



Sharing our Gifts as We Work for the Lord

Bible Study
Leader's Guide

[Please provide: Bibles, hymnals, copies of this Bible study]

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank You for each and every woman with us to study Your Word, as well as for the opportunity to develop and nurture our relationships with one another. Open our hearts and minds to learn more about You and Your Will for our lives. Help us to focus on the truths found in Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

Share with your group something about the kind of work and a bit about the different roles you have in your life. Do you ever ask yourself these questions: "What on earth am I here for?" "Am I doing what God wants me to do?" "Why do I have to work?" "Why am I sometimes overwhelmed?" In the business of our earthly lives, we often find ourselves with these questions and others related to our day-to-day responsibilities.

Sing: "Take My Life and Let It Be," LSB 783, TLH 400, LB 404

What phrases or verses of this hymn speak to you? Encourage participants to share. Focus on the hymn's theme that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we give God all that He has blessed us with so that we may serve Him.

What do the lyrics of the hymn say concerning how we are to use our skills and talents in our work both inside and outside our homes? All we do is to praise and honor God.

Read Exodus 35:4–29. What were God's people commanded to do (vv.4–10)? They were commanded to contribute their time, talents, and treasure generously to build the tabernacle.

Reread verse 21. What motivated God's people to be generous in their giving? God's Word caused the people to be generous.

What special work did the women do? See verses 25–26. The women used God-given skills to spin the fabrics for the tabernacle, including those made from goat's hair.

Read Exodus 35:31–35. How did Bezalel work for the Lord as the tabernacle was built? Bezalel used the intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship with which God blessed him to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood (vv.32–33). Bezalel was also to teach others to do this kind of work (v. 34).

Who motivated Bezalel to work as he did? The Spirit of God (v. 31) motivated him.

What truths concerning how we are to work can you glean from Bezalel's example as well as from the women who worked in the tabernacle? We, too, filled with the Holy Spirit, are to use our knowledge, intelligence, skills, and talents to work for God.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–6 and Ephesians 2:10. How has God specially equipped us to work for Him? The Holy Spirit has given us different gifts and different ways to work and serve, but all are for the same God (1 Corinthians 12:4–6). We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

God knows us very intimately and has designed each one of us uniquely (Psalm 139:13). Each of us is designed or wired differently. That uniqueness sets us apart to serve God in many different ways. We are designed by God Himself to do His work. We are His masterpiece. He created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago. We are all baptized into one body but it is a body made up of many members – each one unique with a special purpose (1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

God works through the different skills, abilities, and talents with which He has blessed us to do the work of His kingdom here on earth. Think about the skills, talents, and abilities given to the women in your LWML society. How has God used these in the work that you do for Him? Lead participants to cite specific examples of ways the women in their society have used their talents, skills, and abilities to work for God (e.g., teaching, banner making, flower arranging, food preparation, organizing events, visiting homebound members).

What The Bible Says About Work

Read Genesis 2:15. What work did God give Adam to do in the garden of Eden? God put Adam in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

How was Adam's original occupation different from any work he would ever do outside of Eden? Before his fall into sin, Adam's work was perfect and joyful. It was never boring or toilsome.

What does this say concerning the reason God gives us work to do? God gives us work so that we can care for His creation, including the people in it. God did not originally intend work to be something to dread.

The work God gives us to do is a gift from Him. Read the following Bible passages. What does each one say concerning how we are to work for Him?

Proverbs 10:4: God blesses those who work diligently.

Ecclesiastes 5:18: It is good and fitting ... to find enjoyment in the work God gives us to do.

Romans 12:11: God desires that we work fervently to serve Him.

1 Corinthians 15:58: We are to continually work for the Lord. We can be certain that our work for God is not worthless.

Colossians 3:23: God wants us to work hard for Him.

Titus 3:14: We are to devote ourselves to good works, help others in need, and be fruitful.

How does your current attitude about your work reflect the work attitude that God desires us to have? Allow participants some time to reflect on their current work attitudes. Because of infiltration of sin into all that we do, we can sometimes have an attitude of resentment towards work, as well as fall into habits of laziness, boredom, and inefficiency as we lose sight of our Lord, for Whom we work.

Seeking God's Will In Our Work

Read Matthew 25:14–28. What led the third servant to hide the talent his master gave him? He called his master, *hard* (v. 24), which could mean “cruel”, “demanding,” or even “violent”. He tried to blame his own failings on his master. (*The Lutheran Study Bible*, CPH, © 2009, study note on v.24, page 1639).

In terms of our own work, what can lead us to be like the third servant in Jesus' parable? Things like fear of failing, being fired, a demanding or harsh employer, or our own indifference are a few of the things that can lead us to be like the third servant.

When we repent for our disobedience for not using what God has given us to serve Him and to bring Him glory, what does He promise us? See 1 John 1:9. God promises to forgive our sins for Jesus' sake.

When our work is difficult and burdensome, what truths from the following Bible passages can help us to work joyfully for the Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit?

Deuteronomy 31:6–8: God promises to be with us always. It is in Him that we have our strength.

1 Chronicles 16:11: God desires that we continually seek Him and His strength.

Psalms 32:8: God promises to teach and counsel us.

Proverbs 3:5: God desires that we trust in Him and not in ourselves.

Jeremiah 29:11: God has only good plans for us. God's best plan for us is the eternal life that we receive through faith in Christ Jesus.

Mark 10:42–45: Jesus came to serve and to save all people. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to follow His example as we serve others through our work.

1 Peter 4:10: God has given each one of us gifts from His great variety of spiritual gifts. He commands that we use them to *serve one another*.

Our Pledge Of Service To God

Speak together these words of the LWML Pledge:

In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and His blood-bought gift of redemption, we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have; and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voice to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him.

How do the words of this pledge remind us of the reason for all of the work we do? We work for God in gratitude for the supreme sacrifice Jesus made for us when He died on the cross and rose again to save us from sin, death, and the devil. We give to our Savior all that we have in service to Him.

The LWML theme Bible verse is *serve the LORD with gladness!* (Psalm 100:2) God gives each one of us a unique set of gifts, skills, abilities, and talents. God is our Father who loves us. As we respond to God's mercy and forgiveness, the Holy Spirit empowers us to serve Him and others. Through His Word and Sacraments, He strengthens us to work for Him. He blesses us to be blessings to others and to be lights of His saving love.

Sing: "Lord of All Good," LSB 786

Closing Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, You have shown us in Your Word how wonderfully we are designed, the work we are to do, and the light we are to be to the rest of the world. Guide us in discovering our talents, skills, and abilities and the direction You want us to take no matter what season of our life in which we may be. Help us to trust You and to show others Jesus in meaningful ways, even in the little things in life. In Your precious Name we pray. Amen.

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