

# Family Matters

Chapter 14

By Dale Payne

## Developing A Healthy Work Ethic In Children

“Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might.” Ecclesiastes 9:10

“In all labor there is profit...” Proverbs 14:23

“It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth.” Lamentations 3:27

“Be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work.” 2 Chronicles 15:7

“Each one must examine his own work, then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone... for each one will bear his own load.” Galatians 6:4,5

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as **working for the Lord, not for men... it is the Lord Christ you are serving.**” Colossians 3:22-24

### Family Evaluation Questions:

- Are most teenagers today hard workers or lazy?
- Are most employees hard workers or slackers?
- Do most people struggle with being slothful, idle, or easily distracted?
- Are most employees satisfied (content) with their jobs?
- In the work place, is the work ethic of believers different than unbelievers?
- If you work hard and live wisely and righteously, should you have something to show for your effort?
- Do you take adequate time to rest after a good week of work to enjoy what you have?
- Do your children help you around the house or yard?
- Do they have certain tasks they are expected to do without remuneration?
- Do they expect to be paid for any work they do at home?
- Do they finish the tasks you ask them to do or do they just barely get started?
- Do your children strive for excellence in their work or just mediocrity?
- Do your children initiate work and go beyond what is asked or expected?
- Do they have eyes to see things that need to be done, or do you have to constantly nag them to help you with work?
- How are you training them to leave your home with life skills necessary to do well away from mom and dad? What have you trained them to do on their own?

Several years ago, I was at a high school cross country meet on a Saturday with my son. His race had finished and we were on our way back home to do yard work. A father whose daughter was also in the event asked me why we were leaving so soon. When we told him our afternoon project, he said, “Wow... I can never get my kids to help me in the yard or around the house. I don’t think my daughter has ever picked up a rake...” As we turned to go to our

car, we both reflected on the sad reality of this lazy generation of young people who have been enabled to be slothful by their parents not training them to work hard. Some joke about the millennial generation being lazy, but who is responsible for them being what they are? They are what we as parents have allowed them (trained them) to be. If our kids are slothful, we need to look first in the mirror to find out why. Do we model a good work ethic before our family and have we trained our children in life skills to be able to function on their own and take on work either in the workforce or in their future homes?

Developing a strong work ethic begins at home, and honestly, it begins with parents modeling what it means to work hard. Our children will never catch what it means to work with excellence if they see bad examples of it at home. They follow our example. If we are lazy, they will be. If we take the path of least resistance, they will follow. If we really don't care, neither will they. If we allow our lawns to be weed fests, they will occupy their time with something else. If our house is a mess, guess what, so also will their rooms and their future lives. If we always function as if someone else will do it for us, then they will follow our lead. They will wait for someone else to wash dishes, do laundry, cook, vacuum, pull weeds, because they would rather someone else do the work rather than getting their hands dirty. If we are unfruitful in our work ethic on the job, they will be just like us because that is all they see and know. Like father like son. Like mother like daughter.

- **Dropping The Baton:**

As parents, our job to model, train, and then transfer our work ethic to our children is crucial for them to carry to the next generation. How we come to work is crucial to their thriving in their futures, be it with or without children. How we pass this value on is vital. Some drop the baton and watch their children flounder in laziness, being completely unmotivated to work hard or use their time wisely. Solomon expressed his frustration...

Ecclesiastes 2:18-20 "Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored... Therefore, I completely despaired of all the fruit of my labor... when there is a man who has labored with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, then he gives his legacy to one who has not labored with them. This too is vanity and a great evil."

Solomon's weak son was Rehoboam who took his council from the losers he grew up with. We can work ourselves silly, but if we don't pass on a good work ethic to our children, our kids will end up inheriting the fruit of our hard labor and will not value what they have because they have never worked a day for it. The entitlement mentality is destruction to our society.

Deuteronomy 12:28 "Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God." (7:13)

- **It Begins With Parents Being Good Examples Of Hard Work:**

1 Corinthians 4:15,16 "...As my beloved children... I became your father through the gospel... I exhort you, **be imitators of me**... Timothy who is my...faithful child in the Lord, will remind you of **my ways** which are in Christ."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "**Follow my example**, as I follow the example of Christ."

Philippians 4:9 "Whatever you have learned or received, or heard from me, or **seen in me** – put it into practice."

- **It Begins With A Father's Example Of Hard Work:** (initiating, leading)

Genesis 18:19 (Abraham) "**He** will direct **his** children and **his** household... to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just..."

Proverbs 17:6 "Grandchildren are the crown of old men, and the glory of sons is their **father**."

Jeremiah 3:24 "But the shameful thing has consumed the **labor** of our fathers since our youth... for we have sinned against the LORD our God..."

Ezekiel 18:14-32 "Now behold, he has a son who has **observed** all his father's sins which he has committed, and observing does not do likewise... he will not die for his father's iniquity, he will surely live. He who executes My ordinances, and walks in My statutes... he will surely live... when the son has practiced justice and righteousness... The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity... repent and turn... and live." (Deut. 24:16)

Fathers are responsible to be the head of the home and have a major influence over their family. Children follow their father's lead. God has given us a clear picture of what a husband and father should be and basic requirements that all men should seek to achieve. One generation's work ethic affects the next - for good or for bad.

- **It Begins With A Mother's Example Of Hard Work:** (initiating, leading)

Proverbs 31:

v13 "She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight."

v14 "She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar."

v15 "She rises also while it is still night and gives food to her household."

v16 "She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard."

v18 "She senses that her gain is good; her lamp does not go out at night."

v19 "She stretches out her hands to the distaff and her hands grasp the spindle."

v21 "Her household are clothed with scarlet."

v22 "She makes coverings for herself and her clothing is fine linen and purple."

v24 "She makes linen garments and sells them and supplies belts to the tradesmen."

v27 “She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.”

v28 “Her children rise up and bless her & her husband also and he praises her.”

V31 “Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.”

Proverbs 14:1 “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”

Titus 2:3-5 “Older women... are to be... teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

Mothers, your self-sacrificial labor for your family speaks volumes of your character. Although work is difficult, your joyous approach to your work is contagious to your children. They are watching you and how you respond to the challenges you have as wife and mother. Your attitude and the way you do what is placed before you, will either build up or tear down your family, and will either motivate your children to follow your example or reject work all together.

#### • **A Biblical Theology Of Work**

The Bible has much to say on work. God led by example by working in Creation and resting from His work (Gen. 2:2,3). God put man in the garden to work and rule over his Creation (Gen. 2:15). Work was easy and good before sin. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, work became much more difficult with the curse as a consequence (Gen. 3:17-19). Noah worked to build the ark which was quite an undertaking of skill and labor (Gen. 6-9). Throughout Israel’s time in the wilderness, God gifted certain individuals with specific skills to accomplish the task of work (Ex. 31:6; 35:35; 36:1,2). God even initiated a retirement from work for those who had served faithfully (Numb. 8:25). God promised if Israel would obey God, He would bless the work of their hands and they would prosper in abundance (Deut. 28:12; 20:9). God rewards good work with full wages (Ruth 2:12). There is great reward for excellent work (2 Chron. 15:7). When Israel came together to work, they accomplished incredible tasks together (Neh. 4:6). Even with success, man is to be dependent on God’s provision and strength (Neh. 6:9,16). Work should be seen as a gift of God and there is much good in our labor (Ecc. 3:13). Team work is crucial when we are working for the same cause (Ecc. 4:9). Rest is pleasant after a good day of work where you feel satisfied and content with your effort (Ecc. 5:12). Profitable wealth is a result of working hard (Prov. 13:11; 14:23). God is with us when we work hard (Hag. 2:4). Rather than profit dishonestly, we should work hard and we will profit enough to then share with others in need (Eph. 4:28). Working provides for a family and removes the burden on others (1 Thess. 2:9). Anyone who does not work to provide for his family, he is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8). The hard worker should be the first to enjoy the benefits of his labor (2 Tim. 2:6). Paul was a tentmaker (Acts 18:3) and

faithfully worked with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:12). Paul throughout his ministry paid for most of his expenses (1 Cor. 9:6). A key principle is “if you don’t work, you shouldn’t eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). We should work to not be dependent on someone else for our livelihood (2 Thess. 3:11,12). Work is always difficult, but very rewarding (Ps. 90:10; 104:23; Ecc. 3:13; 5:19). We are always working toward a heavenly and earthly Kingdom (1 Cor. 3:13-15; Gal. 6:4; Eph. 4:12; Phil. 1:22). Paul said...

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 “You ought to **follow our example**, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you, in order to **offer ourselves as a model for you so that you would follow our example.**”

Acts 20:33-35 “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. In everything I showed you **that by working hard** in this manner you must help the weak... **It is more blessed to give than receive.**”

**Question: What attitudes or character qualities are developed by working hard?**

- **God Initiated The Principle Of Taking Adequate Rest:**

Exodus 23:12 “On the seventh day you shall cease from labor so that ... you may rest... and refresh (yourselves)...”

Exodus 34:21 “...You shall rest even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.”

- **A Father’s Provision:** (Dads, we must model a strong work ethic.)

1 Timothy 5:8 “If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 “Excel still more... Make it your ambition... to work with your hands... and not be in any need.”

2 Thessalonians 3:6-11 “Keep away from any brother who leads an unruly life... follow our example... in labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you... if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat. We hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all... we command and exhort in the Lord... to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread...”

Genesis 30:30 “...When shall I provide for my own household also?”

Ecclesiastes 5:14 “When riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him.”

\* Our greatest strength in teaching is what we set before our kids.

\* Our children will only emulate the work ethic we model before them.

\* Men must learn to be men themselves before they can teach their boys to be men.

\* Our boys are future men in the making. We need to set before our sons the Biblical pattern of masculinity.

• **God's Call To Diligence:**

Proverbs 10:4 "Diligent hands bring wealth."

Proverbs 13:4 "The desires of the diligent are fully satisfied."

Ecclesiastes 9:10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."

2 Chronicles 15:7 "Be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work."

Isaiah 65:23 "They will not labor in vain..."

Colossians 3:22-24 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men... it is the Lord Christ you are serving."

2 Timothy 2:6 "The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops."

• **The Bible Warns Against Laziness (slothful/sluggard):**

People often lack resources because they are foolish and do not work hard. A sluggard is someone who gives too many excuses (Prov. 22:13), who procrastinates, who forfeits tomorrow's possibilities for today's leisure, who delays the unpleasant, who wants but never makes it happen, who would rather watch work than do it, and who is wise in his own eyes – he is all talk and no substance. He is the one who doesn't plan ahead, who doesn't take initiative, who never follows through. He starts work, but never finishes. The sluggard never prepares, never maintains, never perseveres. A sloth is known for his hastiness and deceit. He is dishonest in his work. Not completing work on time is also dishonesty (Prov. 27:1). There is a tendency for mediocrity (taking the least path of resistance) which is also a temptation in a believer's life. Slothfulness brings poverty. The lazy man will eat his own cooking. Someone once said, "If you want someone to do a good job, find a busy man. A man who is not busy probably doesn't want to be" (Prov. 10:4). It is estimated that 20% of employee's work time is wasted and unproductive. It is also projected that 25% of the labor force gives their best effort on the job. Many, if asked honestly, have admitted to being distracted on the job or being guilty of robbing their employer of valuable work time by focusing on personal items, surfing the web, checking email, on social media, gaming, involved in non-profitable office chat (gossip?) or just daydreaming. There are others that don't even show up to work. The Bible says much on laziness. Laziness is a sin that must be resisted!

Proverbs 6:6 "Go to the ant you sluggard..."

Proverbs 6:9-11 "How long will you sit there you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man."

Proverbs 10:4 "Laziness makes one poor." (20:4)

Proverbs 10:5 "He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son."

Proverbs 12:11 "He who chases fantasies lacks judgment."

Proverbs 12:24 "The hand of the diligent will rule; laziness ends in slave labor."

Proverbs 13:4 "The sluggard craves and gets nothing."

Proverbs 14:23 "Mere talk leads only to poverty."

Proverbs 18:9 "One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys."

Proverbs 19:15 "Laziness brings on deep sleep and the shiftless man goes hungry."

Proverbs 20:4 "A sluggard does not plow in season and so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing."

Proverbs 21:17 "He who loves pleasure will become poor, and whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich."

Proverbs 21:20 "The foolish man devours all he has."

Proverbs 21:25,26 "The sluggard's cravings will be the death of him because his hands refuse to work. All day long he craves for more..."

Proverbs 24:30-34 "I went past the field of the sluggard... thorns had come up everywhere and the ground was covered with weeds, the wall was in ruins... A little sleep, a little slumber... and poverty will come on you..."

Proverbs 26:14-16 "A sluggard buries his hand in the dish, he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth."

Proverbs 28:19 "He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty."

Ecclesiastes 10:18 "Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks."

Ecclesiastes 11:4 "He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap." (distraction)

Ecclesiastes 11:6 "Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening... for you do not know... sowing will succeed."

Matthew 25:26 "You wicked, lazy servant..." (You should have invested but instead did nothing and have nothing to show for what was entrusted to your care.)

2 Thessalonians 3:6 "Keep away from every 'brother' who is idle ..."

2 Thessalonians 3:10-13 "If a man will not work, he shall not eat. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. Do not grow weary in doing good."

• **Biblical Warnings Against Sinful Aspects Of Work:**

Genesis 3:17 Sin complicates work and makes it more difficult.

Deuteronomy 28:15,17,18,20 “But if you do not obey the LORD your God... all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl, cursed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground... The LORD will send upon you... confusion... in all you undertake to do... on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me.” (v.29 “You will not prosper in your ways...”)

Psalms 105:44 Others may reap the benefits of one’s labor if God brings judgment upon you because of sin. (Jn. 4:38)

Psalms 107:12 Forced labor can be a result of judgment on a nation. (Ps. 78:46)

Psalms 109:11 “Let the creditor seize all that he has and let strangers plunder the product of his labor.” (Debt can rob you of your wages.)

Ecclesiastes 4:4 “labor and skill done as a result of man’s rivalry” (wrong motivation)

Ecclesiastes 4:8,9 “There was a man all alone, he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth...” (a discontent workaholic)

Ecclesiastes 5:12 “The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.”

Ecclesiastes 6:7 “All man’s efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied.”

Isaiah 41:24 “Your work amounts to nothing...” (Hag. 1:11)

1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.” (workaholic)

2 Peter 2:18,19 “...for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”

Matthew 21:28-31 “A man had two sons and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing, and he answered, ‘I will sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?”

Many individuals are workaholics working overtime, working a second part-time job and rarely taking time off for rest and restoration, which directly effects their health, marriage, family time, impact on their children, church involvement, creativity, and personal joy. If you are chasing the love of money through your work, you will never find contentment and happiness (1 Tim. 6:7-11)

**Teaching Children Good Work Principles:** *(teach your children these values)*

- Do everything as unto the LORD (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23).
- In whatever you do, give it your best (strive for excellence in all that you do).  
“If you have done your best, that is all you can do.”
- Finish well what you start (diligence), before you move to something else.



- Do first things first (discernment in priority).
- Accept your work cheerfully (right attitude/joy).
- Work through difficulty (perseverance/endurance/faithfulness).
- Initiate work without being asked (leadership, being a self-starter/initiator)
- Each person in your family should have regular responsibilities to cook, clean, do yard work, do laundry or folding without expecting to be rewarded. Children need to learn to carry their fair share in the family.
- Train your children to have eyes to see work that needs to be done and do it (being aware, taking the initiative without having to be asked).
- Work because it is the right thing to do (willingness) without expecting anything in return (not only for external rewards)
- A child is expected to accomplish a required task regardless of how they feel about that specific task – whether they like doing it or not, and whether they physically or emotionally feel like it or not. (I normally don't feel like mowing my lawn.)
- Serve one another out of your love for each other (service)

Home is the training ground for the rest of life. What life skills are you teaching your kids while they are under your roof? Riches and over-controlling parents can be a detriment to kids. Everything is done for them. They don't know what work is. I know kids who have never mowed a lawn, never cooked a meal, have no clue of how to wash or fold laundry, never cleaned a shower of scum. Kids have no concept of how to work hard to earn a day's wage because they have never had a real job or checking account to manage. Most kids have no earned savings. The only money they have and spend is from allowance or birthday gifts. When they go off to college, it is a disaster. The only way they can learn these skills is to learn them at home from a young age. You don't just watch YouTube videos to figure things out. You have to do it with the loving oversight of parents who want to build into you life skills that last a lifetime. If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a moment, but if you teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. Even from a young age, you can give your kids appropriate responsibilities proportionate to their ability to help along with their brothers and sisters. What skills are you teaching your children so they are more helpful at home?

### **Areas Children Can Develop A Work Ethic**

As parents, realize the importance of training your children to work. It begins by having a family policy that the whole family participates in work needed to run the family. I will comment on allowances later, but the main point we taught our kids is that responsibilities that specifically had to do with maintaining our home were the responsibility for each of us to make happen – without remuneration or pay – and we would do it together. My wife and I covered costs for the children's food, housing, clothing, medical, entertainment, but the kids were all required to help us work. Areas we needed help included yard work, tree trimming,

dishes, vacuuming, painting, babysitting younger siblings, loading and unloading the dishwasher, cleaning the pool, vacuuming, laundry, dusting, cleaning sinks, cooking, setting the table – all skills that a child needs to learn to be out on his/her own. Remember, we are training our kids to leave. God blessed us with a big house and a big backyard, and my wife and I could honestly not keep it up without our kids. (Just recently, our last child left the nest and it has been really difficult to still maintain the home that we have. I lost my lawn care, tree trimming and pool service in one swoop.) Younger children can help with beginning basic tasks like gathering dirty laundry, setting the table, dusting, emptying the dishwasher, picking fruit, or blowing off the driveway outside. Most of the tasks a young child can do in miniature form – by using a little broom, a knife that is not sharp, using a rake, picking up toys, put things away properly, making their bed, stirring things, gathering and taking out the trash, etc. I started my sons mowing our lawn inside my arms as we pushed together. It may take more time to complete, but training them in how to work will pay lifelong dividends. Don't do everything for them – they will never learn. Let them learn to be self-sufficient and fix things. Give them resources to develop skills for themselves. Don't require of them something you are not willing to do yourself. The more they see you in action, the more they catch what work should be like. The more you do it together as a family, the more they realize that work is what we do together. They help shoulder the responsibility – rather than me ragging on them to work. When they see Dad worn out, they jump in and help.

Someone once said, "The worst day of fishing is still better than the best day of work." But I would challenge that thinking. I love to fish, and I can say I have had some miserable days fishing, but some wonderful times of satisfaction after a good day of accomplishing a big project together. It feels good to do the right thing. Do my kids and I sing with joy every moment of our work? No. We're just like you. There are days I don't even want to get out of bed because of all the work I have to do that day, but that is where men need to be men and step up to the hard things – like putting in a sprinkler system, painting a whole house, laying sod, or fixing trailer brakes. You say, "I don't know how to do that!" I initially didn't either, but I learned to do so with my kids, and we saved a lot of money in the process. It is amazing what you can learn with YouTube self-help videos. Wives and mothers also work hard – just read through Proverbs 31. That lady and her kids were hard workers. Just try raising several children whom you are spending most of your day homeschooling, feeding, bathing, and correcting. Work is difficult, but it is what is necessary to achieve the purpose God has given us. Remember, Adam worked in the garden before sin, and we will be working in heaven – just without sin and its effects. Work is a gift. It is our sin that makes it difficult.

Parents, one of the greatest gifts you can give your children is to model a good work ethic so they can emulate you in their future. How you come to work and how you deal with money will have a significant impact on your children. Values are caught more than they are taught. Working hard develops godly character and a good reputation and God guarantees you will have something to show for your labor. There is something excellent and rewarding in

hard work (a job well done). A man grows up to do what he learned to do as a boy – either to be lazy or to diligently work hard.

Mothers, never subsidize your son's lazy tendencies by removing work that seems too difficult for him. Boys can usually work much harder than they say they can or lead you to believe. Help them push through the difficult tasks and finish well. Just because it is difficult doesn't mean it is impossible. They may get a little sore or develop blisters, but encourage them to go the extra mile, rather than bailing them out on a project just because they resist the challenge. Build toughness in your boys. They will call you blessed later in life for your prodding them toward excellence and a good work ethic.

Parents who allow their children to neglect work are setting up a future problem of their child developing a bad reputation. Work is a public activity and will be evaluated publicly. A boy steeped in laziness will be regarded negatively in a job evaluation and it will affect future employment options. Developing a strong work ethic guarantees job security and a good reputation that precedes the young person. We want personally to be seen as someone who works hard. Do we expect any less of our children and their work reputation. How are they going to learn if we don't teach them?

Laziness is also an object lesson. Parents can point out a sluggard to warn their child not to follow the lazy person's bad example. "Be good, don't be like other boys." Lazy behavior is obvious for all to see and sloths should be pointed out as what not to follow (Prov. 24:30; 2 Thess. 3:11). Hopefully we are not hypocritical in what we expect from others, so that we are not guilty of laziness ourselves. That contradiction will only come back to haunt us.

### **In what places does God call us to work hard?**

Other similar areas that are affected by one's work ethic are how our kids learn to pursue excellence and be faithful in their pursuits like music, sports, and academics. Our children need parental training and encouragement so they use their abilities and opportunities to the glory of God and to practice those things with excellence. How they come to their piano lessons, whether they actually practice their instrument or just wing it for lessons, how they participate in their sport, whether they give their best, or just cut corners and come in last on drills, or whether in their school subjects they do just enough to get a passing grade, or strive for A's, will show if doing their best matters or if just being mediocre is acceptable. We have trained our children to do their best in whatever they do, and if they are giving their best, then whatever the performance, or score, or grade they get, it is good and honorable. If they are not giving their best, then they need to change their attitude or change their pursuit. Kids should not continue with music lessons, or a sport, nor should a parent pay for their college education if they don't work hard and pursue excellence in what they do. Don't reward your children for bad performance. The world won't, neither should we.

Working around the home and working outside the home are similar. If our children do take on a part-time job working outside the home, they should do their work with excellence. They should be committed to that job and see it through, even when it is inconvenient, or is mundane, or isn't much fun, or doesn't pay what they would hope. Teaching your child to honor their boss and give their best at their job will last them the rest of their lives. My kids have been firemen, tutors, painters, janitors, worked lawn and pool care, babysitters, house sitters, animal sitters, worked in a cafeteria, in a shipping department, on a climbing wall, while they were in high school or early college. The strong work ethic they developed in their early years has carried over into their adult years. Their reputation on the job precedes them. As they continue to work hard, their employers have wanted them to continue because they were known for working hard and displaying good character. A good work ethic brings job security. People want you back. One other point. If they do take on a part time job, hold them accountable to still do their chores at home. If they are still under your roof and you are covering their costs in many ways, they need to shoulder the responsibility to still fulfill their home tasks and manage their time schedule to do both. Once they are out of your home, they are on their own, and will be responsible to pay their own bills. Now is the time to learn those lessons.

Volunteer work is equally important. Just because a teenager may not get paid should not mean that they don't give it their best, or use that as an excuse to slough off. God calls us to be faithful in the little things as much as the big (Lk. 16:10). A church work day or an opportunity to help a neighbor should be a worthy task to work with excellence – even if it is for free. God will repay accordingly. Serving others should never come with a price tag. Being willing to help regardless develops a humble servant's attitude toward people. Others on the receiving end, knowing what is being done for them, should never take advantage of those who are willing to work without pay. I have heard in the past people at church suggest that the youth take on a work project, sometimes things that adults were not willing to do. I believe the best way to teach our children to serve, is to serve right alongside them, and work with excellence in whatever we are tasked to do.

Every form of real work is good for a child. Homework or school work is work. How we apply ourselves to our education is a reflection of our work ethic. If we come to our school work with laziness or mediocrity, we develop bad habits that will follow us into adulthood. That means even the mundane, seemingly unimportant homework assignment should be done well. Learning early to work with excellence in everything we do is a positive trait. Boys learn differently than girls. Boys need a goal in their education to shoot for and lists they can accomplish because boys/men are more focused and task orientated than girls/women. Boys need a challenge in their school work to help motivate them. Boys may need more limits set than girls. Boys are more prone to distraction than girls. Boys get cabin fever and need to run and play. Boys learn better under pressure. Where boys may struggle in communication skills, they are usually good in using reason and remembering facts. They may not be as good in

handwriting, reading, or speaking as the girls, but might be better in logic and problem solving – simply by nature God created boys to be different from girls. Girls, on the other hand, are divinely gifted for communication and nurture. They are better at relationships and creativity. They love color and design. To them the journey is what matters, not so much the destination.

Developmentally, some children may be slower in certain areas than others, but don't give up hope. They usually catch up and adapt as they develop certain skills and a willingness to learn. Many in the public system have been exposed to a wide variety of subjects, but they have no motivation to learn. Many who have been home educated have less opportunity to be exposed to certain subjects, but they come with a greater motivation to learn and desire to do well. Some children may barely pass an entrance exam or are slow at reading, but by the time they graduate, they can catch up and attain a high GPA and graduate with honors. The flexibility of home education allows for an individualized education approach directly fitted to a child's strengths and needs. Whatever their gift, each child is unique and should be challenged to do their school work with excellence.

The subject of paying children an allowance is each parents decision. It is neither right or wrong. Some parents want to teach their children how to handle money by giving them an allowance. I understand that, but I feel it is better for them to earn that money through working outside the home, and thereby learning the principle of stewardship through work, rather than rewarding them with money without work. I personally believe any work done for our family should be done without remuneration. My wife and I already pay for most everything our kids need or do. However, we have an agreement that whatever they want out of the ordinary, they are responsible for covering the cost. We also have an agreement, if a child is making money through a job, they can help us with costs by paying half for special events like church youth group camps. When the kids are young and cannot work outside the home, they still get birthday or Christmas money or gift cards that they can use to buy special things they desire. In our family, there was no specific reason for us to give our kids extra cash. When a job presented itself, they jumped to it and stayed faithful to it because they knew they would add to their own savings. When our kids were old enough to manage money and demonstrated good stewardship, we got them a savings account and a debit card. They value their account because it is hard earned money they worked for. My grown kids have a savings mentality because they learned to save and work hard when they were young. Training your children to keep receipts and keep track of where they spend their money is also a helpful practice of managing their money. Talking openly about the family's use of money and financial goals will help your children value the proper use of money and will challenge you to be a good steward of what God has blessed your family financially. How are they going to learn if you never talk about it and train them in the God-honoring use of money?

Another great result of children working hard for the money they earn is they also feel a part of being a good steward by giving it away – especially to the Lord. It does not have the

same effect of sacrifice if I give them money to give away. When they earn it and tithe with it, it develops a habit of them giving on their own initiative. My wife and I tried to practice before our children giving to the Lord's work by letting them see us visibly put our check in the offering plate. When our children were young, we would allow them to put the check in the plate to help them physically participate. This is one drawback of having online giving – your kids never see you give. You can't model something if it is visibly absent from their experience. Our desire to make life easier by giving online may be sacrificing a greater opportunity to teach our children the joy of giving personally.

### **Personal Advice On Work And Finances:**

- Practice saving money for your family by doing the work yourself (house repair, painting, lawn care, haircuts, pool service, auto repair, inspect spraying, tree trimming, etc.)  
A young man has to be taught the importance of saving and deferring gratification to provide for the future. Teach your children the quality of saving over spending.
- Don't pay someone else to do something you can do as a family for yourself.
- Teach work to your children early. Teach them the value and privilege of work.
- If both spouse's work, live off the husband's income & save the wife's income.
- Take any overtime money received and pay off debt or create an emergency fund.
- Remember, a fool and his money are soon parted. Teach your children to use wisdom with their money. Model those principles before them and they will follow.

Questions on money management.

Do your kids see the correlation between work and money?

How do your kids deal with money?

What do they see you modeling?

What is your children learning about financial stewardship from you?

What do your children learn from your spending habits and view on material things?

What is your children's view of saving, spending, and giving?

### **Who Do You Ultimately Work For?**

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (His work of art, His masterpiece)

Ephesians 6:5-7 "...Obey your earthly masters with respect and fear and with sincerity of heart just as you would obey Christ... Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were **servicing the Lord, not men**, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does..."

Colossians 3:22-24 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as **working for the Lord, not for men... it is the Lord Christ you are servicing.**"

Romans 12:11 "Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, **servicing the Lord.**"

1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all **for the glory of God.**" (Colossians 3:17)

- All work done for the Lord is good.
- Our Heavenly Father is always watching.

### **Desiring God's Favor In Our Work:**

Deuteronomy 12:28 "Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God." (7:13)

### **Spiritual Illustrations Regarding Work:**

John 6:27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you..." "What shall we do so that we may work the works of God." "Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him (Jesus) whom He has sent'."

Romans 4:4,5 "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justified the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness... whom God credits righteousness apart from works."