

This Truth Module addresses the workplace issue of:

Do I connect eternal significance to my actual work?



# Spiritual Ergonomics



Maria sat in the congregation on Sunday morning and listened intently as several church members testified about how God was using them to reach and impact their workplaces for Christ. Each story was more inspirational than the last—how a manager had led several coworkers to a personal relationship with Christ, how a nurse had seen multiple opportunities to share her faith with patients facing terrible physical challenges, and how a student had organized a group of teenage believers at her school to serve the poor in their community.

But Maria couldn't help feeling sad as she looked at herself. All these people had such great opportunities for impact. But how could she "measure up"? After all, in her mind she was "just a school bus driver"

who had been driving for the county system for 17 years. Although she enjoyed her job and loved the kids, she didn't see the spiritual importance of her role.

As Maria and her husband Steve drove home after the service, he noticed she was very quiet. "Wasn't that a great service?" Steve exclaimed. "Yes, it was" came Maria's half-hearted reply, as tears began to silently fall. Picking up on Maria's emotional state, Steve asked, "What's wrong?"

With that, the tears and emotions poured out like water through a broken dam. She sobbed as she shared how the morning's testimonies had brought her a sense of not being important in regards to God's plan.

If you were Steve, what would be your response to Maria?

See Last Page for More on Maestro™ and Other Work Issues



## Introduction

You've probably heard the term "ergonomics"—especially in reference to your workplace and even your work area. Whether you are an assembly line worker or a data typist in a cubicle, there are guidelines in place to help you work in the right position or manner, both for optimal performance and in a way that reduces the probability of injury.

The root word for ergonomics is "ergon." Believe it or not, that same word is found in multiple verses in the Bible that focus on work. Oftentimes, we assume these Scriptural references are strictly addressing "church work"—using our gifts and talents to serve God at church. However, a closer review shows we may have missed the broader meaning.

**Ergon** (*Strong's #2041*) occurs 176 times in 161 verses of the Bible. It is defined as:

1.) *business, employment, that with which any one is occupied*

Check out one passage where this term is used:

*"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved."*

— 1 Corinthians 3:11 – 15

This is a verse that you most likely have read and heard a number of times. Like most readers, you probably thought this was solely focused on the "work" of the church or at church, or maybe even good deeds that we do. However, when you study it closely and consider the actual language, it can take on an entirely broader meaning with an application you may not have expected.



Now go back and re-read the verse above, but this time when the word “work” appears, insert “business, employment.” Does that change how you view this verse? “...their business/employment will be shown for what it is...” Wow! We now look at the eternal significance of work in an entirely different light.

Let’s look at another familiar passage. The same is true for the word “works” in Matthew 5:16:

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your works (your business, your employment...) and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

In both passages, the Bible is referring to the area of work life/occupation. In fact, work is mentioned in the Bible more than 800 times—more than worship, music, praise and singing combined. For many Christians, this is a topic that they have never heard or been exposed to. The fact that God is interested in their work—much less has immense plans for it—is a great mystery.

Because work has eternal significance, it should be performed in a way that honors God. We call this spiritual ergonomics.

## In Depth

**Go back and read 1 Corinthians 3:11 – 15 again.** Remember, Paul was writing this to believers. He points out here and in other Scripture that our work is not what earns salvation—it is our relationship with the Foundation, Jesus Christ. However, part of God’s plan after our salvation experience is for us to work in a manner that will positively influence others toward a personal relationship with Him.

**After reading these verses, consider how you have been building on the Foundation of Christ at your work. What materials have you been using—gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw?**



**In your work, what are some examples of what those “materials” above represent?**

In other words, what are some good ways you build on the foundation Christ laid and what are some that are not good?

**What are some practical ways you can build on this spiritual foundation in and through your work?**

Because work has eternal significance, it should be performed in a way that honors God.

**For each of the following verses, write the reason believers should honor God through their work:**

— Ephesians 2:10

— Galatians 6:3 – 5

— Matthew 5:16

— Colossians 3:17

**Read Ephesians 2:8 – 10.** In these verses, Paul is once again driving this point home—we are not saved by works, but are expected to work unto God once saved. So going back to our spiritual ergonomics discussion, what are some challenges at work that pull you out of proper alignment with God’s plan?



When someone has an ergonomic problem (from a purely physical point of view) at work, there are various adjustments that can be made to get them back on track—repositioning their desk or keyboard, utilizing a brace or support bar, etc.

**What are some resources or tools you can utilize to help you make spiritual ergonomic improvements at work?**

*...not only did God create us as workers, He was actually a worker Himself in the process.*

As a reminder, notice in verse 10 that not only are we created to be workers, but we are also the direct result of God's working! Isn't that a wonderful fact—not only did God create us as workers, He was actually a worker Himself in the process. And in that process, we are given the means and source of the good works He desires—Jesus Christ!

**Read Colossians 1:9 – 10.** Here Paul tells us that God is pleased as we work and “bear fruit.” As you look at your current work situation, what are some opportunities you have to bear “spiritual fruit”?

**Are there situations or opportunities there that you may not have recognized before?**

If so, list them here; then commit to pray and seek God's guidance, which He has promised to give.

## Common Sense and Eternal Principles

- ◆ Because work has eternal significance, you should perform it in a way that honors God.
- ◆ All that we do is ministry unto the Lord—including our work.
- ◆ We are God's workmanship—He gives us work to do that reflects Himself.
- ◆ God is pleased as we work and bear fruit.
- ◆ God equips us with everything needed to do His will.

# What's Breaking your Rhythm at Work?



- ▶ **We all have a Work Rhythm unique to each of us**, but In our busy work lives, our rhythm with God can be overpowered or compromised by issues common to us all. Economic instability, interpersonal conflict, temptation, and pride all have a way of rendering us out of tune.

Visit [www.WorkLife.org](http://www.WorkLife.org) for more on **Maestro WorkLife Coaching**, and pinpoint your own rhythm breakers.

**Explore Maestro™ today!**



**Maestro™ is a self-directed, web-based coaching system** that helps you target and overcome issues breaking your rhythm—no matter what job faces you Monday morning. Maestro™ Includes:

- ▶ A Work Issues Assessment
- ▶ Weekly email-based Maestro™ Coaching
- ▶ Maestro Truth Modules for in depth study.
- ▶ Maestro Tuning Tools for dealing with specific work challenges.



## ▶ The Top 30 WorkLife Issues

Check out these top WorkLife Issues!

Go to [WorkLife.org](http://WorkLife.org) to learn more.

<b>CLARITY</b>	Do I understand why God created work in the first place?
	Do I relate to God through my work?
	Do I connect eternal significance to my actual work?
	Do I simultaneously serve God and my earthly boss, making sure I don't "turn off" my spiritual life at work?
	Do I narrow my focus each day by setting clear limits and boundaries on my ambitions, so that work doesn't take over my life?
<b>CALLING</b>	Are my God-given talents, passions and temperament aligned to my present job?
	Do I see my work calling as really serving society and God?
	Is my work ethic free from compulsions such as: meaningless goals, accumulating temporary success, and a desire to please everyone?
	Do I learn from detours, zig-zags, false starts, and dead ends in my job to eliminate self-destructive patterns of behavior?
<b>BALANCE</b>	Do I honor my earthly employer with competency and integrity in order to accomplish God's purpose?
	Do I manage stress and discouragement by practicing the principle of rest and recreation?
	Do I manage my time without being distracted by unfocused impulses or becoming a slave to my schedule?
	Am I keeping a connection with God and my family in the midst of my hectic work life?
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	Do I manage all my resources (i.e., time, energy, talent, money) in a way that reflects God's perspective?
	Do I avoid the pitfalls of compensation and position discontentment to maximize my impact for Christ?
	Do I earn the respect of my coworkers in a way that blends a gracious spirit, keen intellect, courageous heart, and cultural sensitivity?
	Do I look for natural opportunities to talk about God that are appropriate to my workplace?
<b>SKILLS</b>	Do I effectively answer the tough questions coworkers ask me about God, life, and faith?
	Do I feel prepared to present the gospel message in language that is clear, succinct, and jargon-free, yet faithful to the Scriptures?
	Can I clearly explain the benefits of a relationship with Jesus to those at work?
	Do I regularly grow my practical work skills in order to serve my employer and God?
<b>RELATIONSHIP</b>	Am I seeking and hearing God when making work decisions?
	Do I operate with virtues that honor God (i.e. fairness, graciousness, and compassion)?
	Do I keep promises and tell the truth at work when subtle pressure is used to encourage hype, false appearance, white lies and spin?
	Am I willing to go against the grain at work when biblical values are at stake?
	Do I effectively deal with a difficult boss, serve an unreasonable client, or cooperate with a cynical coworker?
	Do I resolve conflict involving office politics, gossip, slander, favoritism, and unfounded criticism?
	Do I effectively deal with lust at work, including everything from travel temptations to office affairs, from risqué jokes to sexual harassment?
Do I protect and help the weakest members of my workplace and society in a "survival of the fittest" world?	
	Do I seek out and connect with fellow believers at work for support, encouragement and accountability?