



Rule 2 for Gaining Financial Happiness

Why Do You Work?

Almost two years ago I started putting together two minute video devotionals to share on YouTube. I didn't expect much out of them; had no illusions of wild success. For a while, it was only about twenty or so people watching any of them but then I placed small ads on Facebook and picked out various parts of the world where I would promote it. Without warning suddenly over a hundred were watching them, and then as I kept creating new videos, several hundred were clicking into them, and then it was several thousand. I was completely caught off guard by their relative popularity and I must admit, a bit intoxicated by the results. I kept trying to make better quality videos, worked on my presentation and lighting and sound. I would track views during the week with eager anticipation. But then, without warning, without any logical explanation, viewing dropped dramatically. It went down to less than two hundred and I was in shock. I thought about quitting, wondering why I ever thought I could produce something good and popular. I questioned why I put so much time and effort into the devotional videos if they just were doomed to failure. It created a spiritual and psychological crisis for me, a time of deep reflection on my work and ministry.

Have you ever wondered what was the point of your work? Do you ever question the value of what you do? Does it seem like your work doesn't matter much, nobody really cares if you try hard or not, if you are giving it your best? You may feel unappreciated and unrewarded. It is common to experience this and many suffer depression because of their work. How many live for the day when they can retire and they are free to relax? Much of financial happiness centers around the way you see your work, how much value you place on it. I had someone tell me that he can make a lot of money doing what he does but he doesn't really like the work. You can't have financial happiness without having purpose and meaning in your work. The truth is that work never ends, even to the day you leave this life. Even if servants are there for you, you still have to tell them what to do and how to do it. To gain financial happiness, you have to at some point solve the work dilemma. How do you make your work a part of your happiness?

I recently read the account of someone who was fired from his job even before he started work. As a middle aged man, King David decided his new career goal would be to build a Temple for the LORD God. His nation was at peace and his career goals changed. He told the prophet Nathan, his good friend what he planned on doing and first Nathan thought that was a great idea but then the Lord came to Nathan at night and informed him David wasn't the man for the job. In David's own words, the LORD fired him before he got a chance to begin the project. **King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.'** (1 Chronicles 28: 2-3 NIV) Imagine that; God taking your professional dream away! Has that ever happened to you? It could have been bewildering to David, but he quickly shifted, knowing the Lord was still for him and had his best interests at heart. The rest of David's life he spent gathering the material needed for the Temple's construction after he passed away. His mission shifted but the nature of it remained. He was working for God.

You may be familiar with Esther, the beautiful Queen of Persia. She became queen when King Xerxes, ruler of the most powerful nation in the western world called for a search of the women in his empire to find a perfect match for him. Having chosen Esther, there was one detail of her background he wasn't aware. She was Jewish. Normally this would not have been a problem, but Xerxes's prime minister had convinced him that it was in the best interests of the empire to have the Jewish people exterminated. A plan was put in place for the genocide and a royal decree was publicly issued for it to be implemented. Esther, after her parents died was raised by her cousin Mordecai, a faithful man of God. Mordecai sent word to Esther that she needed to go to her husband the king and ask him to change the law for the sake of her and all her fellow Jews. Esther demurred though, knowing that she could not approach the king; he had to call for her or she could be executed. Mordecai's reply is immortal. **For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"** (Esther 4: 14 NIV)

If you have come to know God at all, you may have realized that what was said of Esther is true of you also. You are not an accident. You live because God has you living and your talents, abilities and characteristics are all there because God has given them to you. More than that you live in a particular time and place where God has put you. Nothing about you is accidental. Your work is not an accident. The tasks before you are not luck, either bad or good. The moment where you are now, the chore before you is God planned and a part of what He is doing with you and through you. You may not know how what you are doing fits into God's plan for you and others, but it does. One of the more seemingly random bits of information found in the Bible is a simple note placed at the end of Genesis 22. Abraham had just offered to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar, but God stopped him just in time and told Abraham through an angel that the great man had passed a test. Abraham proved that nothing, not even his precious son stood between himself and God. Abraham returned home to Beersheba and while there he got word from someone that his brother Nahor had children and grandchildren. Nahor lived hundreds of miles away; not close at all. No one would have come to bring the news of Nahor to Abraham on a lark or a vacation. The people of the time were hard working, and nothing was done without purpose. Word would have had to have reached Abraham because someone working had gotten it from someone who perhaps had gotten it from someone else working who got it from another working. The point is that this seemingly random bit of information that made its way to Abraham was not just a bit of luck. It was in fact passed along to Abraham through the working of God. As a result, when later, after Sarah, Abraham's wife died and Isaac the son needed a wife who would be perfectly prepared to help him carry on the life of God to the next generation, Abraham knew where to go find a wife for Isaac. Straight to the household of Nahor, his brother where God worshipping women were being raised. As a result of this information shared with Abraham, the nation of Israel came to be born and through the generations that followed, eventually Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Solomon once wrote, **I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live.** (Ecclesiastes 3: 12 NIV) Doing good brings happiness. It is a rule of the universe God has created. What better good can you do than what precisely God has given you to do. It may be baking bread, cleaning the floor, making a sales call, or talking with a customer who needs advice. Work is given to you by God to bless you and make you better and happier. The curse of work is not the work itself; it is the sin we bring to our work. The Apostle Paul gives us this masterful approach to the work of the day.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3: 23-24 NIV) Treat each task not as a money making moment or a burden you have to bear but as something God wants you to do right then which He will, if you do it for Him, reward. Here is a way to start off your workday whatever it may be. It is a prayer for those who work for the Lord, however cool or humble the task may be. 1. God, guide me as I work. 2. Correct me when I am off. 3. Encourage me as you see fit. Work can be a great source of happiness if your work is not just for the money you make or the applause you garner but for the goodness of Christ to fill you and make you perfect in every way.