



2023 1Q Managing for the Master Till He Comes—Lesson 8 Planning for Success

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

What do you think of from the title, “Planning for Success”? The lesson rightly asks, how do we define success?

When you think of planning for success, what do you consider to be success? What standard do you use?

What determines whether you are successful or not?

My granddaughter Lennox played on the Standifer Gap SDA school basketball team this year and they did not win one game—were they successful?

Well they...

- Improved their basketball skills
- Improved their cerebellar brain function, which helps develop their overall brain organization and impacts thought organization later in life
- Experienced the physical health benefits of exercise
- Learned teamwork
- Experienced team bonding and improved friendships
- Learned how to handle themselves responsibly and focused upon being good sports, having positive attitudes, affirming others, being kind to the other team members etc. and while they didn't win a game their team was the unanimous choice of all the other teams for the sportsmanship award.

Were they successful or did they fail? Doesn't it depend on what criteria one uses to measure success and failure?

- I am proud of Lennox—not for how well she played basketball—even though I saw improvement in her physical skills. What I am truly proud of her for is her spirit, her attitude, her choice to stay positive, to focus on kindness, and caring about the people, including the other team members, more than winning. That is evidence of Jesus in your heart!

What is the standard that determines success in God's kingdom?

- Is it the Ten Commandments?
- If we keep that list would that be the measure of success?



- Would the motive in the heart have any bearing on whether one is a success when keeping that list?
- Love for God and others?
- Living in harmony with God's design laws?
- And what does living in harmony with God's design laws look like?
- Is it measured primarily by performance, how well one does on tasks and deeds, for instance we know loving others helps, so do we measure success by counting how many people we feed, or how many articles of clothing we give to the poor, who how much money we give? Or is success determined by attitudes and motives of the heart when carrying out the action? The Bible says, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV84).
- So would success be a person who:
 - Loves God and others
 - Loves the truth and is willing to grow in new truth
 - Is honest, kind, loyal, faithful, and trustworthy
 - Is mature and self-governed
 - Is wise in the principles, methods, and design laws of God

How does a person become like this?

- By beholding we are changed—we must first and foremost have the truth about God as revealed by Jesus at the center of our lives.
- We must be won to love God and cherish Him and value His character and methods and long to be like Him.
- Then we eagerly open our hearts and actively ask God to come in and transform us. We experience new motives and new desires and then we must choose to apply the truth God has revealed to our lives and then we experience the joy of living out the principles of God. The selfish and corrupt things of this world become offensive and disgusting to us. And as we choose to live out God's principles we mature.
- When we slip up, we know God loves us and we go to Him in sorrow, in repentance, in disappointment with ourselves, and experience His grace, forgiveness, and healing power so that the next time we face a similar situation we will be quicker to recognize the danger and choose a different path.

What is the standard that the world measures success by?

- Power
- Position
- Wealth
- Fame
- Clicks, followers, or views
- Gold medals, awards of various kinds
- Performance, how well one completes a task—winning at all cost
- Survival



Do we sometimes confuse these two standards?

Consider this historic quote from *Christian Education* about the Christian school at Battle Creek MI, what do you think? Any relevance for us today?

Our College at Battle Creek is a place where the younger members of God's family are to be trained according to God's plan of growth and development. **They should be impressed with the idea that they are created in the image of their Maker, and that Christ is the pattern which they are to follow.** [Is this the message our young people will get in the public-school systems? Does it make a difference in the development of our children if they believe they are made in God's image and are to pattern themselves after Christ, or if they believe there is no God and they are just the final link in an evolutionary chain of evolving animals in which the strongest kill the weakest?] **Our brethren** permit their minds to take too narrow and too low a range. They do not keep the divine plan ever in view, **but are fixing their eyes upon worldly models.** [Who is doing this? Our brethren, our fellow church members, leaders, and educators. Do you think she is suggesting that our brethren are rejecting the belief in God and the Bible, and are teaching that we evolved from lower life forms? No—she is not suggesting that. She is saying that our Bible believing, God fearing brethren have in some other way had a narrow view and have been fixing their eyes on worldly models. What might that be? Could it be the worldly model of law and justice? A worldly model of a god who makes up rules and is required to use his power to punish rule-breakers and that that god requires some legal payment be made in order to propitiate his wrath? And what happens to the heart and mind if that kind of a god is internalized?] Look up, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and then labor that your pupils may be conformed to that perfect character. [What is the recommendation? Take our eyes off worldly standards, and instead make Jesus the center. Is there a law involved in this recommendation? The law of worship—we become like the one we admire and worship. And what do we see in Jesus? We see the Father.] *Christian Education* 41.

If you lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then make this increase a cause of rejoicing, you show great blindness. If numbers were evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for, in this world, his followers are largely in the majority. [Do we ever get tempted to measure success by numbers? Have churches ever had numbers of baptisms as the measure of success for their pastors? And what about lowering the standard to keep our governments approval of us, our government funding, Medicare reimbursements of our healthcare institutions? When is it okay to exchange the principles of God for the methods of this world? Have we seen over the last several years various Christian organizations justifying the use of coercive force on others, even claiming to do so is an act of love?] **It is the degree of moral power pervading the College, that is a test of its prosperity.** It is the virtue, intelligence, and piety of the people composing our churches, not their numbers, that should be a source of joy and thankfulness. *Christian Education* 42.

What is to be the thing that we are to value, that we hold as a standard of whether we are successful or not? Christlikeness of the people in our institutions.

Do you know what the motto of Liberty University is? *Training Champions for Christ.*



In every leadership meeting that I have attended, they make this mission central—they make Christ central, make standing for Biblical truth central and actively seek methods of teaching that incorporates the truth of God’s kingdom into every aspect of learning.

As I was thinking about these things in preparing the lesson, I came across this historical quote from one of the founders of the SDA church. I feel confident that the faculty at Liberty would agree with this, what do you think?

It should be the fixed purpose of the youth to aim high in all their plans for their life-work. They should adopt for their government in all things the standard which God's Word presents. [What government? Their government, in other words, how they govern themselves. What is the standard that God’s Word presents that we are to adopt for our self-government? Is it a list of rules? Should we go to the Bible and find a list of approved foods and prohibited foods and then make a rulebook and not only apply it to ourselves, but also judge others who claim to be Bible believers by that list? If we see people eating foods on the naughty list then can we be sure that they are not following the Bible? Or perhaps rules about dress, or jewelry, or religious rituals. Is this what the author means by living by the standard in God’s Word?] This is the Christian's positive duty, and it should be also his positive pleasure. [Do you hear any contradiction in this sentence? Or do you recognize this author’s understanding of design law? Can you make a rule that your child is required to eat turnip greens? Can you even enforce that rule so they will eat them to fulfill their duty to eat foods on the healthy list? Can you make them take pleasure in it? So how can our fulfillment of Biblical duties be a pleasure? God instructed throughout Scripture that His people were to observe Sabbath, but in Isaiah, He told them in order to truly keep the Sabbath they must delight in it. This is design law. We don’t really obey God until we move from children who obey out of duty, out of fear of punishment, out of obligation, because the rules say so, into mature people who have come to recognize that God’s laws are the laws life are built upon and we freely do it because we not only want to, but we delight in it. Consider teeth brushing, how a child does it because of a rule, but as an adult we delight to brush our teeth because we love keeping our teeth healthy.] Cultivate respect for yourself because you are Christ's purchased possession. [What is the lesson here? What is the idea being taught? Why should a person have self-respect? Because God so loved us He not only created us in His image, but Jesus died to redeem us from sin. We are valued and cherished by God and we are to recognize our value and respect ourselves as children of God. In other words, our value comes **in who we are**. Is that the world’s standard? Or does the world place value on what people do not on who they are? In the world we are valued because we get good grades, hit the most home runs, can run faster, jump higher, sing better, speak more eloquently. Does the world value people for who they are or for what they do? God wants people, including our children, to understand who they are as His children and respect themselves as His redeemed and cherished people and to value themselves and others for who they are.] Success in the formation of right habits, advancement in that which is noble and just, will give you an influence that all will appreciate and value. [What determines what is noble and just? Don’t we hear a lot about justice in the world and doing what is just? What is God’s standard of justice? It is God’s law, and how does that function? It is the law of love, truth, and



liberty—the laws of reality. We cannot be just if we violate God’s law. One of Satan’s traps is to get people to pursue some justice via his methods, methods that violate God’s design laws—made up rules by enforcement, manipulation, and coercion rather than truth, love, and conversion.

And how do we develop habits of any kind? By repetition, by doing things over and over until neural networks are laid down that make our responses semi-automatic. This includes motor habits like how you button your clothes or tie your shoes, but also habits in how we process information and treat others. Notice the counsel on the types of habits we are to develop.] Live for something besides self. [Is this a rule? Interestingly, the author did not say live for someONE besides yourself, but for something besides yourself—in other words a higher purpose that survival-driven me first. It is a call to altruistic living, to serve a greater purpose than self-advancement, which will mean our lives become blessings to others.

But what happens if we use force to make a person do something that is beneficial to others, that that person doesn’t agree with? What happens inside the one forced? God’s government does not function like human governments. God does not use force to get our compliance. He will, with children, act the role of a loving parent and discipline, but in the end, when He knows we have had enough truth to make our decision, He leaves us free to reject Him if we desire. So, is living for others a rule or a principle? Notice what is said next.] If your motives are pure and unselfish, if you are ever looking for work to do, if you are always on the alert to show kindly attentions and do courteous deeds, you are unconsciously building your own monument. [This is all design law—about the motives and the motives of unselfish love leading to actions that apply those motives in the world around us and this builds a monument, what kind of a monument? It builds Christlike character, reputation, recognition of trustworthiness, beauty, and reliability—not necessarily in the eyes of the worldly, those who selfishly reject God, but in the eyes of God and the heavenly beings—those who see reality for what it is.] This is the work God calls upon all children and youth to do. Do good, if you would be cherished in the memory of others. Live to be a blessing to all with whom you come in contact, wherever your lot may be cast. Let the children and youth awake to their opportunities. By kindness and love, by self-sacrificing deeds, let them write their names in the hearts of those with whom they associate.—The Youth's Instructor, February 7, 1901.

Does this description sound like people whose lives would be successful?

But what if some people do take the position that Bible standards for our success does mean that we are to use the Bible to find the “right” rules, and then we should make a list of those rules, like the “right” and “wrong” foods, clothes, rituals and not only live by them but seek to get everyone else to live by them too?

Have you ever met people like this—I assume they really want to do good, but have you found their influence to be good or disruptive?

Well, as I was thinking about these things, and in light of the health message given to the SDA church—which has been a huge blessing to many and is simply a message calling people to live in harmony with the laws of health, learning to care for the Spirit temple so that people can experience



the best possible health to be of the greatest use in God's cause—I was thinking of some who fail to understand the laws of health, the principles involved, and instead approach it as a list of rules and how doing so can harm. And then I came across this historical quote, also from E.G. White, who was integral in advancing the value of living in harmony with the laws of health. What do you think of this?

While we would caution you not to overeat, even of the best quality of food, **we would also caution those that are extremists not to raise a false standard and then endeavor to bring everybody to it.** There are some who are starting out as health reformers who are not fit to engage in any other enterprise, and who have not sense enough to take care of their own families or keep their proper place in the church. And what do they do? Why, they fall back as health-reform physicians, as though they could make that a success. They assume the responsibilities of their practice and take the lives of men and women into their hands, when they really know nothing about the business.—Testimonies for the Church 2:374, 375 (1869). CH 161.2

Do you love it when people speak truth clearly and plainly?

She is applying the principle of Romans 14—let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind. Don't try to bring everyone else to your standard.

She describes people who have their own responsibilities that they have not managed well.

- The natural result of not fulfilling one's legitimate duties, when one is capable of doing so, is to experience guilt, shame, and inadequacy.
- If they refuse to respond to the godly conviction of guilt by humbly seeking Jesus, asking for enlightenment, and then repenting and choosing to reform and begin fulfilling their responsibilities—if they fail to do this, then their guilt, shame, and inadequacy only worsens.
- Having rejected the path of truth and repentance, they then seek to offset their guilt and shame by some activity that they invest with goodness, some behavior that they can point to and claim as evidence of righteousness, virtue, or fulfilling God's purpose for their life. They become an extremist in some behavioral element of life that they can control, such as diet and food choices, or dress, etc.
- Their fastidious compliance with their righteous food list makes them feel good and allows them to avoid the suppressed guilt and shame for neglecting their actual duties in life.
- Having taken this position as a means to avoid their own guilt, shame, and inadequacy, they cannot tolerate any feedback that suggest a different course is equally righteous. They cannot tolerate others not eating according to their rigid standards and also being considered as equally righteous, because if one could be righteous while deviating from the food list, then that would mean their hard work is not righteous and it would no longer serve the purpose of allowing them to avoid their own guilt and shame.
- Thus, they criticize and find fault with those who don't eat according to their rules, may seek to get others removed from offices in the church for not eating according to their rules, and do all they can to convert others to their stringent and extremist eating patterns.



Such an extremist may very well consider their life a success—but is it?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph:

As youth matures into adulthood, thoughts will arise about having to provide for basic needs—food, clothing, and shelter. Jesus Himself has told us how to prioritize our needs when He said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Of course, for those who are older and who didn’t make the choice for Jesus when they were young, there is still time to make the right decisions regarding stewardship. (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 65).

What do you think of Jesus promise: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33)?

What does it mean?

- Does it mean if we don’t have adequate food, shelter, clothing then we are not seeking God’s kingdom?
- Does it mean that if we don’t have adequate food, shelter, clothing and want more we need to conduct more Bible studies?
- Is Jesus setting up a quid pro quo system of receiving blessings if you serve in His system—and thus health and wealth become good measures of righteousness?

If we think only of this temporal life Jesus’ words here may be confusing, but if we approach life from a Biblical reality, then this comes into clarity. What do I mean?

Because of Adam’s sin we are all born in sin and conceived in iniquity—we are born with a terminal condition that without remedy will result in eternal death. What difference does it make if we have all earthly wealth and then die eternally? Jesus is saying prioritize eternal life over temporal life. That doesn’t mean that God doesn’t care about our temporal wants—He does, He provides and Jesus provided all kinds of temporal blessings, healing, food, etc. when He was here. The point of this statement however, is that we must value eternal things over temporal things.

We must be so settled into the truth that we would not:

- bow to an idol to avoid a fiery furnace
- stop praying to God to avoid a lion’s den
- stop preaching the gospel to avoid arrest and imprisonment and even execution
- We will not embezzle to pay our house payment, or steal to get money to go to school, or bear false witness to get a promotion etc. etc.



It would be better to be like so many martyrs who sleep in death awaiting the resurrection into eternal life than to live a few more years on earth, and then sleep in death anyway, and lose eternal life.

Recognize God's priority for everyone—which would be our priority for ourselves and our loved ones if we sat where God sits—and that is eternal life. Where God sits eternal life is what matters, not years of temporal life.

If you had a rope from our sun to our Earth, that would be a rope 93 million miles long. And if every inch on that rope represented one year of life. And if a person lived 969 years Methuselah or 10 years—a child dies, is there a significant difference between 969 inches and 10 inches on a rope 93 million miles long? And God's rope is an infinite rope. God's design for our lifespan is eternity. So God is primarily concerned with bringing people into a trust relationship with Him where He heals the damage of sin and gives them the gift of eternal life. If they sleep, like Daniel, for a few years or a few thousand years, it really doesn't matter as long as they have been restored to trust in Him for they will have eternity to live, thrive, and grow.

Again, that doesn't mean God doesn't care about our temporal needs and struggles, He does, but we must look beyond the temporal to the eternal.

The paragraph ends by affirming even if we were not faithful in stewardship when we were young, we can choice to be faithful now. This is so true—we cannot change history, we can only choose to surrender to God, be transformed and live in new ways moving forward.

Read last paragraph,

After Jacob made his spiritual and financial commitments to God, the Lord directed him to Rachel at the well (see Gen. 29:9-20). It is fitting to make your spiritual decision and your lifework decision before committing to marriage. Your future spouse should know “what they are getting into.” Is this person a committed Christian? What type of work will he or she be involved in? Will this person be a teacher, a nurse, a lawyer, a laborer, whatever? What kind of life will I be committing to? Other questions that need answers before the marriage commitment are: What level of education has been completed? What amount of debt will come into the marriage? Am I willing to accept this situation as part of my responsibility? (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 65).

What are your thoughts?

- Did anyone give you advice before your chose your spouse? What advice was given?
 - I remember a Bible teacher telling us to trust God with finding our spouse. What are your thoughts about this advice?
 - Does the kind of God people believe God to be, have an impact in their ability to trust Him?



- What if people believe in God, but have a punitive, legal, view of Him? Could that make them believe but not trust? Could they believe that God would pick someone they won't like?
- I think it is better to get to know God for who He is first.
- If we don't know God, if we aren't friends of Jesus, then we probably are not ready to be getting married—what do you think?
- What advice have you given to your children or grandchildren regarding finding their spouse?
- Any advice would you give today that is different than what you gave in the past?
- What advice do you wish someone would have given to you before you chose your spouse?

The lesson, in the green section, points us to 2 Corinthians 6:14 about not being yoked together with unbelievers. What are your thoughts on this?

Is it enough for a potential spouse to believe in Jesus, to have been genuinely converted to Christ? Or is something more required than this in order for two individuals to be equally yoked as God intends? Would the level of maturity of the converted Christian matter?

Can a person genuinely be converted to Christ but still be immature in the things of God, perhaps approach their Christianity from a rule-keeping perspective, very much like a child who seeks to be a very good little boy or girl. They want to know the rules and they want to keep them—they don't have any interest in why, they just want to know what to do in order to be good, to get a gold star, to avoid getting sin registered in their record, and to avoid getting punished.

Now, is the attitude, the desire to be good, to be obedient, to have mommy and daddy say “well done” evil, sinful, or wrong? Not at all, it shows the child's heart is rightly aligned with the parents. This is a converted Christian, they want to please God, they are not in rebellion—so they would meet the qualification of being a believer. But would such a person make a good spouse? Not likely, not until they grow up. Perhaps two people at that same level of maturity could marry and then in humble faith grow together as the Holy Spirit leads.

But what happens to children who are eager to obey as children, as they grow up if they never discover the reason for the rules? What happens to Christians who as newborn babes in Christ are eager to know the rules and obey, if they never grow up but stay stuck in rule-keeping?

And what if you are mature in your Christian walk, above the level of the child that Hebrews five describes, and marry a genuine believer that is immature, someone who is at the rule-keeping level? Wouldn't that almost certainly result in problems?

Can you think of one of God's design laws that is perhaps the most important when it comes to establishing healthy partner relationships? Certainly love—but what about the law of liberty?

What happens in a relationship when liberty is violated? And could an immature Christian, one who wants to please God, but hasn't yet grown beyond the rules, have a motive of love for God and their spouse, but then sees their spouse breaking one of the rules and think that the spouse is sinning, so



because they love their spouse they seek to get their spouse to comply? And what happens if the spouse who broke a rule doesn't agree that their behavior was a sin? Will the love and concern of the rule-keeping spouse prevent the damage if they seek to pressure and force compliance?

What other elements are important in finding a life partner?

- Healthy relationships require healthy people—so instead of asking God to help you find the right partner, ask God to help you become the right person for the partner He knows is best for you.
- Not just Christians, but of similar maturity and similar practice, vision, goals, and calling. It would be a poor match if a person who was called by God to third world mission field married a person who was called by God to lead cancer research.
- Similar lifestyle patterns—i.e. an outdoor camping enthusiast would not do well with an indoor bookworm.
- Compatible IQ—if the difference is too great then they have little in common to talk about
- Do they live God's design laws in governance of self and how they treat others?

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on seeking godly counsel—what does this mean to you?

I think this is very wise counsel, but what is the danger in this?

Because it is absolutely true that we want godly counsel and not worldly counsel, but how do we know the person we are seeking for godly counsel actually knows God?

- Are we supposed to surrender our decision-making to those from whom we seek counsel?
- What if they are the pastor, or conference president?
- Does a pastor necessarily have better counsel than the church janitor?
- What determines if the counsel is godly or not? Does authority of office?
- Does the view of God one holds impact the counsel they give?
- How about if a person is a Christian of another denomination—can they give godly counsel? Would the quality of the counsel be determined by the denomination a person belongs to?
- What standard do you use when you give godly counsel?
- Would a list of rules from the Bible be a good basis for godly counsel?
- What about application of God's design law principles?
- If we are following God's plan will we apply principles the same in all circumstances?



TUESDAY

The lesson states in the third paragraph:

The children who are brought into the world during this segment of life are called “a heritage from the LORD” (Ps. 127:3, NKJV). We must remember that children bring with them an awesome responsibility. The goal of Christian parents is to train their children to become independent adults in this life and to fit them for the life to come. Here are three points to help parents (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 67).

And then the lesson lists these three:

1. Provide a Christian home environment.
2. Teach children a willingness to work and an appreciate for it.
3. Help with a good education.

Do you disagree with any of these? I think these are excellent and I agree with them, yet something struck me as I read this. I remembered multiple people with whom I grew up, and with whom I attended Christian school, and spent time in their homes and saw their parents do these things—yet they have left the church. I know of families where every child in the home where these things were done left the church.

What happened? How can parents:

1. Provide a Christian home environment.
2. Teach children a willingness to work and an appreciate for it.
3. Help with a good education.

And the children leave?

Now we need to be very clear here, before we explore this further, even with perfection—God parenting Lucifer and Adam and Eve, free-will beings can still choose to rebel. So, a child in rebellion is NOT evidence of poor parenting.

But does that mean there are not methods with higher likelihood of a positive impact and methods with a higher likelihood of a negative impact?

Can you think of any? And to be sure some of these change with age, time, place, situation. One might employ any of these in a particular place, but I am specifically thinking of the general rule, practice, and method across the landscape of parenting the child, not in emergencies.

- Do it because I said so
- Obey because the Bible says so
- Good is determined by how well you obey
- Rule-keeping as a measure of righteousness
- God is the source of inflicted punishment for sin



- Sin is doing bad things and requires punishment
- Forgiveness is getting our sins pardoned by accepting the blood payment of Jesus
- Jesus is in heaven pleading to the Father to protect us from His wrath
- God sends His angels to watch over you, but if you go into a movie theater your guardian angel will stay outside, but the recording angel will go in and record your sin
- You can't go out to eat on Sabbath, but you can work in the church-school cafeteria on Sabbath and get paid as long as the money goes to pay for your Christian education, but you can't use the money for anything else. And you can't get a job in a local restaurant on Sabbath to earn money for school, even though the tips will result in three times the income from the cafeteria and you will only have to work one Sabbath instead of three each month to pay for your tuition.

Could God be presented to children in such a way that He is not friendly, and worse, He isn't even rational, but comes across as capricious, arbitrary, and even mean and untrustworthy?

Now, does that mean there is no place for parental rules, or church standards, or teaching our children by setting of rules?

Consider how you taught your children to brush their teeth, or not play in the street? Was there a time you had a rule? Was there a time you had to oversee and enforce that rule? And was there a time you didn't have to do that anymore? Why not?

What is different about our rules for brushing teeth and playing in the street and our religious rules?

If God's laws are design laws, then won't the same methods of teaching apply?

But wouldn't that require that WE KNOW why there are rules? And if we have never learned why we brush our teeth, and only do it because good people do and bad people don't, then we will be able to help our children learn why?

So, why do we do what we do as Christians?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson in the second paragraph brings out an excellent point:

God calls His children to a higher standard in work and life. That standard is God's law written in our hearts (see Jer. 31:33) and reflected in our characters. As society erodes and Christian teaching is diluted and minimized, it will become even more important for the individual Christian to live and work on a level that is above reproach. The Bible says, "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Prov. 22:1, NKJV). (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 68).



One of Satan's strategies is to get us to take our focus off of Christ and focus on the world and its standards, to tempt us to think that if everyone else is giving bribes to the city inspector we will need to bribe them also if we want to have our business succeed. But the lesson is correct. We are responsible for governance of ourselves. We are not responsible for:

- How others govern themselves
- What others think of us
- How things turn out

Many people I see in my practice forget this and get caught up into frustration, anger, or jealousy when they see others cheating. Or they get very upset if others accuse them or think badly of them, and rather than simply doing in governance of self what is right, rather than simply being the most Christlike person they can be, instead they focus on persuading others' view of them. And many rather than focusing on making the wisest choice they prayerfully can in humble openness to God's leading and then trusting God with how it turns out, instead seek to make things turn out a certain way they believe is best.

MONDAY

The lesson explores the benefits of work. What do you think?

Human beings were created in the image of God. He is the Creator, and, therefore, we are designed to be creators in our own sphere. We are built to be industrious, creative, builders, designers, and workers!

When we engage ourselves in activities that are productive, whether they result in an income or not, we experience joy, fulfillment, and expansion in our abilities. We grow healthier and more capable as we apply ourselves and expend our energies to useful outlets.

Regular work has multiple benefits:

- **Improved self-esteem**, from actual accomplishment and achievement
- **Better physical health**, from increased physical activity and the reduced firing stress pathways as we experience satisfaction with completing tasks, or fulfilling our life goals, aspirations, and dreams. Additionally, physical activity produces factors in the brain that causes the neurons to stay healthy, improves the ability of neurons to make new connections, thus improving learning and reducing the risk of dementia as we age.
- **Development of our brain circuits** that control physical movement, which in turn improves our thinking and reasoning. When we engage in physical activity, the striatal pathways in our brain, that initiate motor movement, develop, but these pathways not only initiate physical movement, they also initiate thinking, so as we develop and use these pathways, we improve our ability to initiate thoughts. The cerebellum, which is involved in making our physical



movements smooth and coordinated, also helps smooth and coordinate our thoughts. Thus, when we stay physically active, we ultimately improve our thinking processes.

- **Blesses and benefits those around us.** As we engage in useful activity, it results in blessings in our environment, whether we are creating works of art or music to brighten the heart, or are mopping, vacuuming, and picking up trash to create clean environments, or growing food, all useful activity blesses those around us.
- **Reduces burdens on others.** By staying active, we reduce the likelihood of our own disability and the need for others to care for us.
- **Harmonizes with the law of love,** which is the principle of giving. The more we give, the more we receive. In a community, active people are constantly blessing those around them, while simultaneously being blessed from others. We receive benefits of electricity, clean air, water, emergency services, road crews that keep the roads clear, and so much more from people we will most likely never meet.
- **Reduces the opportunity for temptation.** This is perhaps one of the greatest benefits of useful work. Any time spent in usefulness not only produces all the blessings above, but is time unavailable for engagement in destructive and harmful activities. You've heard the old saying, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop." When we are not engaged in useful activities, we are more vulnerable to temptations that result in harm to ourselves and others.

When we divert our energy, our mind, and abilities away from useful work—activities that may or may not generate income, but are beneficial (housework, lawn care, gardening, sewing, painting, sculpting, building, writing, playing musical instruments, drawing, developing systems or programs of education, parenting, coaching, and so many more)—and instead use the majority of our energies on entertainments, diversions, and indulgences (video games, TV, amusement parks, playing games), we undermine our physical and mental well-being. We become internally restless, lose our sense of peace, and often look for actions to change our feeling state, too frequently in alcohol or other substances, or more entertainment and avoidance of real-life responsibilities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Billboard Resource: In response to requests from our listeners, we are designing billboards with various themed slogans, each one to be released periodically. They will be released in sets that have the same slogan with different layouts and images. These are available for anyone who would like to download and use them in their community. Come and Reason Ministries is not, at this time, planning on purchasing billboard space, but we are making these available for those who want to put billboards up in their community. Find the FIRST slogan "Discover The God You Can Trust" in our new Resources > Billboards menu item on our website.