

SOCIAL STUDIES 904 PLANNING A LIFEWORK

CONTENTS

I. RECOGNIZING GOD'S DIRECTIVES	2
Glorifying God	2
Serving Others	3
Avoiding Entanglement	4
Following Love and Peace	6
II. RECOGNIZING GOD'S DESIGN	9
Concerning Authority	9
Concerning Male and Female	12
Concerning Personal Uniqueness	13
Concerning Brotherhood	16
III. CHOOSING GOD'S WILL	19
Understanding Job Opportunities	19
Discerning Job Opportunities	21
Applying for a Job	29

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PLANNING A LIFEWORK

Life is a gift from God. Recognizing this is an important step in planning our lifework. It places us under the obligation of planning our lives in such a way that God will be pleased with us when our lives on earth are done.

In view of this, choosing a career, a lifework, is not a small decision. It has to do not only with this life, but with the life to come. Since God gave life, He will ask us to give an account of our lives when life is

done. And so, the child of God realizes God is concerned about the details of this life because He is concerned ultimately about eternity.

In this LIGHTUNIT you will explore some of God's **directives** for all people. You will also consider His design for you in particular. And you will see how all this applies to the actual job opportunities which are available to you.

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIGHTUNIT.

When you have finished this LIGHTUNIT, you should be able:

1. To name a number of directives which guide us in planning a lifework.
2. To define the Biblical concept of servanthood.
3. To tell how the principle of unequal yoke applies to one's lifework.
4. To tell how the principle of nonresistance applies to the planning of a lifework.
5. To tell how authority figures become God's channels for revealing His will in the matter of a lifework.
6. To describe how God's design for male and female relates to the planning of a lifework.
7. To name some of the pressures of our society which distort male and female roles.
8. To evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses as they apply to work.
9. To describe how one's lifework must contribute to the brotherhood.
10. To tell how job opportunities have changed in recent years.
11. To identify good and bad points about particular jobs in relation to one's faith in God and also in relation to whether a person is male or female, married or single, etc.
12. To tell how to apply for a job and how to conduct oneself in an interview.

Survey the LIGHTUNIT. Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

I. RECOGNIZING GOD'S DIRECTIVES

In this section you will be studying some of the general principles of God's Word which apply to work. Since God is the One who gave life, it is only reasonable to look to Him for directions about how to live. As you study, you will find that these directives from God do not restrict (hinder) how we live. Instead, they show us how to live with the greatest sense of fulfillment.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able:

1. To name a number of directives which guide us in planning a lifework.
2. To define the Biblical concept of servanthood.
3. To tell how the principle of unequal yoke applies to one's lifework.
4. To tell how the principle of nonresistance applies to the planning of a lifework.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

directive (də rek' tiv). Something that is given to provide guidance; a command.

exempt (ig zempt'). Released from the normal requirements; excused.

joint (joint). Combined; united; working as one.

legitimate (li jit' ə mət). Lawful; accepted as proper.

manual (man' yəl). Done by hand; requiring physical skill or effort.

misconception (mis' kən səp' shən). An idea which is wrong, untrue, or misunderstood.

recompense (rek' əm pens'). To pay back in the same way.

retaliating (ri tal' ē āt' ing). Getting revenge; reacting against wrong.

venture (ven' chər). A work, project, or plan which involves danger or risk.



Note: All vocabulary words in this LIGHTUNIT appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: a cat; ā bake; ä father; â care; à out; e pet; ē easy; ə alert; i trip; ī life; o cot; ō flow; ò order; òi oil; ù put; ü rule; ər bird, herd, fur; hw which; ng sing; th these; yū use; yū furious; zh measure.

GLORIFYING GOD

We were created for a purpose. The Bible is clear that one of the primary purposes for our creation is that we bring glory to God. No matter what we do, no matter where we go, no matter who is with us, we are to glorify the One who made us. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

If even the small things of life such as eating and drinking are to glorify God, how much more something as major as our lifework! Any planning concerning our work must certainly start with a desire to please God. As Paul wrote to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that

needeth not to be ashamed" (II Timothy 2:15).

But how do we know if our work glorifies God? Several questions may be asked to determine the answer. First, we might ask, "Would Jesus have done this work without any embarrassment?" The more clearly we know Jesus, the more accurately we will be able to answer this question. We may be certain that if Jesus would have objected to a particular job, His heavenly Father would also.

Another question we might ask is, "Will I be comfortable about this work when I stand before God at the end of life?" If we know something about our work would not be approved then, we can know

it is not approved now. God is the same now as He will be then.

A third question to ask in determining if our work glorifies God is perhaps on the more positive side. "Am I being drawn closer to God through my work?" This does not mean that our work should be without any trials. Most work will have its times of testing.

But the nature of our work itself should not have a corrupting influence. Some work, for example, requires a person to be away from home the majority of the time so that he has very little time with his family or church fellowship. Such a work will likely harm a person's relationship with God.



Complete these statements.

- 1.1 "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all _____."
- 1.2 A Christian should seek approval above all from _____.
- 1.3 The nature of our work should not be of a _____ influence.
- 1.4 Three questions we might ask in determining if our work glorifies God are:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
- 1.5 Work which takes a person away from his family and church fellowship will likely harm _____.

SERVING OTHERS

A very common attitude among working people of North America is that the best jobs are those of high rank. In other words, it is better to be a foreman than to have to work under a foreman, or it is better to have people working for you than to have to work for someone else. Now it may well be that some jobs are easier than others, or that some jobs have more pleasant conditions than others. But it is a great **misconception** to think that fulfillment and satisfaction in one's work are dependent upon rank.

Jesus taught us that fulfillment and satisfaction are instead dependent upon faithful, loving service. To His disciples, He pointed out that unbelievers enjoy high positions of honor and authority. But He went on to say, "It shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28).

Jesus was truly great. If anyone deserved a position of rank, He did. Yet He came to serve. And

He taught us to do the same. When our lives are done and we stand before God, the earthly rank of our work will not be important. But God will be concerned about how faithfully we served others. He intends that our lives be patterned after Jesus' life, that we "minister" to others. In other words, He wants us to give our lives to meeting the needs of people.

All this does not mean that it is wrong to be a foreman or to employ people. It means, rather, that even if we are in such positions, we should have the heart of a servant. We should desire to contribute to the lives of others in a positive way. And we should not value ourselves above others, even though we may have a position of greater authority.

Having the heart of a servant is important in preparing you for your lifework. It will also guide you when you must actually choose a particular work. If you desire to make your life a contribution to others, you will avoid work that would harm or endanger others (such as bartending), no matter how high the pay. You will be concerned that your work has a

positive influence on others, rather than that it simply benefits you personally.

Serving others is not limited to our work. It is a way of *being* that directs us no matter where we are. You can find the fulfillment of servanthood at home as you relate to your family members. You can also serve at school. Begin by accepting those tasks

which are assigned to you. They are opportunities to serve. Those who are able to accept directions from others without complaint will experience the joy of faithful service. They will go on to look for more opportunities to help, aid, and assist wherever needed.



Write true or false.

- 1.6 _____ For the Christian, no job is more difficult than another.
- 1.7 _____ A Christian can find as much fulfillment in common labor as he could in a supervisory role.
- 1.8 _____ To minister to others means to work to meet the needs of others.
- 1.9 _____ Since Jesus was a servant, it would be wrong for a Christian to be in a position of high rank.
- 1.10 _____ A person who wants his life to be a contribution to others will avoid manual labor.
- 1.11 _____ Serving others can begin with such simple things as obeying parents.
- 1.12 _____ Serving others is a way of being.



Read Philippians 2:5-7 and complete these activities.

- 1.13 What two things are mentioned in verse 7 that Jesus did?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
- 1.14 The “mind of Christ” is best described as _____.
 - a. the desire to be as low as possible in the eyes of people
 - b. a way of thinking which so wants to meet the needs of others that it will sacrifice a high position to do so
 - c. thinking one is equal with God

AVOIDING ENTANGLEMENT

We have noted that God wants our lives above all to glorify Him. We have also noted that He expects us to serve others. These are general directives which guide us in planning a lifework. A third

directive is that we avoid entangling our lives in a yoke with the ungodly. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (II Corinthians 6:14, 15).

Long ago when cattle were used for plowing, a yoke was used to join two oxen together as a team. The yoke fit snugly around the neck of each beast to prevent the animals from choosing their own course. They were required by the yoke to work together.

God asks us not to form similar "yokes" with unbelievers. In other words, we are not to form binding agreements with them which require us to "walk their way" and which keep us from walking with God.

This principle can readily be applied to work relationships. **Joint business ventures** with non-Christians could easily get us into situations where the non-Christian would want to pull one way because of his earthly goals and the Christian would want to pull the other because of his commitment to God. If the Christian would give in and pull with the ungodly man, he would disobey God. But if he would not give in, the ungodly man would say he is not living up to the agreement. You can see why God says not to form such an "unequal yoke."

This does not necessarily mean that a Christian should never work on the same job as an unbeliever, or that he should never be employed by an unbeliever. In fact the Bible gives us directions as to how to relate to an unbelieving employer. The point is that we should not form relationships which bind us to unbelievers.



Choose the best answer.

- 1.15 A yoke is _____.
a. a team of oxen b. a partner c. a neckpiece for animals
- 1.16 An unequal yoke is _____.
a. two unbelievers joined together in a binding agreement
b. two believers joined together in a binding agreement
c. a believer joined in a binding agreement with an unbeliever
d. none of the above
- 1.17 The tension caused by an unequal yoke points to a basic difference between _____.
a. Christ and the devil
b. the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness
c. righteousness and unrighteousness
d. all of the above
- 1.18 An unequal yoke does not work for all of the following reasons except _____.
a. the believer and the unbeliever have different goals
b. a believer and an unbeliever will not do the same work
c. a believer and an unbeliever live by different directives
d. a believer and an unbeliever will want to go different directions
- 1.19 A verse which speaks to the matter of an unequal yoke is _____.
a. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"
b. "There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."
c. "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."
d. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me"