



9 OCT 2022 | LAM ZHENGXIN

THE IDOLATRY OF WORK | EXODUS 20:8-11; MATTHEW 11:28-30

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

- Identify potential idols we face in our work
- Take practical steps to enter into the Sabbath rest.

SERMON SUMMARY

We continue on a three-part series on Worship at Work. Work is God's design for us, however work has also been corrupted. Zhengxin highlights three potential idols that could be formed in our work.

1. The idolatry of overwork
2. The idolatry of money and success
3. The idolatry of work as our identity and fulfilment.

To counter these potential idols, we need to recognise the importance of the Sabbath – Firstly, we need to learn to come towards God. Secondly, rest can only be found in the presence of God and thirdly, we need to learn from the perspective taught in [Matthew 6:25-33](#). Sabbath helps us remember that our work does not depend on us and to surrender the outcome of our work.

SERMON RECAP

Work is God's design for us and work is good, however, work has also been corrupted. How do we maintain our worship to God in the midst of the fallenness and idolatry of our workplace? How do we prevent ourselves from building false altars to the idols of work?

Zheng Xin shares about three potential idols.

a) The Idolatry of Overwork

- God has designed for us to thrive in a rhythm of work and rest.
- We overwork when we neglect this rhythm, as our workplaces are fallen, when we idolise success and money and when work becomes our identity.
- We need to acknowledge the fallenness of our workplaces while recognising how God can use our workplaces to shape and refine us.
- There will be times, when it is necessary to work overtime (e.g. to complete a project).
- It is important to seek God's leading in our choices and be obedient to it.
- It is also important for us to spend time building our marriages, families and the Kingdom of God.
- We need to recognise the thin line between working hard vs un-Biblical overwork.



b) The Idolatry of Money and Success

- As fallen beings, we are susceptible to the deceptiveness of wealth and power.
- While we need to watch the desires of our hearts and not be drawn to money and success, desiring or working for promotion is not a bad thing as it is an acknowledgment of us doing well in our work and being entrusted with more.
- Still, we have the propensity to make good things ultimate things.
- Idols are seldom formed overnight but through small justifications and minor value shifts over time.
- It is important to be mindful of the influences around us and our own fallen nature that causes us to build our identity around success and wealth.
- Timothy Keller commented that making a lot of money only means that we are making a lot of money. It does not shape our identity in any way, nor does it have eternal value in the Kingdom of God. God looks for faithfulness and fruitfulness.
- Success should be the by-product and not the goal of our work.

c) The Idolatry of Work as Our Identity and Fulfilment

- We need to recognise that our work is what we do; and our identity is who we are.
- Our work was never meant to fulfil us and only a relationship with God can truly satisfy us ([John 4:13-14](#))
- Our calling is meant to flow out of our relationship with God.

The Sabbath allows us to remember that we are more than our work.

- We can only fully enter the Sabbath rest when we take on the yoke of Christ ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).
- This passage in Matthew highlights 3 practical applications:
 - Firstly, we need to learn to come towards God.
 - Secondly, rest can only be found in the presence of God. It is important for us to work with God, not just for God.
 - Thirdly, we need to learn from His perspective of [Matthew 6:25-33](#).
 - Lastly, the Sabbath lets us remember that our work does not depend on us and to surrender the outcome of our work to the Lord.


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Many of us know that work can become an idol. Zheng Xin shared about three potential idols we may experience in the course of our work.**
 - a) **Are any of these idols more or less prevalent in your workplace? What are some values or beliefs from yourself or your work culture that influence this?**
 - b) **What are some Biblical principles or perspectives you have adopted or desire to adopt in your work?**

Leader's Notes

This is a recap and reflect question.

For part a), members can examine if there are any potential idols in their work and to reflect on the values or beliefs that may have shaped their work, and how this may have subtly affected their work. As members share with one another



their views, they may also wish to examine if these views are Biblical and God honouring.

For part b), members can consider finding Bible verses or worship song lyrics, etc. that can help remind them of being anchored in God while avoiding falling prey to these potential idols.

Transition

God's creations are good, even the design for work. However, we live in a fallen world and it is important for us to recognise the biblical balance of working and resting in God.

2. **The Sabbath allows us to remember that we are more than our work.**
 - a) **Is this concept of a Sabbath rest new to you? If yes, what is new for you?**
 - b) **As a cell, share your thoughts regarding the Sabbath – do we see it as a good-to-have or a much-needed necessity? What does it mean to take on the yoke of Christ?**
 - c) **What are some of our experiences in practicing the Sabbath and how can we grow or learn from it?**

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect and relate question. For part b), leaders may wish to get members to consider what the benefits of the Sabbath are and for us to reflect on our own attitudes regarding the Sabbath. For part c), leaders may also wish to encourage members to practice having a Sabbath if they have not done so, and to share what they have learnt from it in future cell sessions.

Transition

God desires for work to be redeemed and to form an integral part of our worship to Him. While we are in the midst of waiting for His return and for the restoration of things, we can turn to His Word for timely reminders.

3. **As a cell, read Matthew 6:25-33. Share your reflection of this passage and how this could be practiced in your life.**

Leader's Notes

This is a relate and response question. Leaders can get members to read the passage a few times and offer some quiet time for members to note down their reflection and to share it with the cell afterwards. Leaders can also encourage members to consider how these verses can be applied to the various arenas of their lives, aside from just work.

Others:

- Leaders can also choose to refer to the following Desiring God articles for members to share and reflect:
 - [Let There Be Rest: Recovering Healthy Weekly Rhythms](#)
 - [Do You Fear a Day of Rest?](#)
 - [Better Than Busy](#)
- Some other questions for consideration: What does it mean to work with God? How would it look like in everyday life?

Closing

God has designed work for good and He desires for us to give excellent work so that His glory can be manifested through our excellence to the world. May we learn to work with Him and not just for Him, and to balance this with the knowledge and confidence that God is our Jehovah Jireh and that He provides for us.

PRAYER

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- For us to be discerning of the subtle influences in our lives that contribute to making work an idol
- For us to grow in our trust in God as we obey Him by practicing the Sabbath.

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Pray for God's protection especially from the Omicron variant.
- Pray that the community cases will be low.

3. World

- A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
- Pray for peace especially in areas of conflict (Ukraine) and potential conflict in the Taiwan Straits.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin


1. Nov-Dec Church Calendar

- 06 Nov, 11 am - "Irreplaceable" Movie Screening
- 13 Nov – Christmas Gear Up (Service extended for 15 mins)
- 13 Nov, 11 am – Workshop: How to Share the Gospel in 5 Mins
- 13 Nov, 2.30pm – Water Baptism Service
- 20 Nov, 11am – 377A Forum: Future of the Family
- 03 Dec, 4.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
- 17 Dec, 2.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
- 04 – 25 Dec – Christmas Evangelistic Services

2. Pulpit Series – Worship at Work. This series will help to address the misconceptions we may have towards work and help us to become salt and light in our workplaces.

- 2 Oct – The Theology of Work
- 9 Oct – The Idolatry of Work
- 16 Oct – The Testimony of Work

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3. **Leaders Advance 2022.** 3-5 November. More details and registration here: rlc.sg/la2022
 4. **Global Hunger Fund.** This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the [Digital Bulletin](#) for more details.
 5. **Children's Day Book Gift Sets.** Missions from Home (MFH) are selling children's day book gift sets to help families in Myanmar with food and necessities. Link: rlc.sg/mfhm-book
 6. **RiverLife Kindergarten**
 - RLK has vacancies for Chinese Teachers. If you wish to apply, please send your resume to Mrs Tan Oi Leng (oileng@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg).
 - RLK are looking for volunteers for their Annual Concert and K2 Graduation. Full Dress Rehearsal – Thu, 10 Nov, 8am-1pm. Concert & Graduation – 12 Nov, 9am – 12pm. Contact: 65114168
 7. **Updated Safe Management Measure.** Mask wearing for indoor worship services and religious classes is now optional. All worshippers and performers can sing and play instruments without wearing masks.
 8. **RiverLife Missions Upcoming Trips.** Signup: rlc.sg/signupformissions.
 - Arise and Shine Church Pastors & Leaders Conference. Pangasinan, North Philippines. 9-14 November. Cost: \$800.
 9. **Call for Musicians and Vocalists.** The Worship & Music ministry is on the lookout for musicians and vocalists – keyboardist, electric guitarist, bassist, drummer and singers. If you are interested, you can sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Do note that an audition will be required before joining the ministry.
 10. **Call for SuperLife Volunteers.** If you have a heart for children and a desire to disciple them in their spiritual journey, come be a part of the SuperLife team. Sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Immediate needs:
 - *SuperLife Primary Teacher* (Serve twice a month. Facilitate small group discussions after each Bible lesson, connect and pray with the children, be involved in SuperLife Ministry events, etc.)
 - *Special Needs Chaperone.* (Serve twice a month. Provided 1-1 support to children with special needs and help facilitate an inclusive environment between children with and without special needs.)
 11. **F&B Related Ministries Recruitment.** We're looking for RiverLifers who love connecting with new people and enjoy cooking and serving. Team members will serve once a month. For more details Karen Koh (Welcome Lounge) at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg and Jonathan Cho (The Café and Volunteers Corner) at jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg.
 12. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that



allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our [digital bulletin](#) for more details.

13. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS).** In 2021, RCS focused on providing relief to families who were badly affected by the pandemic. We believe that in this season, God is calling RCS to build loving families and strong communities. Listed below are opportunities where you can serve or give to RCS:
 - You can serve as a volunteer in one of our programmes to befriend and build relationships with children, youth, mothers and lower-income families. Find out more here: rlc.sg/rcs2022.
 - You can sow by contributing financially too. Your giving will go into initiatives such as grocery distributions and various programmes that will help our beneficiaries build resilience and break free from the poverty cycle. Find out more by writing to RCS at office@rcs.org.sg.
 - RCS is also looking to partner with organizations (donations of essential items – toiletries, wearables, etc). To find out more, write to us at volunteer@rcs.org.sg.
 - RCS is looking for 20 Food Collection Helper/Driver that is able to help with the loading/unloading of fresh food items at blocks where we are reaching out to. **Commitment:** Minimally once a month for 6 months, Saturdays, 12-4pm. Contact: rlcares@rcs.org.sg.
14. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.
15. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.
16. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. *NO booking of tickets is required.*
17. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>
18. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.
19. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

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