

"To a man who lives unto God, nothing is secular, everything is sacred. He puts on his workday garment and it is a vestment to him. He sits down to his meal and it is a sacrament. He goes forth to his labor, and therein exercises the office of the priesthood. His breath is incense and his life a sacrifice.

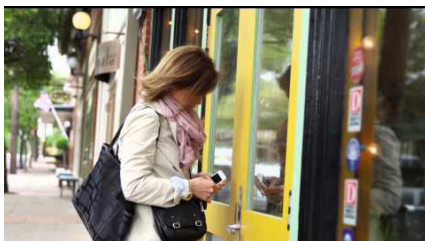
He sleeps on the bosom of God, and lives and moves in the divine presence. To draw a hard and fast line and say, 'This is sacred and this is secular,' is to my mind, diametrically opposed to the teaching of Christ and the spirit of the gospel. . .

Peter saw a sheet let down from heaven in which were all manner of vasts and four-footed creatures which he was bidden to kill and eat, and when he refused because they were unclean, he was rebuked by a voice from heaven, saying "What God hath cleansed that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15; 11:19).

The Lord hath cleansed your houses, he has cleansed your bed chambers, your tables. . . He has made the common pots and pans of your kitchens to be as the bowls before the altar—if you know what you are and live according to your high calling. You housemaids, you cooks, you nurses, you ploughmen, you housewives, you traders, you sailors, your labor is holy if you serve the Lord Christ in it, by living unto Him as you ought to love.

The sacred has absorbed the secular."

—Spurgeon



Work is Beautiful: A Florist's Story
([click here to watch the video](#))



I. Introduction

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

From the lips of Jesus to His followers comes a confirming message : you and I have been made for abundance, ***made to flourish!*** Whether we're headed back to school as students or will soon celebrate a holiday from work on Labor Day, God's promise of flourishing can be ours.

All across the pages of scripture resounds this hopeful declaration of God's intended purpose:

"God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

Speaking of the Patriarch Joseph: *"The Lord was with him and whatever he did, the Lord made to prosper" (Genesis 39:23).*

As a promise to those who walk in the word: *"He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers" (Psalms 1:3).*

As a promise to those who walk up rightly: *"In his days may the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon is no more" (Psalms 72:7).*

Embracing the wonder of such truth is transforming. Life routines take on new possibilities. Work roles and responsibilities take on new meaning. Expansive time commitments to vocational and educational pursuits come to be seen through the paradigm of worship and wonder, eternity and Kingdom.

Discover how your daily work can have a beautiful and often unseen impact in the lives of those around you with a video clip called *Work is Beautiful: A Florist's Story*.



W-10 Implicit, unwavering trust that His Word will never fail

In this time together we will explore the possibility and promise of our own “Joseph experience”...that the Lord is with us and in whatever we do, we prosper! (Genesis 39:23)

Experiencing Scripture:

“as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are ‘yes’...” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Pause now with a partner or in your small group to give thanks for the certainty of His word; though every man be found a liar, God remains faithful to fulfill His Word. Thank Him for the John 10:10 promise of life's abundance as declared by the Son.

“Father God, with grateful heart I cling to your promises for direction in life. Hearing Christ's promise of abundant life gives security and hope. Open the eyes of my heart to see your plans for prospering in whatsoever I do.”

II. Whatsoever you do—Colossians 3:23

The inclusiveness and expansiveness of “whatsoever” can be both mind-boggling and faith-stretching. God's promise of blessing and abundance, prosperity and flourishing touches ALL of life. Attempts to *compartmentalize* our faith into certain times of the week or limited spheres of life is both the tendency of the flesh and one of the schemes or “wiles” of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11).

Seeking to divide our life commitments and priorities into *sacred* and *secular* limits the eternal possibilities of our Kingdom impact. Defining a person's only “calling” as “into full time ministry” is a contradiction of Ephesians 4:12 “equipping (all) saints for works of ministry.” EVERY follower of Jesus has the wondrous privilege of co-laboring with Him that we might see flourishing in whatsoever we do!

JESUS is our example.

“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).

Just as we find Jesus “balancing” His flourishing in wisdom, physical development, and relational closeness with His Father and others around Him, so also we have the possibility to experience life abundance and satisfaction in “whatsoever” we do.

Key to this life-flourishing is the yieldedness of Jesus to the Holy Spirit. In fulfilling His life purpose, for example, we find that He was “led by the Spirit” (Matthew 4:1) into the wilderness to be tempted and came out of this time “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14). It's this yielding for direction and discernment, enabling and empowerment that can insure our own flourishing in all of life.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:18).

As we explore the wondrous possibilities of our own adoption into God's family and the promise of “life flourishing,” it's in significant contrast to us living life as “orphans” (Galatians 4:5). Through the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit, He comes to impart to us life and love, discernment and provision.

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you” (John 14:16–17).

W-6 Encountering Jesus in the Word for deepened transformation in Christ-likeness

Note: The Hebrew word *avodah* is sometimes translated *work* (Genesis 2:15), sometimes *worship* (Exodus 3:12; 4:23; 7:16) and sometimes *serve* (Joshua 24:15).



Work Is Worship: Alfonso's Story

Discover how your work can be worship through the real-life story of an auto mechanic who uses his gifts and abilities for God's glory and the good of others.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

Encounter Jesus :

"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" (John 4:9).

Listen quietly before the Lord and sense the sobering sadness of these words: "Have I been so long with you and yet you have not come to know me." These words are not just about Philip. None of us yet knows Him completely. YOU do not know Him as intimately as He desires. Sense the Spirit's sadness. Your hope of life abundance and flourishing is in this person, Jesus.

Pause now and pray a prayer of compassionate yielding "to count all things as loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..." (Philippians 3:8). Lord Jesus, in all of life, in whatsoever I do—I want to know you.

III. Do heartily—Colossians 3:23

Key to flourishing in "whatsoever" we do—in relationships and vocation, in recreation and mission—is by the Spirit's prompting to do it *heartily*. The word "heartily" (from Greek—*psuche*) speaks to our innermost drive involving our thoughts and intentions, our motivations and emotions. It speaks of all that gives life purpose, our *soul* or heart.

Doing all of life *heartily* often begins by changing our THOUGHTS and INTENTIONS. Truthful, biblical thinking says every moment in every life situation matters to God; all of life is shared intimately with Him and is sacred. Special importance relates to the places where we spend huge portions of our time—our vocations whether at home or in the workplace, and our school days as students. So we can begin each day embracing truthful thinking: "I'm excited to share this day and all it brings with my Creator who will give it meaning, and my intention is that I will be found "doing the will of God from the heart (*psuche*)" (Ephesians 6:6).

Jesus is our example.

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10: 38).

As the Apostle Peter shares the convincing gospel message with Cornelius, one of his summarizing statements on the life of Jesus was that "He went about doing good."

It's this same mission that can enable flourishing in our lives as we "go about doing good." It's this calling to "do good" that turns work into worship and school into something sacred. "Doing good" in every sphere of life brings blessing and balance to life.

With Jesus as our example of doing good, flourishing in all of life relates to involving the Person and Power of the Holy Spirit in each dimension of life. It's the Holy Spirit who pleads within our hearts to "do good" and empowers Kingdom impact in all we do. It's the Spirit's work to produce abundance and flourishing that brings *Spirit-Empowered Life Balance*. It's this hope and promise of satisfaction in life that we long for deep within as purpose is discovered and *calling* fulfilled.

Assess your satisfaction in the following six areas of your life:

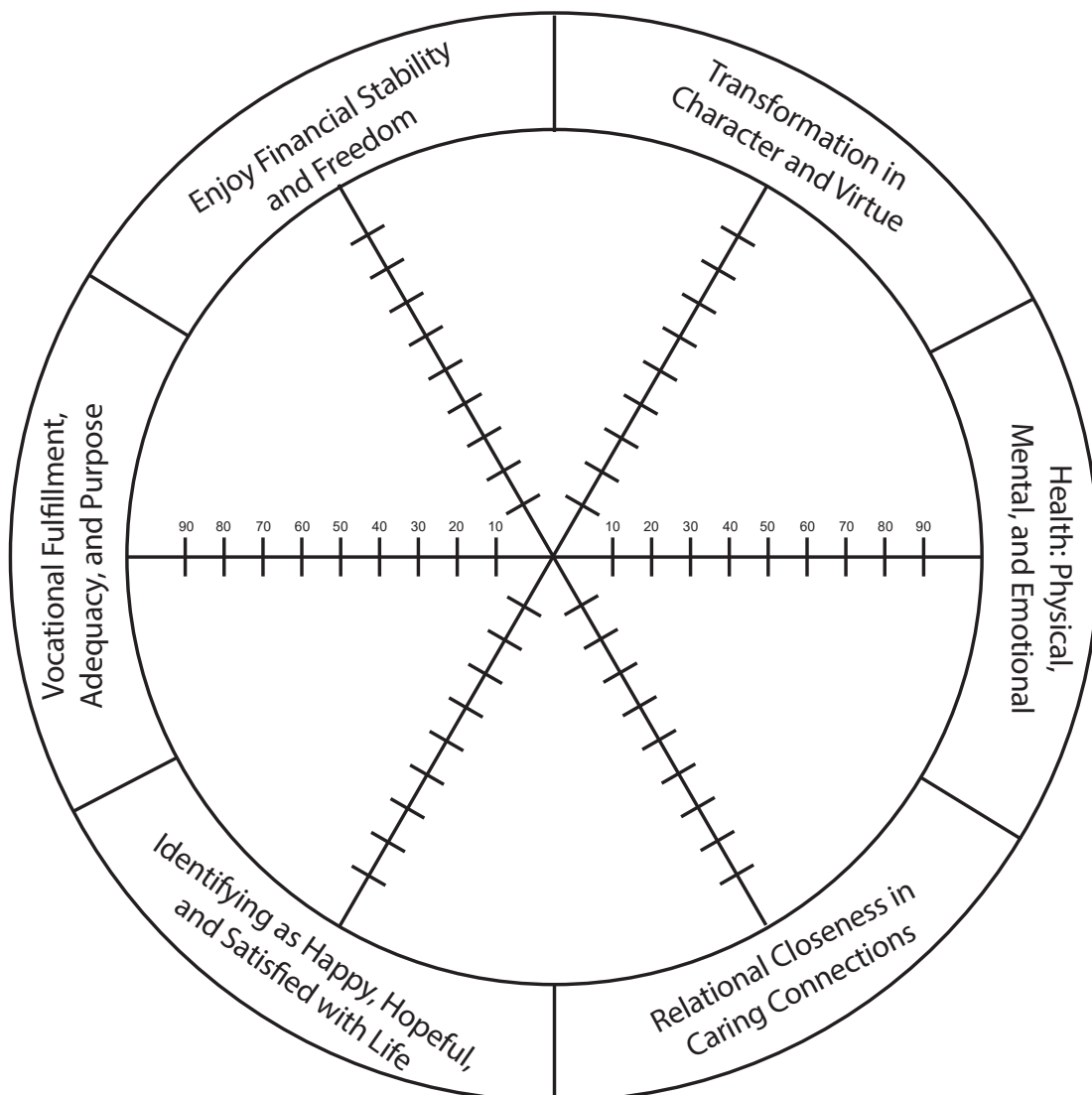
1. Transformation in Character and Virtue
2. Health: Physical, Mental, and Emotional
3. Relational Closeness in Caring Connections
4. Identifying as Happy, Hopeful, and Satisfied with Life
5. Vocational Fulfillment, Adequacy, and Purpose
6. Enjoy Financial Stability and Freedom

T.H.R.I.V.E. Life Balance

Flourishing Assessment

- Plot a score of how SATISFIED you are with experiencing fulfillment in this area of your life:
- Examples: 80=Satisfied in Health; 40=Unsatisfied in Relationships
- Connect the dots and shade or color in your T.H.R.I.V.E. growth areas

Very Dissatisfied 0	Dissatisfied 40	Somewhat Satisfied 70	Very Satisfied 100
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W-2 Being a *living epistle* in reverence and awe as His Word becomes real in my life, vocation, and calling

Engaging Fellowship:

Consider two areas of desired T.H.R.I.V.E. Life Balance improvement and share them together, then look for opportunities to encourage one another and celebrate together.

"...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25).

1. I desire increased flourishing in the area of:

To increase my flourishing in this area, I could...

*(i.e. I desire increased **flourishing** in the area of my relationships and I need to schedule, plan, and protect regular fun times with my spouse and kids.)*

2. I desire increased flourishing in the area of:

To increase my flourishing in this area, I could...



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V. Unto the Lord—Colossians 3:23

Abundance and flourishing in life is keenly tied to our driving motivation; “who are we seeking to please?” God will resist selfish ambition and seeking the approval of people will prove to be empty. Only a life lived “unto the Lord” will yield 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold fruit!

Our daily routines and schedules, our conversations and choices can be lived out *unto the Lord*. Every dimension of life and vocation, relationship and recreation can be made *sacred* as we live them unto the Lord. It’s this “unto the Lord” motivation that ensures abundance and flourishing.

Again, JESUS is our example.

“For even Christ did not please Himself...” (Romans 15:3); and in His example of His pleasing His Father, we hear these words, “I always do those things that are pleasing to Him” (John 8:29).

Living all of life seeking to please Him and not ourselves brings Him honor and is the pathway to our flourishing. The following three aspects of living life “unto the Lord” are of real importance:

- He is present in all we do: “...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

There’s nothing so routine, so mundane that is not made special by His presence. There’s no intention, attitude or passion that escapes His notice, but rather in all of them, His Spirit can empower our testimony to be as it was of Jesus “in whom I am well pleased.”

- He can be pleased in all we do: “For the Lord takes pleasure in His people” (Psalms 149: 4).

The Apostle Paul reflected on this possibility as he declared: “We have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to him” (2 Corinthians 5:9).

Again it’s imperative to rely on the person and power of the Holy Spirit: “It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2 :13).

- He has purpose in all we do.

Our flourishing is to be found more in the eternal than the temporal—more in expressing the Kingdom than extending our own influence. Yet our flourishing in life is not all *by and by* but very much *here and now*.

- A flourishing heart finds and imparts an inexpressible joy in and through all of life: “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (John 15:11). “...and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory...” (1 Peter 1: 8).
- A flourishing life calls attention to Jesus, the source of our joy: “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).
- A flourishing life expresses a generous, caring priority toward others: “And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).



P-1 Living a Spirit-led life of doing good in all of life: relationships and vocation, community and calling

Experiencing Scripture:

“And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:16).

Consider the various dimensions above that contribute to your *life balance* and then pause to reflect on the God-pleasing possibilities of doing good in all of life. Pray together with a partner or small group, making personal your application of Hebrews 13:16.

Father, in my relationships and work, my community service and recreation, would you open my heart to sense the possibilities and potentials of increased sharing and caring. In all the traffic patterns of my life, I yield to the Spirit’s work of generous love being expressed through me to others.