

WORK OUT

Look back at how you have handled confusions in the past and see how you have improved day. Ask God to lead you in your day to day pursuit of finding meaning in life and specifically at work.

A PROJECT GROW SERIES DISCUSSION GUIDE



Lesson 2 : What Defines You?

GET STARTED

'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book (which is not the Bible) and one luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take and why?' Share your answer to the group.

REFLECT

When someone has just entered the workforce, he soon discovers that he is starting from zero. He may have been popular on campus, garnering donors. But in the office, he is a new face, unknown and untested. And so he feels the pressure to prove his worth, to make a name for himself.

In one sense, this is good. We all yearn to be recognised. We want to point to something and say, "See? I did that". But in another sense, it can sabotage our career at its early stage. The perennial question "Who am I?" can be rephrased as "What defines me?". What gives me meaning? How we perceive ourselves shapes our thinking, our behaviour and our destiny.

1. Don't let your work define you.

A job heralds that we have worth. That makes us feel good. But to let our job define us is a double-edged sword. One feels significant as long as he holds that job. But when he loses that job due to corporate restructuring or unsatisfactory performance, he feels like the ground beneath his feet has turned to quicksand. Our career should not be the primary basis of our self-worth.

2. Don't let possessions define you.

Our career can shape our self-image because there are tangible evidence of success. Who can argue with the size of our paycheques, the model of our car, or the neighbourhood we live in? While we ought to enjoy the fruits of our labor, whether they be a necessity like food on the table, or a luxury like that fancy new gadget. It is also good to delight in providing our loved ones with the finer things in life.

But when we believe, "I am only good as what I own", we rest our self-image on an unstable foundation. Jesus said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." (Luke 12:15). Many people have a lot of wealth but remain unhappy. Worse? When the pursuit of material possessions come at the price of damaged health, sullied integrity, and broken relationships.

3. Don't let failure define you.

Just as career and success should not provide our primary identity, so shouldn't failure. Many beat themselves up for a bad career decision or kick themselves up for letting their bosses down. A helpful change in thinking goes like this; "I am not a failure, I am a person who has failed."

We should keep our self-worth intact and not separate from our circumstances, for the ultimate reason that we were created in the image of God.

What should define you then?

1. Grace should define you.

Many of us fail at some point of our career, some would scold themselves for having failed. The theme song of these people would go, "I did my best, But I guess my best wasn't good enough." They see a chasm between who they want to become and who they really are. The antidote to this is to let Grace, and not failure, guilt or shame define us. Grace is extending love and kindness to someone who doesn't deserve it. Interestingly, there

2. Excellence should define you.

We put grace first, then excellence. This is because grace when properly understood, is a motivator for excellence not a license to mediocrity. Our job is ultimately by God's grace. True, we study hard, send our resume's, and go through interviews. But at the end of the day, only God can crown our job-hunting with success. Gratitude then is the proper response to a good God just as it would be to a good employer. Excellence then should mark not only our work, but everything we do. If we fall flat on our faces, then we should get up, extend grace to ourselves, learn from our mistake, and still give our best shot.

3. God should define you.

It is not enough to say that what we have is from God. Who we are should also be from God. This brings us full circle in our quest for identity. God adopts us as His children through faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot become His children by our own efforts-His standards are too high-and so, He saves us out of grace.

With our identity rooted in God, we can truthfully say, "I am God's worker. For some reason, He has put me here. Therefore, I will pursue excellence and be faithful to my task,"

When we peg our central meaning on God, everything else, in due time, will make sense. Yes, including our jobs.

OPEN UP

1. Share your struggles, previously or presently, in your pursuit to discover who you really are? or what defines you as a person?
2. God, Grace, and Excellence. Which of these three do you think defines you less in your present job or career? Share why.
3. What other factors, in your opinion, keep us from discovering our

