilling to work because that's exactly who Paul is talking about. He's talking about the one who has every ability to work and provide and put food on the table for their family but chooses not to. That person becomes... I'm just going to say it because this is what the scripture is clearly teaching. That person becomes an unnecessary burden to the church.

You should not live your life in a way where you burden others when you have something to provide. For all of us should carry each other's load because this fulfills the Law of Christ. This is what Paul said in Galatians, but every one of us should carry our own loads, meaning we should do our part. He said, "The one among you who is idle, disruptive, and unwilling to work, shall not eat." You should let them feel the hunger pangs so that would motivate them to go and work.

11 We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. This is the challenge he gave them when he first wrote to them in the first letter. ***They are not busy; they are busybodies.*** The person who works hard doesn't have time to be the busybodies.

Yesterday, we had our family over for brunch and I was setting the table. I don't know if you're like this, but Amy likes to work and talk and carry on with people. When I'm filling up nine water glasses and getting nine forks and nine spoons, and nine knives and nine napkins and nine glasses for the orange juice, I have one-track focus. She's wanting to just shoot the breeze about life and about our five-year plan. We were back and forth from the kitchen to the dining room table. I've got one thing on my mind, which is getting the job done. If you want to start talking about our five year plan, I can do that, but I can't do that and this.

Women in here are laughing because their husbands are that way and they don't understand. But, that's why it was men who built the railroads. Because men could stand there 12 hours a day pounding in the rail spikes over and over. They weren't doing small talk as they did it. That didn't happen. Why? Say it, men. Because we were working. And when you're busy... Let's take it out of the gender thing for a second. When you're busy, you don't have time to be a busybody. When you're being productive, you don't have time to get into somebody else's life. You have a job to do. Get the job done.

I don't know if Paul is putting this much passion into the text, but I read it. When you study the Bible, you're supposed to be a fly on the wall in that day of what was going on. I just picture some people doing their tent making, standing in the market selling their goods, and the person who has done nothing, who's not working, who's not raising crops, not weaving baskets together, not doing anything. comes around and all they want to do is chitchat and shoot the breeze. It's like, "I've got stuff to do." Be someone who is busy working any job until the perfect job comes along.

12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. We don't like this term today. I've been thinking about the word settled all week, helping people be settled in their beliefs. The reason your life is unsettled is because you have unsettled beliefs. There are certain things you can be settled on. You can know for sure... You know, *settle down* is a term we love to give to our small children when they're bouncing off the walls, but some of you are tired of hearing this in your 20s and 30s. It's time for you to settle down and get serious about work and get serious about providing for someone other than yourself. Before we get to the settled down, can I get back to what Paul is saying? **...urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat.**

Motivation: What's the motivation for work? He's given us the foundation for it right here. We read this also in Proverbs 16 - **25 There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death. 26 The appetite of laborers works for them; their hunger drives them on.** Meaning an empty stomach should motivate us to work. An empty stomach should motivate us to hit that alarm clock in the morning, get up, get ready, and have excitement as we head to work because by working today, my family will be able to eat tonight. That's the motivation.

Diligence – But, scripture, in Ecclesiasts 9, also gives us that there is diligence in this foundation of work: **10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...** This is why when we pray... I encourage you if you don't pray before meals, start there with this attitude of gratitude toward resetting your work. Don't let it just be a super-fast prayer like, "Thank you for the food. Amen." Take your time with it. Take your time and here's what we say. It's something similar to this: "We are grateful for the work you gave us to do today. We receive it with thanksgiving. Thank you for the food we're about to eat. We receive that with thanksgiving. We know that what we have is all yours. You give us the ability to work and provide for our family. In Jesus name, amen."

Is there anyone here right now that you still live in your parents' home? It's okay; I'm not going to pick on you, I'm going to challenge you. I'm being serious. I know everybody's like, "Oh, he's going to slam them." You can put your hands down now. I know you live in your parents' house. I want to encourage you, Sam. I'm being honest with this. After the amen, after you thank your heavenly Father, I want to encourage every young person this week to pause and thank your earthly parents. I think we get away

from that. How many of you are going out to eat at church today? Can I just encourage you? After you order... I don't know if know, but eating out is very expensive. We're teaching our kids right now... We haven't done a good job of it, but we're starting to teach them how to order off the right side of the menu. Does anybody know what that means? That means that's the price side. You start with the price, you figure out where you're going to eat and then figure out the price range and which is acceptable and order from that right side and then figure out what you're getting. I think this is recognizing your Father in heaven. Do that this week, understanding that the food you eat takes a lot of hard work.

And there are parents sitting at the table that are grateful they are able to provide. We live today with all of this pressure... You turn on the television and you see financial planning commercials like crazy. It's like we work to prepare for a time we won't be working. We work to prepare to send our kids to college. We work to prepare to be able to take that vacation next year. Put all that aside for a second. We work to eat. That's the first priority. And for the parents who feel they're not providing their children enough, the third exhortation for you this morning is for you to pause and thank the Lord. You may not be able to provide your family with everything, but they are eating today. You were able to put food on the table.

Stewardship – We need to get back to this idea of the motivation of work, the foundation of work, the diligence of work because that's tied in also to the stewardship. Colossians 3 says, ***23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart...*** It's a theme all throughout scripture. ***...as working for the Lord...*** It's in this slave/master relationship that they're speaking of it. ***...not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*** So, not only am I thankful that today I'm able to work and just provide food for my family. I know when I go to work, who my ultimate boss truly is. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. I can work for challenging, difficult people, I can work for easy-to-work-with people, but ultimately it is the Lord that I'm working for and it is the Lord that I'm serving. He allows me to work, he allows me to work for him, and in turn, I get to provide food for my family.

Submission - There is one last idea as we talk about resetting work. Some of you are like, "I'd have a great job if it wasn't for my boss." You'd rather have a talk called *Reset Your Boss*. You're like, "How do I take care of this boss that is just too difficult?" In the context of shepherding, we have this great passage in Hebrews 13: 17. It's speaking here now of a spiritual leader, of a shepherd, but there is much application for all of those in leadership. And much application for all of us because every single person in here submits. Some of you think I submit to no one. I submit to an elder board. I don't call all the shots. I don't make all the decisions. Some of you are like, "Yeah, I don't submit to anybody; I own my own business." You submit to people every single day. They're called customers.

The scripture here is speaking of spiritual leadership or of shepherding when it says, ***17 Have confidence in your leaders...*** Why? We have to understand that leadership is something God ordains. Whether its of the government, whether it's of the church, whether it's of leadership in the home, this is something God has put in place. ***...and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden...*** Let me repeat that. ***Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.***

We're talking about resetting your work and it's how we're going to close out the time today. How do you make your leader's job a joy, which is of great benefit to you? Some of you are like, "I don't know how to do that. You have no idea where I work."

Some of you work for a boss who every now and then asks you to do crazy stuff and difficult stuff. Stuff that puts your life at risk. This guy knows what you're dealing with. Beaker is constantly getting requests from Dr. Bunsen Honeydew.

What do you do with a boss that is an angry, bitter, and her or his pursuit of your job is just relentless; they're always on you and there's no room to breathe? Its one of my favorite movies: *The Devil Wears Prada*. And you can't please such a person.

Others of you work for someone who goes off and says things and you don't even know what's going to come out of their mouth next [picture of President Trump and Vice President Pence]. Put Mike Pence on your prayer list.

Others of you don't even know who the boss at work is. You can't figure that out [picture of Bill and Hillary Clinton]. I always love... if you're a guest at Woodland Hills today, you don't know who we are. You know we take a firm stand on the scripture, but other than that, there are some things that we say are non-essential and we can poke fun at a little bit. Again, welcome to Woodland Hills.

Wherever your boss falls in this... Whether they're a great leader or someone who is changing their mind all the time. Some of you work for a boss... I know a lot of you that work for this type of boss that has you start on a great project, you're into it for six to twelve months and then he or she changes their mind and it wears you out. You start building something and they make you tear it down and build it again. Some of you have this type of boss and you're like, "It drives me crazy. Ted, how do I submit to that authority?" I'm convinced every single person in here, according to the scripture, the motivation for work, the diligence of work... If you're truly serving in your job as unto the Lord and not your boss, and you're submitting to leadership, do you know what that gives you at work? That gives you influence. I believe every person in here has influence at work. What do you do with that influence?

Clay Scroggins, who was here over the summer, wrote a great book: *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge*. We say it around here all the time and it comes out of North Point. "When you're the most powerful person in the room, leverage your authority to help others win." Now, he has actually taken the whole idea to how to leverage your authority when you're not in charge to help others and your boss win. I love that idea. For some of you're like, "How do I leverage my influence at work? I'm at a job that is frustrating, exhausting, I don't enjoy it anymore. I think to reset my work, I need to go get another job." That may be true for some of you but not all of you need to leave your job to reset your work. You just need to reset your attitude. And that's how we want to end out our time today.

Submit to authority even when you're the smartest, most creative, most productive person in the room. How many of you are smarter than your boss? It's all over the place. Unless your boss attends this church, your hand shoots up. It's hard to sit there when you have great ideas, ways that you think the company can move.

It's easy to have great ideas with someone else's money, isn't it? When someone else is the one taking all the risk and spending all the money and putting all the capital into it, you can have great ideas for what they should do with it. But the person of influence, the one who truly understands that the Lord is the boss and it's him you're ultimately serving, can sit through meetings, can sit through your annual review or your 90-day review at peace, knowing you've got some great ideas, but they are going to go their way with this and you don't have to share them.

Honor your boss when he or she goes with their idea instead of your idea. When they do want your advice or opinions or ideas, go ahead and give it to them, but don't be mad when they don't go with yours. They have to take in a lot. A good authoritative, not authoritarian, leader takes in the opinions and advice of other people and then has to make a decision, and their decision might not land where you land.

We were having meetings over the last year and decisions were made outside of all of those in the meeting by the one who was putting the money into the meeting and into the project. Some people got it their way and other people didn't. The people who didn't get it their way kind of reacted a little bit and kind of had attitude. I love what Dr. Travis Brawner says. He goes, "You can always tell a lot about a person's character by the way they handle a no." That's good in a meeting. It's like, "Hey, I appreciate what you're saying. We're not going to go that way." You can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle that response right there.

You boss doesn't always need to know what you're thinking. True? You're like, "No, I bring a lot to the company." You do when you're working hard, when you're not idle and disruptive, when you're diligent and you're doing the job you're asked to do. From time to time, you'll put in your opinion, but if you want to be a true influencer, you submit. What does a true influencer do? Let's talk, as we end, about what they never say.

A true influencer never says...

"That's not how I would do it." Out loud, in the meeting. I'm going to do it, but it's definitely not the way I would do it.

"Don't they see how hard I'm working?" To the one who is diligent and working hard, you never have to say it; it's always seen. It may not be appreciated, but it's seen. And you understand sometimes in an organization or a company or a restaurant or a store and you're working hard and not being appreciated, it's because the one you're working for or those you are working with are idle and disruptive. You working hard actually frustrates them. It actually wears them out and you have to just sit back and go, "Listen, I'm doing this work. I'm working hard. I don't have to wonder did they see me punch in, did they see me clock out?" If you're working for the Lord, he sees it all.

"I don't get paid nearly enough." A true influencer says this is the job I agreed to, the job description I received, the hourly wage or salary that we agreed to and I'm doing the job. But boy if you've ever watched someone's attitude at work sour it's when they... This is all the language coming out of a person that's entitled, the person that just feels, "You know what, I'm not appreciated enough, they

don't see enough of what I'm doing. I'm working so hard and they're not paying me enough." When that attitude starts to go, how do you fix that attitude?

Here's what I've learned. I'm only 22 years into ministry, but I've learned if someone has this attitude, paying them more money isn't going to fix anything. Do you know what we've actually found? We've seen this happen sometimes around here even. If you pay them more, it makes their attitude worse. I can't figure that one out. One of the things we do around here that we have to be very careful about is when we start paying a volunteer. They had a great attitude as a volunteer, but when we started paying them, it went bad. I've never really understood that. It's not something I can fix. It's not something we can fix. It's something, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that only that person can deal with their Lord and Savior with. It's a heart issue. It's not an organizational issue.

"This place would be lost without me." Wrong. Do you know what I'm grateful for? If the Lord takes me out today, if I retire tomorrow, this place wouldn't be lost without me. Do you know why? We've got a great teaching team. And all God's people said... Amen. They'd just keep on trucking along. We have great elders. And all God's people said... Amen. We've got a great staff. Your place can go on without you. This place can go on without me. That's an attitude of the heart that can only be fixed between you and the Lord, not the organization. Stop asking an organization, a business, a restaurant, or a store to fix your attitude. Take that before the Lord. Reset your work by asking the Lord to do a work in you.

"That's not in my job description." There are times you may be asked to do something. If you're doing your work as unto the Lord, take it as just a moment of freedom from your existing job description and go do it; be excited about it. Throw yourself into it. These are attitudes of the heart, not attitudes of the organization. Be one who is motivated to work, be one who is grateful when the food hits your table today at lunch or tonight, that you would thank your heavenly Father and then you would thank your earthly parents. Then you pause and just be grateful, just have this moment of gratefulness that you're able to eat because you had the ability to work. Then resetting your job... It isn't about resetting your boss' attitude, resetting the vision and mission of the organization; it starts in your heart. Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life. May your work flow out of an attitude of gratefulness because you're able to provide for your family.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for what you continue to do at this church. This is our last 9:00 am service. We are grateful for all of those who are here. We are grateful for the Chapel as across the way, they are having their last morning together and then they get to join us next week. We're looking forward to integrating the band from the Chapel into the Castle and the worship team and being able to meet under one roof. We're very grateful for that. We do pray a blessing over the transition, that next week, across all service times, there is just a level distribution of folks that we're able to meet the growing needs of this congregation. Thank you for the work that you provide for us to provide for our families. We want to be grateful stewards of it.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.