

# WORKPLACE DISCIPLESHIP 101: A PRIMER

**VIDEO COURSE STUDY GUIDE**  
FOR INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS,  
LEADERS, & PARTICIPANTS

WITH  
DAVID W. GILL, PHD



WORKPLACE 313

**A Primer**  
*David W. Gill*

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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***Workplace Discipleship 101: A Primer*** (Hendrickson/Tyndale, 2020) by **David W. Gill** is the book on which this video series is based. It is available in print, e-book, and audiobook formats. We strongly urge viewers of this video series to acquire this book and use it alongside the videos to get a deeper, fuller introduction to the topic.

**To order:** <https://www.hendricksonrose.com/p/workplace-discipleship-101/25806/e-book>.

**David W. Gill**, series speaker, served forty years as professor of Christian ethics and business ethics at New College Berkeley, North Park University, St. Mary's College, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has also worked as a pastor, organizational ethics consultant, journalist, factory worker, and gas station attendant. David studied at UC Berkeley (BA), San Francisco State (MA), and the University of Southern California (PhD). He was ordained at Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland. He is author or editor of hundreds of articles and reviews and ten books.

## ORGANIZING A GROUP STUDY—OR AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PLAN

**WE RECOMMEND** viewing just one or two of these videos in each study session, accompanying each video with reflection and/or group discussion. Reading the corresponding chapters in the book, either before or after viewing the videos, is not essential but highly recommended.

### Video Group Course Set Up

- Log in a few minutes before a session begins to check video and audio connections.
- Light in front of you—not behind you—so you can be seen more clearly.
- Mute yourself except when you are actually about to speak during discussions.
- Chat box—use any time to raise a question or make a comment.
- Depending on one's wi-fi setup, video and audio quality will be best if you are hard-wired to the internet.

### Video Course Execution

- Watch each video w/study guide open and pen-in-hand.
- Review “key points” and the notes you have made.
- Meditate on (or discuss if in group) the questions for reflection and discussion.

## THE COURSE—12 SHORT FILMS (18-26 MIN.) & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### **Part One: Preparation**—Getting Ready for Our Work

- 1: Commit** Be intentional, not just casual, about the workplace adventure
- 2: Pray** Talk to God, not just when in crisis but proactively and daily
- 3: Listen** Ask God to speak to you about work through Jesus & Scripture
- 4: Partner** Form a supportive Christian “posse”—don’t do it all on your own
- 5: Learn** Get better at your job—and get broader, deeper, and wiser

### **Part Two: Presence**—Impacting Our Workplace

- 6: Align** Work in harmony with God’s work
- 7: Model** Set a great personal example at work
- 8: Light** Share helpful biblically-based insights about work—at work
- 9: Share** Talk about Jesus and your faith in appropriate ways at work
- 10: Overcome** Deal well with conflict and wrong-doing at work

### **Part Three: Post**—Moving Beyond Our Workplace

- 11: Contribute** Bring your work skills & resources back to church & community
- 12: Rest** Say No to workaholism & idolatry; rest, worship, & play

## SUMMARY OVERVIEW

**Workplace Discipleship 101** is all about bringing our Christian faith and values to our daily work. “Work” includes any and all of our efforts to provide things and deliver services—paid or volunteer, blue or white collar, veteran or novice, large or small enterprise. We all work in some way throughout our lives. But how does our biblical faith affect what we do and how we do it? What difference is there in our work if Jesus is Lord of it all?

The heart of this study is in Part Two: Presence. What is our impact in the workplace? We are seeking God’s job description for disciples. We will look at five aspects: (1) the work itself, the products and services; (2) the worker himself or herself, who we are; (3) what we have to say, our ideas and insights; (4) sharing our faith appropriately in our workplace; and (5) overcoming conflict and wrongdoing in our workplace.

But we cannot be a faithful, effective “presence” unless we do the right “preparation.” We can’t “play the game” if we are not properly “conditioned” and prepared. In Part One, then, we take a careful look at the importance of (1) commitment, (2) prayer, (3) listening to God’s Word, (4) finding supportive partners, and (5) lifelong learning.

Finally, as important as is our workplace discipleship, our work must not become an obsession or idol. Thus, we close by considering (1) how we can contribute our resources and skills back at our church, neighborhood, and community, and (2) how to be sure we break from our work for rest, worship and play.

# EPISODE 1

## COMMIT : Be intentional—not just casual—about this adventure

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/761722322> | 17:55 min

*(filmed at the **Plumbing Ministry**, San Leandro; Louis Ray, Sr., proprietor)*

### KEY POINTS

- “Work” is “effort in thought, word, and deed to provide needed and wanted products and services.”
- “Discipleship” is “learning and following” a leader, teacher, or mentor
- “Workplace Discipleship” is about following Jesus Christ and biblical teaching in that half of our waking hours when we work
- Workplace disciples are “in” but “not of” the (workplace) world; we must be ready to “say no” at times to injustice, ungodliness, and bad work
- Workplace disciples are on a permanent quest and adventure to be “transformed” in our thinking and behavior by our discovery of God’s will
- Faithful workplace discipleship brings purpose, meaning, and (often) success in our workplace lives and careers
- Faithful workplace discipleship brings a positive impact to our organizations, colleagues, customers, and communities—“salt” and “light” in the workplace
- Faithful workplace discipleship brings glory and honor to God
- Like any other important challenge in life, workplace discipleship requires a clear commitment on our part—not just a casual, nonchalant, intermittent attitude

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** Has your Christian faith ever helped you in a positive way in your work? Have you ever suffered in any way in your work or career because of your Christian faith?

**2:** If God could speak up, what do you think he would enthusiastically approve—and what would he strongly object to—in today’s world of work? What would you add?

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# EPISODE 2

## **PRAY**: Talk to God—not just in emergencies but proactively and daily

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/764840191> | 17:47 min

(filmed at **Criss Gardens**, Oakland)

### KEY POINTS

- If we want to work with God's help, presence, guidance, and strength, we need to talk to him: pray!
- Our Lord's own example, and the Bible from cover-to-cover, urge us as disciples to make prayer a constant part of our life
- God welcomes our crisis and emergency prayers. "Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you" (*Psalms 50:15*)
- Advance prayers—before we undertake projects
- Looking back—prayers of apology, gratitude, and praise
- Bigger picture, proactive, holistic prayers about our work and career
- Before, during, and after work
- "Chat" prayers throughout the day
- The Lord's Prayer as a model
- The Holy Spirit intercedes and empowers our imperfect prayers

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** What have been your experiences of trying to have a regular, personal prayer life?

**2:** Have you ever tried to focus your prayers on your work or career in a proactive (not just emergency) way? How could you make this a regular part of your life?

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# EPISODE 3

## **LISTEN**: Let God teach you—about work through Scripture

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/765273991> | 18:45 min  
*(filmed in Rios-Lovell Winery Vineyard, Livermore)*

### KEY POINTS

- Great to talk to God in prayer—but we also need to listen to God speak about our work
- God can speak in many ways, as the Bible itself illustrates—nature, animals, plants, stars, dreams, literature, conscience, “law written on human heart,” pagan poets, circumstances, other people—always subject to correction by Jesus and Scripture of course
- The written word—all Scripture is uniquely inspired by God and is profitable for teaching and training us. Biblical sermons, letters, laws, psalms, stories . . .
- The incarnate, living Word, Jesus Christ at the center of the written Word, the fullest, clearest revelation of God, who always did the will of God
- Read the whole of Scripture but focus on (1) Jesus, (2) the big picture of God’s work in the world as creator, sustainer, redeemer, (3) the big picture of discipleship, (4) teachings and stories about work and money, (5) anything touching on your particular work specialty
- Read, meditate, study, memorize, share and discuss
- Put into practice—we can only know something when we live it out
- Read prayerfully and humbly, remembering that full understanding requires God’s Holy Spirit, promised to us as our divine helper.

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** Have you ever done any systematic or regular Bible reading and study? When and how did you manage to fit this in your schedule?

**2:** What parts of the Bible (stories, laws, teachings, psalms, proverbs, etc.) have been (or could be) most helpful in hearing God on the subject of your work? Why these?

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# EPISODE 4

## **PARTNER** : Don't just do it by yourself—form a posse

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/766617042> | 15:32 min

*(filmed at ArcSource IT Consulting, Berkeley; Dave Monk, Proprietor)*

### KEY POINTS

- Workplace discipleship is a “team sport” not a “solo sport”—we need to find at least a couple good teammates
- Jesus sent his disciples out “two-by-two” not “one-by-one.” He promised his special presence wherever two or three were gathered in his name
- In the Creation the only thing God said was “not good” was for man to dwell alone without a Helper. The Creator is a triune “we” making a human “us”
- The whole Bible teaches that two are better than one, more successful, able to pick each other up, fight off difficulty, etc.. Moses needed Aaron, David had Jonathan, Ruth had Naomi, Paul had Priscilla and Aquilla, et al.
- A workplace discipleship “posse” is essential for discernment (figuring out the will of God) and support (carrying out the will of God)
- Workplace colleagues, church-based small groups, family and close friends can get us part way
- An intentional, committed “posse” of two, three, or more brothers and sisters is best for a durable, knowledgeable, trustworthy, wise posse
- Find one or more congenial friends in (or at least understanding of) your work life and give it a trial period for weekly contact, discussion, and prayer. Extend it if it goes well.
- Our Lord never leaves us alone, he is always with us. But it is God’s promise to guide and strengthen us even more through our partnership with others

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** What has been your experience with small group Christian fellowship? Was it trustworthy? Encouraging? Helpful for your work life?

**2:** What would be the major obstacles and challenges you might face in trying to create a covenanted workplace discipleship “posse”? How could you make it happen?

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# EPISODE 5

## LEARN: Lifelong learning—get better, deeper, and wiser at work

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/768182403> | 18:26 min

(filmed at *Gill Study, Oakland*)

### KEY POINTS

- Learning—education—is a lifelong task, an obligation and an adventure
- Learning from Jesus and Scripture is basic and foundational, but there is more
- First, bring honor to our Lord by being as good as you can be at your job. Mediocre, error-prone, half-hearted work dishonors our true Master, Jesus Christ. “Whatever your task, do it heartedly, as for the Lord.” This means formal and informal education, extra classes, continuing education, seeking out mentors, and reading up in your field
- Second, develop a deeper “theology of work.” Read a couple great books on the topic. Take a class or workshop.
- Third, seek out Christian perspectives on your field of work in particular—books, organizations, and conferences on “Christianity and” . . . the arts, child care or parenting, music, law, architecture, technology, business leadership, teaching, engineering, social work, history, health care, science, manufacturing, etc..
- Fourth, broaden your general education beyond your work specialty. Study some history, geography, art and culture, religion, philosophy, cooking, literature, foreign language. Acquire wisdom, not just narrow technical job skills
- Fifth, try to understand the news and current events and trends—not by becoming a “news junky” and not by submitting to 24/7 propaganda from partisan channels—but by giving some of your attention to reliable sources so you know what is happening in your community, nation, and world.

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** How do you stay current (or even get ahead of the pack) in your field of work or job specialty?

**2:** What have you read (or done) that deepened your historical or theological perspective on your work?

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# EPISODE 6

## **ALIGN**: What we do—align with and participate in God’s work

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/767134380> | 19:41 min

*(filmed at **Larry Hatfield Art, El Sobrante**)*

### KEY POINTS

- Now it is time to go to work. How will our work itself, the stuff we make, the services we provide, be different?
- The key is to understand God’s work that God does—and then do our best to walk and work in ways that align with and participate in God’s work. God is our working example to follow—and, created in his image, it is in our DNA as well
- First, follow the example of our Creator—promote teamwork, beauty, utility, diversity, productivity, and good stewardship of God’s planet and people.
- Second, be a Sustainer, like God, upholding—not walking away from—our work, the people impacted by our work, and the care of the creation/planet itself.
- Third, bring wisdom to our workplace, common sense, good planning, practical counsel. God’s Word is packed with wisdom and it is ours to share
- Fourth, be the advocate for justice and righteousness, fairness and honesty. God worked through Lawgivers and Prophets for this and it is part of our workplace role to advocate for fairness, to defend those being harassed or exploited
- Fifth, God is the Redeemer, the fixer of what is broken not just the creator of something new. Setting people free, reconciling the alienated, healing the hurting, saving the lost. This is also part of our work role.
- Sixth, God is the Finisher, the Completer, the Omega, not just the Alpha. Like God we want to finish the good work we begin

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** Have any of your jobs given you opportunities to align with or participate in God’s work of creating, sustaining, bringing wisdom, advocating justice, and redeeming/healing/liberating?

**2:** How would you like your work colleagues to describe your contribution if they are asked to speak at your funeral some day?

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# EPISODE 7

## MODEL: Who we are—be an exemplary, godly model worker

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/770067853> | 17:53 min

(filmed at **Creekwood Restaurant**, Berkeley; Greg Poulos, Proprietor)

### KEY POINTS

- It's not just the work we do—it's who we are, our example and character. What kind of model do people see and experience in us? That is already a "message" from us, without our saying a word.
- The toxic worker
- The Proverbs model: wise, diligent, honest, sexually pure, generous
- The faith, hope and love model
- The righteousness, peace, and joy model
- The Beatitudes model
- The Fruit of the Spirit model

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** What are some of the worst attitudes and behaviors you have seen in the workplaces you have been part of? What was the impact on the organization?

**2:** Describe some exemplary colleagues or managers you have worked with? What made them so admirable?

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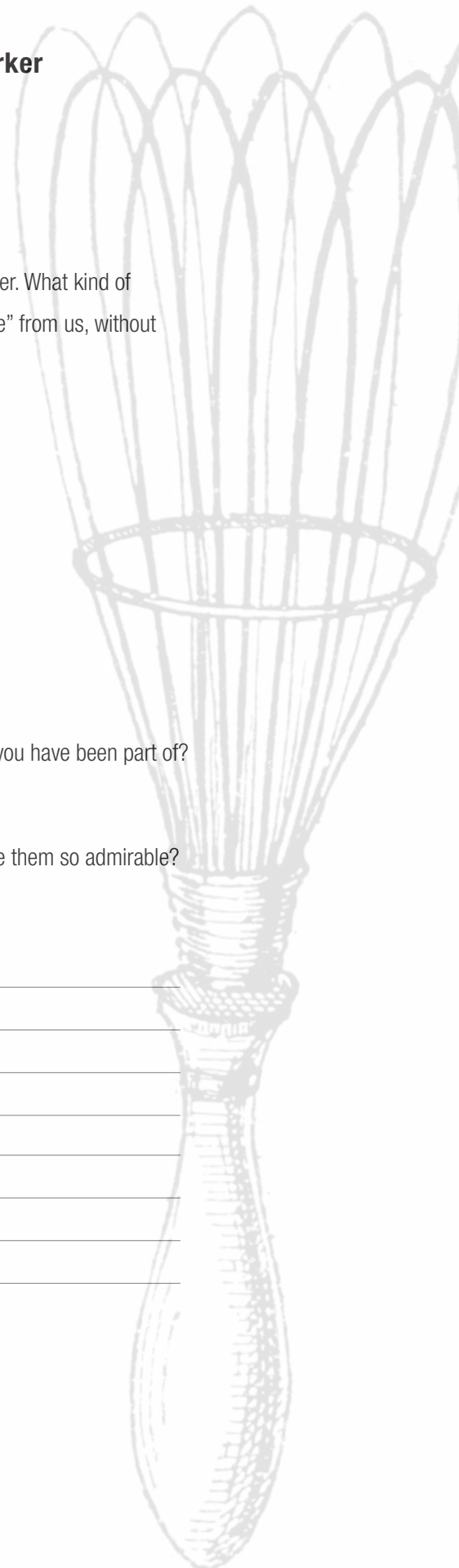
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# EPISODE 8

## LIGHT: What we say—bring biblical work insights to our workplace

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/770069103> | 19:14 min

*(filmed at Alan Kropp & Associates, Berkeley; Alan Kropp, Proprietor)*

### KEY POINTS

- Who knows more about work and money than any other source? Who knows more about law and justice? About health and healing, agriculture, music, business leadership, politics, child rearing—about any work specialty? God!
- Have something insightful and helpful to say! Find some great insights. Study Scripture, talk about it with your posse, do some research among Christian thinkers in your field.
- Test your ideas on your posse.
- Say it (share it) in your workplace with humility as well as enthusiasm
- Provide supportive expert references and practical applications
- Biblical insights anyone can share: (1) openness and teachability, (2) mission and purpose, (3) teams are best, (4) diversity pays off, (5) all stakeholders matter, (6) Golden Rule
- Insights for your particular field

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** Have you any examples of general workplace insights (applicable to all work environments) you got from Scripture and shared at work? How did it turn out?

**2:** What might be a couple basic, easy to communicate, biblically-based ideas you could promote in your particular profession or industry?

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# EPISODE 9

## **SHARE:** Articulate the Gospel—in appropriate, effective ways

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/770251088> | 25:42 min

*(filmed at **First Covenant Treehouse Preschool**, Oakland)*

### KEY POINTS

- Our world and its people are lost and hurting without Jesus Christ. Compassion should motivate us to share the Gospel. Our workplace is usually where we have the most contacts with unchurched people
- Our Lord gave us the “Great Commission”—it’s about obedience when we serve as ambassadors for Christ
- It’s about the joy of introducing our Friend to our friends. We love connecting our friends—and evangelism works best in that mood
- Become articulate about the story of Jesus
- Become articulate about our own story of following Jesus. Why do we do it?
- Respect our employers’ policies and our listeners’ privacy
- Showing care and concern for people often leads to opportunities
- Inviting colleagues to concerts and outside events
- Creating faith-based study groups or experiences at work can help
- Creative, intriguing messages in your workplace (books, cups, etc.)
- Inducing questions about your faith by your conversations
- Never get stressed: God is at work in his own time. Plant, water, harvest

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** Have you ever tried to share your faith with your co-workers, customers, clients, or patients? How did you do it and what were the results?

**2:** Have you ever been “evangelized/proselytized” by other Christians or those of another religion? What are the appropriate times and ways for workers to share their religious, philosophical, or political views?

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# EPISODE 10

## **OVERCOME:** Respond redemptively—to workplace conflict & wrongdoing

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/770298551> | 20:20 min

*(filmed at Montclair City Park, Oakland)*

### KEY POINTS

- The origins of conflict and wrongdoing: Eden to Babylon
- Workplace disciples cannot just turn away—but what is our role, responsibility, and capability of intervening and overcoming?
- Get the facts straight: who, what, when, why
- Pray and consult with posse—and with wise, trustworthy colleagues—follow company protocols if possible
- Goals: overcome evil with good . . . conflict with peace and reconciliation . . . wrongdoing with righteousness. “Sell” the goals, not just the specific actions
- Posture: be humble, exhort rather than accuse
- Meet with alienated or offending parties—bring others in if unsuccessful alone
- Identify/recognize/own truth and wrongdoing; take responsibility
- Add mercy, forgiveness, and grace to justice—paralyzed otherwise
- Act out reconciliation and peace—and justice/mercy—not just talk and theory
- Reform culture and systems to diminish recurrence of problem
- Spiritual warfare—rely on the “armor of God” not just human wisdom and strength

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** Can you share a story of dealing with a difficult colleague or situation in the workplace? What did you do? What did you learn?

**2:** What are the major examples of wrongdoing in your line of work?

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# EPISODE 11

## **CONTRIBUTE:** Bring your workplace skills back to church & community

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/770361280> | 21:37 min

*(filmed at **Berkeley Covenant Church**)*

### KEY POINTS

- Tithes and offerings—donating at least ten per cent of the money we make back to church and community
- Contributing workplace skills and knowledge to church and community
- Coaching and encouraging others in their workplace discipleship
- Helping those without work to find or create it
- Awakening and using our other (not-employed) work gifts and talents

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** What has been your view of tithing and charitable giving?

**2:** Have you ever donated your workplace skills and expertise to your church, neighborhood, or community?

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# EPISODE 12

## **REST**: Take regular sabbath breaks—rest, worship, & play

- <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/770516061> | 20:59 min

*(filmed at Emeryville Shoreline Park)*

### KEY POINTS

- “Avodah” (Hebrew) can mean “worship” and/or “work”—our work is part of our living sacrifice in worship of God, a means of glorifying God
- Work must not be the object of our worship; no idolatry
- Resist “workaholism,” obsession, addiction
- Find core identity as a child of God, citizen of kingdom—find identity only in a secondary way through your job or vocation
- God, our model, not only worked six days, he rested the seventh, sabbath. We are made in his image and likeness
- We are commanded in the Decalogue not only to work six days but to rest on the sabbath—grateful for creative work (Exodus 20) and liberated from bad work (Deuteronomy 5)
- Rest is not just about “me” but about family, employees, animals, land
- Sabbath is about ceasing, unplugging, detaching, resting—alone and with others
- Sabbath is about “holy convocations,” worship together in the presence of God
- Sabbath is about play, joy, festival, eating and drinking at table with others
- Proactively (but not legalistically) scheduling weekly times of sabbath is key
- Proactively schedule daily rest (and exercise, family time, etc.)—and annual vacations/retreats—and longer range “sabbath and jubilee year” breaks.

### FOR REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

**1:** What has been your thinking and your experience with trying to have a special “Sabbath” day each week?

**2:** How do you make daily time for physical exercise, family relationships, and quiet time with God? What has worked or not worked for you?

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## GRADUATION EXERCISES

**AS YOU FINISH** working through this **Workplace Discipleship 101** course, you will realize that this is really the beginning, not the end, of the adventure. All twelve of our “steps” need constant renewal. These twelve steps need to become habits and an ingrained way of thinking about our work. Yes, it will take a serious commitment and daily effort to be transformed in our workplace thinking and behavior. But this adventure has the capacity to bring us great joy and satisfaction—and great blessing to others affected by our work—and great honor and glory to God.

If you are “all in,” we suggest you commit yourself by making the following pledge to God. You could download ( <https://wp313.org/wd-pledge> ) and print it out and post it where you will see it often, just as a reminder.

### THE WORKPLACE DISCIPLESHIP PLEDGE

As God gives me strength and opportunity, and to the best of my ability,

*I pledge*

To pray about my work and seek God’s guidance for it in Scripture

To be in an accountability and support partnership with other Christians

To be a good example of lifelong learning, diligence, integrity, and excellence

To strive to work in alignment with the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer

To share my faith and the work insights of Scripture when appropriate

To be a peacemaker and overcomer when work gets tough

To share my workplace gifts in church and community

And to guard some time for rest, worship, and play.

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