

# RHYTHM OF LIFE

## "Work"

Pastor Rick Shelton

Sunday, October 18, 2009

- **Matthew 11:28-30 (Amp)** Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." Living organically from the inside out, everything flows from your relationship with God. What I do comes out of the person God wants me to be. "Keep company with Me."
- Is your life with God a drudgery or a blast? Boring or fun? Live life organically - from the inside out! We should enjoy every day of our life. Find beauty even in tough moments of life.
- If God has made me to be a good Christian, He also makes me to be a good husband/wife, father/mother, good citizen, a whole person, etc.
- Years ago, Pastor Rick wanted to learn to pray more. He heard someone say you must pray an hour a day. He worked hard and did it. Then he heard someone say we must 'tithe' prayer - 2 hours and 24 minutes a day. He 'finally' got up to that. Then he heard that Dr. Cho prayed six-eight hours a day. Pastor thought it was hopeless. Then he heard Dr. Cho prays while he was playing four-five hours of golf every day! Eventually Pastor learned the issue was not how long he prayed, but how well his relationship was with God when he prayed. As his relationship grew with God, the time he spent in prayer with God grew naturally/easily.
- Speaking today about 'work'. Many of us think God is not interested in our 'work', but we spend more than half of our day preparing for work, at work, and going back and forth to work.
- If you are unhappy in your job, you probably don't need a new job, or to be moved, but the posture of your heart needs to be 'moved'/changed!
- Speaking to two kinds of people: 1) those that love their work, driven by it, 2) those that don't like their work.
- Work is misery, frustrating, without Biblical perspective/foundation.
- **Ecclesiastes 2:23 (Amp)** For all his days are but pain and sorrow, and his work is a vexation and grief; his mind takes no rest even at night. This is also vanity (emptiness, falsity, and futility)!
- **Ecclesiastes 6:7 (Amp)** All the labor of man is for his mouth [for self-preservation and enjoyment], and yet his desire is not satisfied.
- What is the answer?
- **Genesis 3:17-19 (NKJV)** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': " Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat *of* it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. <sup>19</sup> In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return."
- This doesn't sound encouraging. Some say God cursed work, but that is not true.
- **Genesis 1:28-29 (NKJV)** Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." <sup>29</sup> And God said, "See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.
- God loves and blesses work. God's original intent was that man was to work, till the ground, but he messed it up.
- **Genesis 2:5 (NKJV)** before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was* no man to till the ground;

- **Genesis 2:5 (Message)** At the time God made Earth and Heaven, before any grasses or shrubs had sprouted from the ground—God hadn't yet sent rain on Earth, nor was there anyone around to work the ground (the whole Earth was watered by underground springs)
- Work is a blessing of the Lord! God's blessing is on work. Then, what happened at the fall? God didn't curse man or work, but He cursed the ground! God can still bless the man, but there is a challenge (frustration) to work that wasn't there before.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:13 (NKJV)** and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God. <sup>14</sup> I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.
- God shut man out of the garden and put frustration into the toil of our hands to help us with our tendency to think we can do everything apart from Him and without His help.
- Israel constantly did this. When they were blessed, they forgot to remember that it was because of God, and thought it was from their own efforts.
- Unrighteous people are blessed, too. God rains on the just and the unjust.
- Work is not secular. Even when people are blessed tremendously, there is a certain frustration with work.
- **Deuteronomy 28:1-2,8 (NKJV)** (after the curse) "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: 8) "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
- If we live from the 'inside out', God's blessing will be upon our hands!
- There are two kinds of people, some love (worship) their work; others feel trapped and don't like their work.
- **Ecclesiastes 5:18-19 (Amp)** Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is for one to eat and drink, and to find enjoyment in all the labor in which he labors under the sun all the days which God gives him--for this is his [allotted] part. <sup>19</sup>Also, every man to whom God has given riches and possessions, and the power to enjoy them and to accept his appointed lot and to rejoice in his toil--this is the gift of God [to him].
- Part of your allotment when you wholly love God is to enjoy what you do. (verse 19)
- The end result is to rejoice in your toil. This is the gift of God to man.
- **Ecclesiastes 5:20 (Amp)** For he shall not much remember [seriously] the days of his life, because God [Himself] answers and corresponds to the joy of his heart [the tranquility of God is mirrored in him].
- You must have a Biblical perspective about your work to enjoy it, to provide your needs, and to enjoy the fruit of it!
- People who love their work have a tendency to be driven by it, and also to derive identity from it. God never intended our identity to come from "what we do."
- When asked, "What do you do?," we often respond by telling "who we are." (I am a teacher, doctor, truck driver.)
- The issue is not 'what I do', but 'who I am'!
- I was a Twinkie salesman. I am a pastor, but that is not 'who' Rick Shelton is. I was the 'same' person in both jobs.
- People lose their identity when they change/lose their jobs. Your identity comes from God, who created you, and paid the ultimate price to get you back in relationship with Him.
- When Pastor was on 'sabbatical', he faced this issue, and realized some of his identity was in "what he did," - pastoring the church.
- Confession: I am who I am, regardless of what I do, regardless of my job, my job description, or position, or regardless of the amount of money I have, or whether I have a job or not. I am who I am because God created me in His image.
- Many don't like their jobs. Many even hate their jobs, and long to retire. ("People are mean to me on the job." "No sense of meaningfulness.") The answer is not getting another job/position. You must change 'you'. You may feel 'trapped', and it's futile, but you must change your mind set. Get a Biblical perspective on what you do. Think positively about your job. Don't say you 'don't like' your job. Have positive thoughts.
- **Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV)** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,
- All of us have a calling! (This doesn't mean 'ministry'.)
- Understand the difference between vocation and occupation.
- 'vocare': a calling; to have a sense of destiny (to do what you are doing).

- 'occupy': to take up space. (Some have a 'taking up space' mentality.)
- Occupation without sense of vocation tends to frustration.
- Any job where you are just 'making widgets', may be the place God has given you to 'take up space', to provide for your family, and be a blessing to those around you at work . . . it's your occupation. It doesn't have to be, but can be your calling.
- Your 'vocation' is not your job; it's your calling/destiny! (Eph. 4:1 says we all have a 'calling/vocation!)
- First, you must establish your calling. ("Am I a doctor because I felt 'called' to help people through medicine?")
- Your calling goes beyond your vocation in order to make a difference in the world around you.
- Teachers feel 'called' (who we are).
- **Colossians 3:22-23 (Amp)** Servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not only when their eyes are on you as pleasers of men, but in simplicity of purpose [with all your heart] because of your reverence for the Lord and as a sincere expression of your devotion to Him. <sup>23</sup>Whatever may be your task, work at it heartily (from the soul), as [something done] for the Lord and not for men,
- Imagine you were one of 60 million slaves in Rome, with no hope to get out or move up. This is Paul's word to them. (He is writing this from prison.)
- **Colossians 3:24 (AMP)** Knowing [with all certainty] that it is from the Lord [and not from men] that you will receive the inheritance which is your [real] reward. [The One Whom] you are actually serving [is] the Lord Christ (the Messiah).
- When you are working at a job you think is meaningless, remember 'who' you are working for. God repays you.
- Bro. Lawrence wrote the book, "Practice of the Presence of God." He washed pots and pans all day in a monastery, struggling to find meaning and purpose until God showed him how to do every task and every movement as praise and glory unto the Lord!
- Whether your boss is righteous or not, God wants you to work for His praise, not man's praise.
- God challenges us to give glory to Him by learning to give Him glory for our sufferings in the workplace.
- When your boss is mean, go somewhere and readjust yourself in prayer. "It is for you, God!"
- Live with a perspective to help and build that company whether they are righteous or not. God will bless you when you bless and stop complaining, and feeling trapped. The issue is the posture of your heart!
- Stay-at-home-moms: Your occupation - where you take-up space with kids, diapers, etc., - can get in malaise - look through that to see it is your 'vocation' (calling to raise children for God).
- Christopher Wren, English architect for St. Paul's Cathedral, in England, asked a laborer who was cleaning up, "What are you doing?" The laborer responded, "Can't you see, I am building a beautiful cathedral!" He saw himself as part of the 'whole' picture.
- A guy on the first day of his new job came to the shop steward and asked him, "What is it like to work here?" The shop steward replied, "What was it like the last place you worked? It's probably the same here." (What you need to change many times is you, not your job!)
- How to find your vocation: by S.H.A.P.E.:  
 Spiritual gifts  
 Heart - desire, want, like  
 Ability - skill, talent, training, education  
 Personality - what you are wired to do: serve, lead, teach, organize  
 Experience - good and bad
- In finding and identifying your S.H.A.P.E., you will find/identify your vocation.
- This week, go through this exercise and use it in your occupation.