



Feeling the Love at Work

Theme: "Whether it's a job you love, or a job you're filling up until something better comes along, feeling love at work is possible in both cases."

Bible Reading: Philippians 4:11

Starting Questions: Have you ever felt desperate for not loving your job? Do you have any testimony of years of waiting to find a job you came to love?

Philippians 4:11

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

Reflection Reading

When I was young, it seemed there was a season where the question of my future vocation was on the top of the minds of every grown up in my life. At church, in school, and sometimes, while waiting in line at the grocery store with my mother, friends, family, and complete strangers would ask, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Back then, the possibilities were endless, and the prospect of a dream job seemed a real possibility.

The question is classic—handed down from one generation to the next. We're still asking it, aren't we?

As I grew older, I learned the path to my dream job involved its fair share of trial and error. Not one to ever choose the most conventional route, my first job involved teaching piano lessons in the living room of our house. I was in middle school, the child of a musician whose student list was maxed out. When a new request for lessons arrived, my mom suggested I give it a try. So, once each week, I sat in a chair next to the piano bench and taught my young student the bass and treble clefs, the staff, the difference between a quarter note and a half note, and a little trick for remembering the notes on the page (every good boy does fine). Wonder of wonders, each week, my student's mom handed me a crisp, ten dollar bill!

Eventually, my student outgrew me and I moved on to work at a fast food restaurant, a call center for a heating and cooling company (I knew by the end of the first day that job was not for me, so I called them and quit before the very next work day), and, in a different call center where I helped raise support for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO). For a summer, I sold Avon, actually walking door-to-door, my sample kit in hand. In college, I worked as a Legislative Page in our State Capitol Building, and as a Resident Assistant in our dorm. I also supervised the weekend maintenance crew for two dormitory buildings on campus.

I found something to enjoy in most of these roles. I liked the free donuts at the restaurant, the free concert tickets at the DSO, and the free room and board at the college. As a page,

I learned a lot about politics and power, and it was there, in the break room, I learned of the tragedy of the Space Shuttle Challenger. But it was on weekends where, rising early to supervise a team of workers who cleaned the bathrooms while hungover students slept it off, I learned I enjoy and have a bit of a gift for casting a vision and organizing people around a specific task.

As an adult, I've had jobs I've enjoyed, and others jobs through which I've suffered. Along the way, I've learned about my strengths and weaknesses, my preferences, and a few things I'd rather not do at all. That, I believe, is part of the trick to finding a job you love. Or even (dare I say it?), *the job of your dreams*. As Shakespeare taught us in Hamlet, "To thine own self be true." More than money or fame, be true to the person God created you to be. God knew what he was doing when he created you. Over at Relevant magazine, you'll find Three Steps to Determining Your Dream Job. But, the article cautions, "this only works when we commit to being completely honest with ourselves."

For those of us with vocations we love, the temptation, as Tsh Oxenreider says, is "to continually work on more, more, more." She goes on to suggest, "I think there's a subtle difference between loving to work hard and working hard simply for more. It's tackling that never-ending to-do list because you want to arrive somewhere, because you think (like that middle school student who's sure in high school lie all the answers) once you've summited that mountain, you'll finally be content. It's the difference between working hard to earn enough and working hard to have the ever elusive more."

Leslie Leyland Fields shares a story of hard work, taxing on the body, but done with love. We are reminded that love makes a difference, even when the work is difficult. "I know the difference," she tells us, "I know how it feels to build without love."

In an article he wrote for Forbes, Brett Nelson says, "Having a mission—one you feel in your core—gives you that extra gear of motivation and resolve when the road gets steep..." Similarly, in our interview with Marlon Hall, Marlon shares insight into finding the job of your dreams. Sometimes, that dream job may be right in front of you, and the secret to uncovering it is by asking yourself one, simple question: "Why?"

Speaking of secrets, Fawn Weaver shares one very important secret to a happy marriage. This secret may surprise you, and help you see how loving your work often has a positive effect that impacts more than one sphere of your life.

Whether in a job you love, or a job you're filling until something better comes along, feeling the love at work begins with being true to you.

Dynamic Reflection

1. How could you explain Philippians 4:11 after reading the reflection reading?
2. Why do we usually not love work?
3. How to be content?

Application

1. How your mindset and actions changed after reflecting on this.
2. What can you do to practice this teaching in your work.