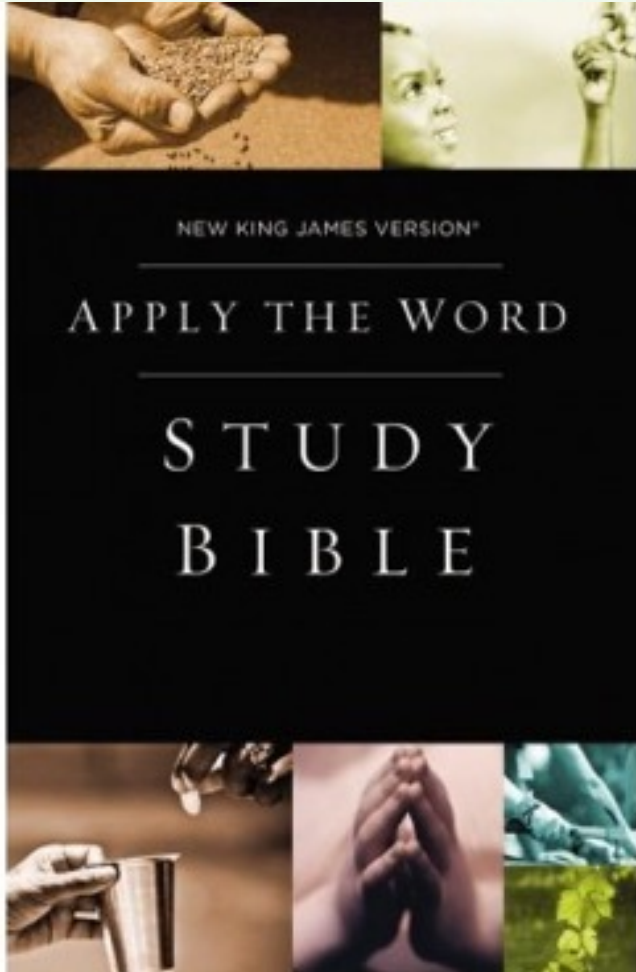


# WORK

**A Blessing from God**

**5-Day Reading Plan**

# NKJV Apply the Word Study Bible



The **Apply the Word Study Bible** brings you to an intimate understanding of the Bible's message, helps you **think about it** and **apply it** to your lives. People of all ages and walks of life will enjoy the **fresh style** of the feature articles, which are directed at helping you approach life with the mind of Christ. You will discover that the Bible is a very **practical book**, just what is needed to guide you through every day. Featuring the New King James Version, the best translation for Bible study, abundant sidebar articles and abundant full-color design, the **Apply the Word Study Bible** is the perfect companion for **everyday living**.

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- New King James Version, the best translation for study
- Hundreds of sidebar articles for seeing the relevance of Scripture for everyday living
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- Full-color page design provides a helpful and interesting visual encounter with Scripture
- Charts, tables and maps provide abundant Bible information
- Concordance for helpful reference
- Full-color maps to illustrate the Bible lands

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# Day 1: Work Itself is a Gift from God

GENESIS 3:17-19



A stubborn untruth in Western culture casts work as part of the Curse imposed by God to punish Adam and Eve's sin, which would make work inherently evil. That idea is not found in Scripture. Rather, these are the biblical facts about work:

- *God works.* The fact that God Himself labors shows that work is good, since God cannot do evil. God is always working.
- *God created people in His image to be His coworkers.* He gives us the authority and ability to manage His creation.
- *God established work before the Fall.* Genesis 1-2 records how God created the world, noting that He placed the first humans in a garden “to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Their assignment came before sin entered the world and before the Curse in chapter 3.
- *God applauds work even after the Fall.* If work were inherently evil, God would never encourage people to labor. But He reappeared for Noah and his family the same command He gave Adam and Eve to exercise dominion over the earth (9:1-7)
- *Work itself was not cursed in the Fall.* Genesis 3:17-19 shows that as a result of Adam’s sin, God cursed not work but the ground: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it.”

This does not mean work remains unaffected by the Curse. Sin has three results:

1. Work that had been a joy became “toil.” People would come to dread the burden of work.

# Day 2: People at Work

PSALM 8:6



When God made human beings in His image (Gen. 1:26-30), He appointed them as His coworkers in overseeing creation and gave them dominion over His works. Consider the implications of that fact:

- *We bear God's image.* God has invested human beings with dignity and value. We matter. Who we are and what we do are significant. God has created us for a reason, which gives us meaning and purpose.
- *We are created as workers.* God is a worker, and we are made in His image. Our labors express who He is and what He wants accomplished in the world. Our work has worth.
- *We are God's coworkers.* God gives us managerial authority to subdue the earth—to nurture and develop it, bring it under our control, use it to meet our needs, explore its wonders, and cooperate with its natural laws. We join Him when we manage creation or advance human well-being.

Our everyday jobs are a significant way by which we can fulfill God's goals and put our God-given skills into action. We bring Him glory when we are faithful managers of the resources and responsibilities he puts under our authority. And we find fulfillment and motivation as we partner with god in lifting up His creation and looking out for the good of others.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** In what ways does your work reflect the tasks God has set before you?

# Day 3: Finding Joy at Work

## PROVERBS 24: 3-6



The Bible affirms that God's original design for work was good—even "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Only after Adam, and Eve rebelled against the Lord did work come under the Curse, making labor toilsome (Gen. 3:17-19). Yet God still wants our work to be significant and satisfying. Proverbs suggests how we can make that happen:

- We are wise to honor God in our work and with the pay we receive (Prov. 3:9, 10; 16:3).
- It is smart to learn diligence and avoid laziness (6:6-11, 13:4; 19:15; 20:3; 21:25).
- Careful planning, as well as taking responsibility for our work, yields enormous benefits (12:11, 14, 27; 14:23).
- We will avoid pain and find joy if we work with integrity (16:11; 20:10, 17, 23).
- The natural motivation to provide for ourselves should prompt us to show initiative (16:26; 20:13).
- It is wiser to work for long-term outcomes than for short-term gains (20:21; 21:5; 24:3-7).
- Performing with excellence brings success (22:29; 24: 3-7).

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Are you finding joy in your work? If not, how can you seek out this joy every day?

# Day 4: Connecting Our Work with God's Work



Psalm 90: 16, 17

Psalm 60 reminds us of a profound truth that God is eternal and unchanging, while humanity is destined to die. Interestingly, Moses ends his song by asking God to show His own work by ensuring that His people's work endures. His prayers essentially asked that God give meaning, significance, and purpose to His creatures' labors. At one extreme, our everyday work may feel like a drudgery done only for someone else's profit— or at the opposite, extreme, it may feel like a pursuit of raw personal ambition. Connecting our work with God's work helps us to avoid both hazards. Our work becomes a testimony to God's goodness and a way of conveying His grace to everyone we serve.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Do you work for your own personal gain or for the glory of God? Do you find yourself falling on one "extreme" or the other?

# Day 5: Rest for a While

MARK 6:31



When the Twelve returned from their tour with Jesus (Mark 6: 7, 12, 30), their Master pulled them aside. He modeled a habit that many of us could stand to practice more—the habit of rest.

Given the pressure we often feel to do our best, or even to outwork and outperform our coworkers, rest may seem like the last thing to pursue. But God wants us to embrace His standards, not those of our culture. He values work. And he also upholds our need for downtime. Rest is something God Himself does (Gen 2:2). He also commanded the Israelites to rest regularly each week (Ex. 20: 8-11).

We need to look hard at how much time we actually need to spend at work, because there are too many other important things we might be missing out on. Work matters but so do family, chores, church, rest, and more. We may need to take Jesus' advice "Come aside... and rest a while" (Mark 6:31).

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Do you take a sufficient amount of time to rest in your week? How can you find moments of rest throughout a busy week?