

“How to Keep Profession from Becoming Obsession”

Text: Proverbs 23:4; Ecclesiastes 10:15

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

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Rev. Chris Gelini

PRAY!

We’re in a series I call “Your Work Matters.” Today we’re going to look at “How to Keep your Profession from Being an Obsession.”

For a lot of people, their whole life is wrapped up in their job. It’s all they think about; it’s all they talk about. Actually, nothing else matters. That is commonly called workaholism or workaholics. This is an epidemic in the Bay Area.

- An article from the paper recently said that for a lot of people, happiness is going to work. They enjoy their job more than leisure. We live in an area filled with workaholics.

The Bible honors hard work. But it condemns workaholism as foolishness.

- Proverbs 23:4, *“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint.”* Be smart. Don’t wear yourself out at your work.
- Ecclesiastes 10:15 (Good News), *“Only someone too stupid to find their way home would wear themselves out with work.”* If you burn the candle at both ends, you are not as bright as you think you are.

I have a quiz to see if you’re a workaholic or not.

1. Are you always in a hurry?
2. Does doing nothing drive you up a wall?
3. Do you feel guilty when you relax?
4. Do people around you tell you, you ought to slow down?
5. Do you procrastinate about taking vacations?
6. Do you have to get sick to slow down?
7. Do you ever take business related reading material into the bathroom? If you do, you’re a confirmed workaholic!

Statistics by the U.S. Department of Labor have said that 25% of the people in America would prefer longer hours if they get paid more. We’re working more and relaxing less – Life in the fast lane. What is the cure? R-E-L-A-X. Five cures from God’s word on how to relax a workaholic.

R EALIZE MY WORTH

- A. Accept what God says about me. You matter to God. No one is insignificant in God’s eyes. You are somebody. 1 John 3:1, *“See how very much our heavenly Father loves us. For He allows us to be called His children. Think of it! And we really are!”*

1. You are His children. You are significant. You are important.
When you grasp this emotionally, it will make all the difference in your life. All of a sudden you stop having to prove yourself. You realize that “God loves me!”
- B. God says in Isaiah 43:4, “*You are precious in my sight.*” You count. You’re valuable. You’ve got nothing to prove.
- C. With each of these points, I’m going to give you a key question. Here’s the first: What am I trying to prove? What’s driving me so hard? The Bible says realize your worth. God loved you so much He died for you. You don’t have to prove it. You don’t have to earn it. You are already significant. That’s the foundation – realize my worth.

E NJOY WHAT I ALREADY HAVE

- A. If I’m going to learn to relax I must learn to enjoy what I already have. This is contentment. Sometime we’re so busy getting more we can’t enjoy what we have. In the Bay Area we have these beautiful homes and nobody’s home. Just about the time you get something paid for, you immediately go back to work to afford the next model up. You don’t enjoy it.
- B. Ecclesiastes 3:13, “*All of us should eat and drink and enjoy what we have worked for. It is God’s gift.*” It’s a gift. Enjoy what you have when you have it. You’re not going to take it with you.
- C. 1 Timothy 6:6-8, “*Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*” One of the keys of relaxing is to learn to be content with what you have.
- D. There was an obituary that said, “The deceased is worth one hundred million dollars.” I hate to tell you this, but when you’re dead you’re not worth anything.
- E. Key question: How much is enough? I don’t think there is a single answer but it’s an excellent question that everybody, particularly in the Bay Area needs to be asking. How much *is* enough?

L IMIT YOUR LABOR

- A. You need to make time for other things in life besides your work, besides your job. This is a conscious act of the will. It is a decision that you make. You schedule it. You decide how many hours a week you will work. Decide how many hours I’m going to be at home every week. How many nights at home? Decide those kinds of things. Force yourself to limit your labor if you have a tendency to workaholism.
- B. Exodus 20:9-10 (Good News), “*You have six days in which to do your work, but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to Me.*” That’s in the Ten Commandments. God said every seven days you take a day off. If you’re not taking a day off every week, you’re

- breaking one of the Ten Commandments. God says you take a day off every week.
- C. I don't think God cares about which day as much as you—every seven days, take a day off. In the French revolution they canceled Sunday as a day of rest. Later it was reinstated because of the collapse of the health of the French nation. People were falling apart. They weren't taking any time off.
 - D. But you say, "I feel so guilty when I take a day off." Jesus didn't and He had a lot more to do than you did. Look at what Jesus said. Mark 6:31, "*There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, 'Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest awhile.'*" He looked at his twelve tired disciples and said, Guys, you deserve a break today. The next verse says they went off to the desert to relax. There's Biblical justification of a Palm Springs vacation.
 - E. Key question: How often do I really relax? You need to schedule three things in your life if you want to relax: Rest, Recreation, Relationships. Those are three things workaholics tend to ignore.

A DJUST MY VALUES

- A. If you're going to relax, you must have a change in your thinking. This is so important. Workaholics think differently. They have different values. You must begin to ask yourself, "What is really important?" Not what is important to the world, to my neighbors, but what is most important to me. You look at your values because your life is driven by your values.
- B. Jesus asked what I consider the two most penetrating questions in the New Testament in Mark 8:36-37, "*What good is it for you to gain the whole world yet forfeit your soul?*" I'd like to put that on a banner on the freeway. What does it profit someone if they are top dog, the number one salesperson, the president of their company, or makes a million by the time their 35? What does it profit a person if they gain the whole world and yet lose their family, health or spiritual soul?
- C. Then He says, "*What can you give in exchange for your soul?*" You have 168 hours in a week. What are you exchanging it for? Something. You are giving your life for something. Is it worth it?
- D. That's the key question: Is it worth it? Is what I'm working so hard to do really worth the effort? Or are there other things in my life that are of equal importance or greater importance. Maybe I ought to have a little balance and not be so consumed that my total enjoyment is my employment. I adjust my values.

EX PECT GOD'S CARE

- A. Expect Him to care for you. Matthew 6:31-32 deals with this issue, that worry causes workaholics to work so hard. *“Do not worry saying, ‘What shall we eat or drink or wear?’ For the pagans run after (that’s workaholism) all these things (they’re in a frantic search), and your Heavenly Father knows you need them.”* God says, “I know what your needs are.” Expect God’s care.
- B. We work so hard thinking, “If I could just get that nest egg to a certain size then I would have ‘financial security.’” No matter how much money you make in your life, you will **never** have complete security because it can be taken from you in an instant in many ways that you have no control over. The economy could collapse, earthquakes, devastation ... your health, before you even get a chance to spend it ... So ultimately, security must be placed in something that cannot be taken from you. And that is your relationship to Jesus Christ. No matter what happens in life that can never be taken from you. That’s security, when you trust God’s care ultimately for your life.
- C. The key question becomes: “Am I really trusting God?” If I’m in this frantic pace of work trying to make it, am I really trying more than I’m trusting?
- D. Does Jesus have anything to say to you? You bet He does. Matthew 11:28-29, *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and overburdened, and I will give you rest. Put on my yoke and learn from me and you will find rest for your souls.”* God says, I want to give you rest. You’re overburdened, you’re stressed out, you don’t know how to quit working. He says, “Come to Me and I’ll teach you how to rest.”

Some of you need to ask those closest to you a very important question: Are you a workaholic? And then you need to be prepared for the answer. Like any addiction, you can become so addicted to work that you ignore your family, your spiritual development; you even ignore your health. God’s solution: RELAX!

PRAYER

Would you pray this in your heart? **“Jesus Christ, help me to realize that I already am somebody significant in your eyes, that You love me, that You approve of me, that I don’t have to prove it or perform to earn it. Help me to relax and trust You with every area of my life. Jesus Christ, come into my life and be the chairman of the board. You call the shots. Be number one. Jesus Christ, You guide me. Help me to realize how much You love me. Teach me how to relax. Help me to feel loved by You. I give You all my life – the past, the present and the future.”**

“Father, thank you for Your word. Use Your word in each of our lives as we need it most. For we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”