

## Five Tools to Develop a Strong Work Ethic

A church that breaks barriers needs a leader that breaks barriers.

[Dealing with sin](#) is of the utmost importance for a leader. But there is another issue that isn't often discussed, and for those in ministry it goes hand in hand with confronting sin—the importance of a strong work ethic.

With sin, we cannot work hard enough to make God happy. Jesus did that for us. But when we experience joy in our forgiveness and salvation, God empowers us to work hard and accomplish things for His glory.

A barrier-breaking pastor is driven to do the work God has given that pastor. In the beginning of Genesis, God says a lot about our work. He has made us to do work, but sin has made it frustrating and difficult.

Sin can certainly lead us to be workaholics, and we burn ourselves or our people out. But it can also lead to the opposite, a poor work ethic.

As a church leader you often do a lot of the work outside of the view of your people, and that can be a temptation toward doing less and just trying to look busy.

Ministry is hard, but God empowers us for it. Leading churches that grow takes sacrifice, focus, and hard work. Here are a few tools you can use to stay focused on your work so that you will lead your church through growth barriers.

### **Work All Six**

Places like America have a five-day work week with everybody working for the weekend—and there are even some trends moving toward a four-day work week. I want to encourage you to work during all six days and take one full day of rest, just like God designed it.

That doesn't mean you work every moment of every day, ignore your marriage, and skip all of your kids' events. But a six-day week in which you are working parts of those days engaged in your context helps keep your priorities centered on the world as God designed it to work.

Is your pursuit of rest idolizing God's gift rather than using it to energize your God-given work? Work hard toward rest, and rest hard toward work.

### **Plan Your Work**

It's a lot easier to start your day focused on the task at hand when you planned your workday at the end of the previous day—or even your entire week at once. Maybe first thing Monday morning you set a general schedule of your week, then each evening you set a more detailed plan for the next day. How you use the blocks of unscheduled time will make the most difference.

It's like a diet. If I plan the contents of my next meal, I'll probably eat it. But if I go rummaging through the refrigerator I'll too often end up being lazy and eating something not on my diet. Plan the productivity ahead of time, and then go for it.

### **Work In Segments**

Think about working in segments of distraction-less environment. For example, the Pomodoro Technique uses a simple timer to break work segments into 25 minute periods. Once the 25 minutes are up, you have a five-minute break where you can do the things that typically distract you. You can [read more about it here, but there are also many other tools that can help](#). Whatever you do, find tools that work for you to keep you focused.

### **Keep a Work Log**

A great way to avoid distractions is to keep a work log. It can be paper or digital, whatever works for you. You may even want to share it with someone once a week to hold you accountable. But even when it's not visible to others it's a reminder to you, as you write down the time and a short description of what you did during that time, that you can be easily distracted and need to stay engaged.

What are the things that distract you most? Should you delete an app off your phone? Maybe your distraction is a good thing gone too far. Are you enjoying too many nights in front of the TV watching basketball? Be honest with what comes to mind first and take steps to keep it from ruling your schedule.

On the days where I have worked long, and done things of consequence, my rest is better and more sweet. My conscience is clearer. My joy in God's grace is greater and I am more likely to trust Him with whatever comes next. If you struggle with a poor work ethic, try out some of these things and trust that God will do the same for you.

### **Trust God & Bear Fruit**

If you are struggling with avoiding the hard work of ministry, God gives the grace to move through it toward a clear conscience and joy. But He will do so much more than that. He will prepare you from the inside out to be the kind of leader who breaks barriers and leads your church toward greater fruitfulness.

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