

**“How to Win at Your Work”**

**Text: Proverbs 16:3; Proverbs 3:6**

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church ([www.pbpc.org](http://www.pbpc.org))

Oakland, California

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**PRAY!**

We’re in a series called “Your Work Matters.” This morning we’re going to look at what God has to say about job success – “How to Win at Your Work.”

The wisest man who ever lived was a man named Solomon. He wrote two books in the Bible of very practical wisdom. One is called Proverbs and the other is called Ecclesiastes. Work is one of the major themes of Proverbs. Solomon says you can tell the wisdom of a person, you can tell how wise a person is by the way they approach their work. We’re going to look at that today. We’re going to look at Solomon’s six winning ways – principles that you can apply to your life.

The foundation for these principles is in Proverbs 16:3, *“Commit your way to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed.”* The Living Bible says, *“Commit your work to the Lord then it will succeed.”* Proverbs 3:6, *“In everything you do, put God first and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success.”* That’s the foundation for job success. Put God first. How do you do that?

- You put God first by applying Biblical principles to your job, to your career.
- Today we’re going to look at six. These six winning ways of Solomon apply regardless of what kind of work you do whether you’re a homemaker or a C.E.O, whether you’re in the military, whether you’re in school, whether you’re an employer or employee, whether you’re nearing retirement or just getting started in the job market. Regardless of what you do, you can apply these six winning principles.
- Solomon says these are winning ways. I put them in an acrostic – W.I.N.N.E.R. – but there is no difference in order. These are simply six principles that are important for your life.

**1. “W” - WORK WITH A PURPOSE.**

- A. That’s the first difference between successful and unsuccessful people – they have a purpose, they have a sense of mission. Do you know why you work? Successful people have a purpose. They know why they work. Without this, your work becomes a prison.
- B. Proverbs 17:24 (Good News), *“An intelligent person aims at wise actions, but a fool starts off in many directions.”* Do you know anyone like that – going fifty different ways at once? Solomon’s saying regardless of what kind of job you have, you must be moving toward a goal. You must have a direction.

- C. The very first recorded words of Jesus, His first public words when He was twelve years old, were these, *“I must be about my Father’s business.”* That’s what I call working with a purpose. At twelve years old He could say, *“I must be about my Father’s business.”* His last words on the cross were, *“It is finished.”* It’s like the book ends in His life – *“I must be about my Father’s business ... It is finished.”* That’s working with a purpose.
1. Friend working without a purpose.
- D. Proverbs 21:5, *“The plans of the diligent leads to profit.”* Plan your work; work your plan. Successful people make daily preparations. They have a purpose.
- E. Have you gotten in touch with God’s purpose for your life? What am I here for? Get in touch with Jesus Christ and God’s purpose for your life.
- “The Purpose Driven Life”

## 2. “I” - INSIST ON INTEGRITY.

- A. Regardless of what you do, insist on integrity. Nothing lasts without integrity. Proverbs 10:9, *“Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.”* The world is interested in image, how do I look? God is interested in integrity – Who are you really? The world looks at the outside – dress for success. God looks at the inside. – What are you like on the inside?
- B. God says if you are an employer, you are to pay your employees adequately, fairly. Don’t cheat them. If you’re in sales, you don’t swindle the customer. You don’t lie to them. You insist on integrity.
- C. Copy of *Time* magazine, “Whatever happened to ethics? Not since the reckless 1920’s has the business world seen such searing scandals. White collar scams abound. Insider trading. Money laundering. Greed combined with technology has made stealing more tempting than ever. Whatever happened to ethics?”
1. Cheating on taxes illustration.
- D. Insist on integrity. Are you committed to personal integrity? Have you decided before the fact that “I will not cheat. I will not lie. I will not compromise my convictions even if it means losing my job.” The Bible says God takes care of that kind of person.

## 3. “N” - NEVER MAKE EXCUSES.

- A. Proverbs has a lot to say about laziness. It calls the lazy person a sluggard. It says a sluggard is always accusing, blaming everybody else. Accusing and excusing. Proverbs 22:13 (Living Bible), *“The lazy person is full of excuses. ‘I can’t go to work,’ he says. ‘If I go outside, I might meet a lion in the street and be killed.’”* I wonder how many lions roam the streets of Jerusalem. I didn’t know they were in that part of the world. Isn’t it amazing the excuses people make to justify their laziness?

- B. Unfortunately, many Christians are pros at making excuses; so I wrote down a few excuses I've heard from pastors and church leaders who are resistant to change.
  1. We've tried that before.
  2. It wouldn't work here.
  3. It costs too much.
  4. It's impossible.
  5. We've never done it that way.
- C. Excusers are losers. To blame somebody else – you spell blame – “B L-A-M-E (be lame). When you're blaming others, you're being lame.
- D. Never make excuses. What's your excuse for not accomplishing more? What is your excuse for not doing more with your life? “If I just had a different husband/wife... If I could just get a different job... If I just had a job with a future...” You make your future, not the job.

#### 4. “N” - NEVER STOP LEARNING.

- A. Always be growing and developing. Proverbs 15:14, *“Intelligent people want to learn, but stupid people are satisfied with ignorance.”* Do you know any people who are brain dead at your work? The last time they ever thought about opening a book was finals week before they graduated. They got their diploma and said, “Thank God my education is over!” Little did they know how truthful they were. They stopped learning. They stopped growing. They're not developing.
- B. Where do you learn?
  1. God's Word.
  2. Wise people. Get around wise people. The Bible says, iron sharpens iron.
  3. Critics. Learn from critics.
  4. Failure is a great learning tool. We usually learn more from failure than success. Learn from mistakes. Never waste a failure.
- C. Thomas Edison said, “Don't call it a failure. Call it an education.”

#### 5. “E” - ECONOMIZE YOUR TIME AND ENERGY

- A. Solomon says if you want to make it in today's world you need to economize your time and energy. Ecclesiastes 8:6 (Good News), *“There is a right time and a right way to do everything but we know so little.”* The point he's trying to make is, don't waste your time and your energy. There's a right way to use them both. We all have 168 hours a week. Nobody has more or less time than you. How do others get more done? They economize their time and their energy.
- B. The problem is we're not skilled in using time wisely. Ecclesiastes 10:10, *“If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed. But skill will bring success.”* He's saying if you've got an ax and you're chopping wood, it takes more energy with a dull ax. That's why you're tired all the time because you have a dull ax. But if you have a sharp ax, it doesn't take as much energy. Work smarter, not harder.

- C. Develop your skills so that if you are an accountant, a school teacher, a homemaker, in school, whatever it is – develop your skill because that’s what’s going to make the difference. If the ax is dull it takes more strength. Sharpen your ax!
- D. Evaluate how well you used your time this past week? Did you waste time as a couch potato, spend time on things that are fun or good, or did you invest time so that it’s easier for you in the future?

## 6. “R” - RESOLVE TO STICK WITH IT.

- A. Solomon is talking about staying power here. Stamina, endurance. Proverbs 22:29 (Living Bible), “*Do you know a hard working person? They shall be successful and stand before kings.*” Circle “hard working”. Winners simply don’t know how to quit. They persevere. They endure. They are determined. They keep on going. They don’t give up.
- B. There is a myth that says successful people do everything right. They don’t. The fact is, successful people probably make as many mistakes and stumble and fail as many times as losers. They just don’t let it get them down. They don’t give up. They learn from those failures so they become better and better. They don’t live a perfect life. They stumble and fall. But they get up and keep on going.
- C. From a book called The Joy of Working. Successful people fail too.
  - “The best basketball players make only about half their shots.
  - Top oil companies, even with expert geologists, find oil in only one of ten wells drilled.
  - A successful TV actor is turned down 29 out of 30 times when auditioning for rolls and commercials.
  - Winners in the stock market make money on only two out of five investments.”
- D. If at first you don’t succeed welcome to the human race. Winners resolve to stick with it. Resolve means a conscious act of the will. It is a choice. I am choosing. I will not give up regardless of economic conditions. Regardless of problems at work. I will not give up.
- E. Have you ever felt like giving up? If you have let me say this – don’t! Keep on going. That doesn’t mean you keep the same job. You might need to change jobs. Never give up on your dream. If it’s from God, and you know it to be the will of God, go for it with all your life.

## PRAYER

**Father, thank you for your Word. It is so practical. It applies to our lives where we spend so much of our time at work. Help us to put these six principles into practice this week in our work. Help us to be doers of Your Word, and not only hearers. In Jesus’ name. Amen.**