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**Economics or Ethics- Podcast 3**

*PLEASE NOTE: These are direct transcripts of spoken sermons.*

Good morning. We’re discovering that God is intensely interested in every aspect of our life, 24/7. Not just interested in what takes place on Sunday morning or in our home, He’s interested in everything including our work life. And as we’ve been talking about, what does it mean to offer our work life up to God or to discover God in our work life, we’ve defined work life with a broad definition. It’s not just for those who work in an office or for those who practice a particular kind of trade. Work life is whatever you do. So if you’re a stay-at-home parent, if you’re a student, {for our Job Seeker Network brown bag series it's your current job search and then future employment or current job/employer} whatever you do that you give yourself to, that you put your heart in to, that you work at, that is kind of your ‘deal’, that is your work life. And God wants to be involved in that, He’s interested in that, He cares about that, it’s important to Him. And so, we’ve been studying it, we’ve been giving you work life challenges to actually put into practice during the week, we’ve been working on these things, and I want to share with you one of the blogs that we’ve got this week. We’ve encouraged you to go on our blog spot and tell us your story. Listen to this story, it’s so awesome.

A guy writes this week, he says, “Pastor Tim, I’ve been putting off a serious discussion with my manager for some time. I was not receiving any feedback on my performance, and questioned his management style. I prayed about it. When I came this morning, I went right to his cube and asked him for feedback on my performance.” That’s pretty gutsy isn’t it? “Since I had been fearing the worst, I had anxiety about this discussion for several months. What I found is that my boss was just time-constrained and would only provide feedback to those who had challenges. After praising my efforts for what seemed like an hour, he asked if I would mind mentoring some of the new team members that were coming on board soon. He also explained some of his actions to help me better understand his management style. Thanks for the challenge to ask.”

Now I just think that’s phenomenal. Here’s an individual that has been wondering, “How does my manager perceive me?” and actually worrying about it for several months, going to work with some anxiety. So, he prays, God prompts him to ask, he asks, and he gets a glowing feedback from his manager on his performance. So several months of anxiety for a conversation where he not only gets positive feedback, but he also gets asked to mentor the other employees. He’s actually an expert! Isn’t that something? You see God wants to work in your work life. And he’s all about doing that, and we’ve defined our work life and how God wants to bring his principles into our work life by looking at the four E’s. And we believe that this is what the Christian work ethic should look like. The first E is excellent, second is ethical, the third is engaged and then the fourth is evangelistic. Last week we began with the whole issue of excellence. What does it mean to bring excellence to my work and what I’m doing in my work life? And we said that excellence is not perfection but excellence is an attitude that we bring to what we do. And in the passage we looked at in Colossians 3, Paul says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.” Now those two phrases, “work at it” and “with all your heart” really define this attitude of excellence. “Work” implies that you’re going to put effort into it, that you’re going to focus on it, that you’re going to give it your best, that you’re going to sweat over it, that you’re not just going to be passive, you’re engaged. And it’s an attitude that if I’m going to invest my time, I’m going to pay attention and make it work. The “with all your heart” side of it, means that you have a passion for the outcome. In other words, I’m not just doing it to get through it, I’m not just doing it to get it done, and I’m doing it because I want to make a difference. So, as I do my work, I care about how this impacts the customer, I care about how this impacts the kids that I’m raising, I care about how this impacts the morale of the other employees, I care about how this impacts the bottom line. I have a vested interest in how my contribution is going to make a difference, and I’ve got my heart into it. Now if you come at your work with that kind of an attitude, that *I’m going to put effort and heart into everything that I do*, we said that this kind of attitude over time will produce a consistent performance that is exceptional in nature. That’s what excellence means. To consistently perform in an exceptional way because I bring an attitude into what I do. And as we looked at that passage of scripture last week and we talked about excellence, we came to understand that if all Christ followers followed Christ’s plan for excellence, we would be the *best workers*. Every employer would be looking to hire Christians because they would be the *best* for any company, for any organization, for any endeavor that we might do. We’re called to excellence.

Now this morning we’re going to turn to our second one, which is ethical.We’re going to look at ethics this week and next week, next week we’re going to look at the ethics in the boss/ employee relationship so if you’re a boss you need to be here or bring your boss, and if you work for a boss you need to be here too because how does that all work out? The boss/employee thing, how does that work together? But this morning we’re going to talk about ethics. And I titled this message “Economics or Ethics”. In other words, what happens when **the cost of doing business is my ethics**? What happens when I find myself in a world where the cost of doing business is my ethics? That I have to give up my values in order to keep my job or in order to accomplish this work life that I have. And you know what? There are a lot of ways that people sacrifice their ethics. Let me give you some examples. 1.) Promising more than what we or the company could deliver. Making a promise that I know I can’t deliver on. 2.) Committing to a deadline that I have no intention of keeping. 3.) Signing something that’s inappropriate or illegal. 4.) Fixing an expense report or a bill of sale to ask for more than what was agreed on or to take advantage of an opportunity or someone else. I’ve got to get a paper done to keep my A average? I’ve got limited time to keep my GPA? So I download a paper from the internet. Anything that I would do that is dishonest or unethical. Sometimes putting the positive in the report and hiding the negative down in the fine print so people wouldn’t notice the negative. Those are all examples of the ways that we cheat and we have lots of excuses that we use for cheating: “Well, that’s just the way it is in my business”, “All of my competitors do it this way; if I don’t do it this way I mean I would lose clients; I’ve got to do it this way”, “The economy is bad right now and so I’ve got to do it this way because if I don’t, how would I make my margins? That’s just what I have to do”, “You don’t understand that I’m in a dog eat dog world and if I told everybody the truth, if I let it all on the table right now, I couldn’t sell this product, why would anybody want to buy this product? It’s inferior to the competition! I’ve got to do it this way”, “Hey you don’t understand. That math teacher, you could never please her. Nobody gets a good grade in that class. And so I’ve got to do something here to get by. Last year’s exam would help a lot.”

We come up with all kind of excuses or reasons why in our situation or in our business, at the level we are, that we need to bend the rules, we need to cheat, we need to change things, we need to be dishonest because this is just how business gets done. And what happens is, over time, we develop the kind of lifestyle where we have two separate types of books that we live out of. One set of books is my business books, it’s my work life books. In that world I have a different set of rules, I have a different definition of truth, I have a different definition of letting my “yes” be yes and my “no” be no. I have a different way of operating. And then I walk right over into my *real life*, my relationships with my family, my relationships with my friends, my relationship with my God, and I expect to live by a different set of standards over here. I would never think of lying to my spouse, but I wouldn’t have any problem fudging the truth when it came to a client, or a boss. I would never think of cheating on my personal finances or cheating myself, taking expenses out that I’m not going to account for, but over here, if we need to do that, we just need to do that. And what happens is over time you can learn to develop this sense in which I am *living out of two sets of books.* Now, oftentimes we rationalize why we do that. And I believe that there are three big rationalizations we tend to bring to the table.

The first rationalization we tend to embrace to justify this whole issue is the rationalization of my **economic standing**, my *economic standing.* “If I were to play fair, what would happen to me? I wouldn’t be able to live in this neighborhood, I wouldn’t be able to afford this house, I wouldn’t be able to send my kids to this school. How would I ever be able to pay for college? Everybody likes the cell phone plan. My kids, being the only kids in high school that don’t have the cell phone? I’ve got to keep up doing what I’m doing to stay at the level I’m staying at because I’ve got an economic standing to keep up. How am I going to retire if I don’t keep this job, if I don’t keep this business, if I don’t keep going?” And on and on and on we begin to rationalize. And so what happens is, that it’s easy to trade integrity for income. It becomes an issue where I begin to trade my *cash flow* for my *character*. And in doing that, I begin to compromise.

 The second rationalization I think we can easily come up with is the whole issue **of ego of position***. Of ego of position*. “Well, I hold the title, I’m a manager now,” or, “I’m considered the best in my trade,” or, “I’m an A student and I’ve worked hard to get to this position, I’m at a high level, and you know what? If I didn’t play the game, if I didn’t go along with the corporate culture, if I didn’t do what was expected of me, you know what would happen? I may move from the boardroom to the mail room. And I went to *college*, I’m not doing the mail room job. I went to *college*, I’m not going to do that. I’m an engineer, if I lose that position, I lose my identity, and I’ve worked hard for this. I’m not going to give up my position. So *I’ll play the game. Because I want to keep this position.”* and we rationalize unethical behavior.

The third way we rationalize is the whole issue of **effort sacrificed**. “I’ve worked too hard to get to the place where I’m at, and the thought of going *backwards over ethics?* I just don’t think I can do that.” Or, “Hey its first semester senior year, I’ve maintained a B average and I’ve got a pretty solid SAT score and I’m planning to get in to Texas A&M University.” Or, “I’m planning to get in to the University of Texas, I’m planning to do that.” Or, “If you think that having a test on the weekend after home coming, what stupid teacher would schedule a test on the weekend after home coming, if you think I’m going to sacrifice my future, having worked for three years to get to this GPA because I don’t have time to study, when I can call one of my social outcast friends who will have all the work done, pass it on to me so I don’t have to do it? If you think that I’m going to lose all that I’ve worked for, over this weekend? You’ve got to be kidding me.” And so we cheat, we cheat. Because “I don’t want to lose this, I’ve worked too hard, I’ve gone too far to go backwards now.” And so we begin to live out of two sets of books. Once you start down that path, you start compromising, you start cheating, you start fabricating, you start exaggerating, you start saying things that just don’t reflect reality in order to keep something else. The problem with that, is that ethics are like *water.* They *seep*. And they seep in to every area of our life. And if you think you can live out of two sets of books with your life indefinitely, you’re going to find that you lose some things that you really don’t want to lose. While we rationalize the external, there’s something that’s happening on the internal, there’s a loss that really fits the reality of our circumstances. In fact, there are three things that I really think we lose and the first one is this: **loss of moral authority**. *Loss of moral authority*. How do you tell the people around you to trust God when things get hard? Dads, how do you look your sons in the face and tell them to trust God and be honest and to tell you the truth when things get hard, when you know personally that you’ll lie like a dog if necessary, in business, in order to keep your job or make a buck. How do you do that? What happens is, over time, you start to lose your moral authority. You start to look at yourself and say, “How can I ask or encourage anybody else to live ethically, when I know, that I’ve got to get up and look in the mirror every morning and I know that I’m not living that way?”

The second loss goes along with that and that’s **the loss of self-respect**. *That’s the loss of self-respect*. What happens when you get to a point where you understand that deep down, you’re a coward. When it comes to doing the right thing and potentially losing something that you care about, or being dishonest, you’ll cop out, you’ll be dishonest. And you start realizing, *I’m a hypocrite and a coward. T*hat begins to chip away at the very heart of your identity. And it takes a lot of the joy out of life. And over time you begin to feel this loss of enthusiasm for the person that God made you to be.

The last loss is the greatest loss, and that is the **loss of seeing God show up in powerful ways**. *The loss of seeing God show up in powerful ways.* It’s the loss of being able to go into a situation and say “I don’t know what’s going to happen here, but God, I’m going to do the right thing and if you don’t show up, I’m sunk.” And how many people have missed out on the stories of God’s powerful working in their life because they took the short cut instead of just throwing themselves on God and saying, “Hey God, if you don’t do it, I’m sunk. Show up here, I need you. You’ve got to help me I can’t fix this; I don’t know what’s going to happen tomorrow in the meeting, I don’t know what they’re going to say about me, but I’m going to do the right thing, it’s up to you now.” And how many stories of your life are going to go untold because you took the shortcut along the way?

 As you think about that, I want us to turn to a story about some people that faced the same ethical challenge, and it’s found in the book of Daniel. Turn to Daniel chapter 3. Found in Daniel chapter 3 is the story of three guys that had basically risen almost to the top of their game and they were faced with an ethical dilemma that they had to deal with and they had to work through and the way that they respond to this is a real model for us as we think about our lives and our ethics. In Daniel chapter 3, we have the situation where Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had conquered most of the civilized world of his day, and as he began to bring together all of these people from all of these different tribes and nationalities and different religions, different ethnic groups, part of the way the king would do that in the ancient world was to try to unify everybody around the worship of himself. Caesar did that with the cult worship of Caesar, Xerxes did that, and Nebuchadnezzar does the same thing. What he’s trying to do is he’s trying to equate himself with a god in this polytheistic religion and get people to renounce their gods or at least to give up on them and to worship him, the god cult of the king. And that was a test of loyalty. And so, if your nationality, or your national god was set aside to embrace him, his god, his deity, you become one of the group.

 And so Nebuchadnezzar sets out to do that in verse 1 of chapter 3 we read King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold 90 ft. high and 9 ft. wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. I’m not sure exactly where the plain of Dura is, but interestingly enough, from Archeology, there is a plain outside of the ancient city of Babylon that has a really huge base that’s still there today, which would’ve held a statue or an obelisk or some kind of an idol that would meet these dimensions. This would’ve been a huge base out there, and so we’ve got some kind of archeological evidence to even validate this particular story. In verse 2: “He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up and they stood there before it.” So he pulls out all of the officials, all of the leaders at every level of government including military officials bring them all together from all over the empire to come to this statue. Here’s what his plan is: “Then the herald loudly proclaimed, ‘This is what you were commanded to do, oh peoples, nations, and men of every language. As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.’” That’s pretty straightforward, everybody hear? Here’s the cult, the cult of the emperor, you’re going to worship it, you’re going to show your allegiance by bowing down, and if you don’t, you’re going to get executed. You’re going to get toasted; your life is over.

 Now, for most people in the ancient world that would’ve been fine because they were polytheistic, there were a number of gods, you could add this god to the group and hold position with Nebuchadnezzar. But the Jews had a commandment. Do you remember what it is? “You shall have no gods before me.” So it was a matter of *loyalty to their God* to not bow. So what do they do? We find out in verse 7. “Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, ‘May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, and that whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.’”

Now let’s think about this situation. Here are these guys, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and they’re living in the Babylonian empire. Now, the astrologers that come and accuse them, as far as we can tell from the language here, they are natives, they are Babylonians, in other words they are nationalistically *in*, but they’ve been replaced or they’re under these three Jewish guys that Nebuchadnezzar himself has handpicked and appointed, and they are rulers in the province of Babylon. In other words, not only are they important in the government, but they are actually important in the region of the capital city, the most prominent place. And I love the way the accusers say it. They say, King you know what? The guys that *you appointed do not obey you.* In other words, they’re kind of calling his man card here. Like, *what are you going to do about this? You’re the man, you appointed them, and they’re spitting in your face.* They’re not going to do it. So Nebuchadnezzar has a reason to blow up here. Now on the other hand, you’ve got Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they’ve got a lot to lose, they hold high ranking positions in a hostile government. So they’re in the heart of hostility and yet they’ve risen to the top? They’ve got money associated with that, they’ve got power associated with that, and they’ve got a lot to lose. Not to mention, *their lives*.

 Now, if you were there what would be some of the things that you would potentially rationalize as to why to go ahead and bow and just get this over with? I mean what would be some of your thoughts? I’ve had some time to think about that, and I’ve come up with a whole bunch of things. One of mine, initially, you know, would be that this is a pagan government and you know, I’m God’s guy! So if I’m not still in my position, how could I influence the rest of the people? So if I just bow and get this thing over with, prove my loyalty, then I can stay here and do *more good* than what I could do if I was, say, dead. I mean it would be better for me to hold the position than not to hold the position. I would probably rationalize like this, “Well you know what, I may bow on the outside but while I’m bowing I’m going to be praying the judgement of God down on this statue, I’m going to be praying,” in other words I’m going to be bowing on the outside and I’m going to be standing up on the inside. Well it’s just symbolic! It doesn’t really mean I worship this god, and you know who’s going to take care of my extended family and who’s going to pay my bills and who’s going to cover the rent on my condo? There are all kinds of reasons that we could come up with to justify this, you know why? Because we come up with these reasons *every single day*. Over a lot smaller issues, with smaller consequences.

Let’s see what happens. Nebuchadnezzar is basically ticked off, and look at what it says in verse 13, “Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?’” Now that statement is loaded with application. He says if you do not do what I tell you, then you will be thrown into the furnace. What’s he saying? He’s saying, “I control your future and I control your destiny. I am in charge of your life, I am sovereign over you and I can do to you whatever I want to do, so therefore you better do what I’m asking you to do.”

You know what that raises for us? It raises the question: do you believe that your employer is in control of your future? Do you believe that your employer has the power to determine the direction and the destiny of your life? Or your customers? Or the economy? If you believe that, then what you’re saying is, “I trust my economic conditions for my future more than I trust the God of heaven. I have *more confidence* in the fate of my company than I do in what *my God* is doing. I really am worshipping my economic standing, my job, my world.

The second thing that you notice in this passage, is just the question that he asks here. He says, “Then, what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” He’s asking them the question: do you really believe that your God is more powerful than me? *Do you really believe that your God is more powerful than me?*  And then, raises the place where we all get in trouble: I’m going to do this to you, then what’s going to happen to you? And we think that, you know, it’s like the “then’s” of our lives. If I tell the truth, or if I do it right and I lose my job then who’s going to pay the mortgage? Who’s going to cover the kids’ college? Who’s going to ensure that I can retire? Who’s going to be employing me, who’s going to hire me after this? And we start going through all the “then’s” what will happen to us, and we fail to see the question: is our God able? And that’s the question I really want us to wrestle with: do I serve a God who is able to oversee the outcome of my life, or do I need to compromise along the way to ensure that the others who I believe control my life are pleased with me? You know, if you’re afraid that the people who control the economy in your life, if you’re afraid that they are sovereign over you, and that makes you someone who violates your ethics and order to obey, then you know what? You’re really a slave. You’re a slave to your fear of what might happen to you.

If you stick with your character, if you stick with your ethics, I want you to see what they say. Verse 16, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.” In other words, you don’t need to call a representative from HR. We’re not going to get our attorneys involved, this is not a matter of debate, don’t bring us in before the board, we have already predetermined that when it comes to being honest, to telling the truth, to honoring our God, to keeping our Christian ethics, we’re not going to change. This is not a discussion. We’ve come to the end of talking about it. You don’t need to blow the music again. We heard it the first time! Here’s their response, they say, “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and” this phrase haunts me, “He will rescue us from your hand, oh King.” Now how can that be? What do you mean “he will rescue us from your hand”? Like, our God is able to deliver us from the furnace? But, even if you throw us into the furnace and he doesn’t rescue us, we are going to be rescued from you. The only thing that that can possibly mean is this: Nebuchadnezzar’s will that he is exerting over them would compromise their beliefs and worship, and they’re saying, you know what, our God is going to rescue us from that, either by death or by supernatural intervention, but death or supernatural intervention; we would rather have either of those two things happen in our life than to give in to you and do what we cannot do, and that is compromise our ethics. We will not compromise our ethics, regardless. And you know what? Getting fired from this job is considered being delivered from an employer who is trying to get you to do something that is not biblical. From a client, who is trying to get you to sign a contract, or give kick-backs that are not biblical. From a fellow student that is trying to convince you that cheating in this one class is okay. *I’d rather die, or see God show up in miraculous ways, but I’m not going to do the wrong thing*. That’s what they’re saying. In fact, they even reinforce it more in the next phrase. Look at how they say it, they say, “ ‘But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.’ ” *We’re just not going to do it, we’re not going there, so do your worst.* And that’s exactly what he does.

Next verse, “Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usualand commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. The king’s command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, **23**and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.” Probably the way this thing was set up was it was some kind of a containment area, and there was place below to look in and put the fuel in, and then people were actually taken to the top, they’d be on a mound or a ramp, and they were tossed in from the top. And so, the soldiers picked them up, carried them up there, and when they’re throwing them in, the flames were so hot, and the fire was so hot and it’s coming up so fast that even the soldiers putting them in there, are killed, they get wiped out. But that doesn’t end the story, you’d think it would, but verse 24 says, “King Nebuchadnezzar leapt to his feet in amazement and asked his advisors, ‘Wasn’t it three men that we tied up and put in to the fire?’ They replied, ‘Certainly oh king.’ He said, ‘Look I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed. And the fourth looks like a son of the gods.’ Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and said, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God,’” Yeah, we’ve got a change of attitude here, “’come out, come here.’ So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire and the satraps, prefects, governors, and advisors crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies nor was the hair of their heads singed, their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them” and King Nebuchadnezzar recognizes that his little statue is no match for their great God. And so after he proclaims that in verse 30, it says that, “Then the King promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.” They got a promotion out of the deal!

Second question: **Do I conduct my work life in a blessable way?** You may say, “Well what in the world do you mean by that?” Do you do your work in such a way that God can intervene and bless you? Because God’s not going to bless work that is not done in integrity. Work that compromises my ethics, work that is based on fraudulent activity, or work that is just based on fudging along the way. But if you choose to follow the ethics of Christ in your work place, you give God the opportunity to enter in and intervene in powerful and amazing ways. And in order to apply that this week, I want us to take the work life challenge. And so, reach in to your bulletin. So the idea is that you look for God in your work by taking the work life challenge, whatever your work is, whether you’re a student, a parent, a teacher, whether you work in trade, whatever your work is, you take our work life challenge and then you get on to our BlogSpot and you tell us how it went and you read the stories of other people as well.

So let’s open our work life challenge, your mission, if you choose to accept it, there’s two opportunities, pick one, you don’t have to do them both unless you’re type A, then you can. **The first one is: Have you been fudging in any area of your work life?** Fudging numbers, or time, not telling the whole story, exaggerating your progress on a project? Commit to and follow a specific plan of action, make restitution and seek forgiveness as applicable. Is there an area of your life where your ethics are in question, where you’ve been fudging on something? Make a commitment to change. Identify it, deal with it, straighten it out, and take care of it. I know some kinds of y’all, stay-at-home parents, are saying, “I’m not an employee, I don’t make a paycheck.” Are there areas where you’ve been fudging in your roles and responsibilities? Let me say this at the risk of making everybody unhappy with me (it fits in that category), there are *many ways* for stay-at-home parents to fudge. You say, “I’m home because I’m committed to raising my kids.” Are you raising your kids or is there a video babysitter that takes care of your kids to give you free time to take care of what you want to do? And, just from that example, you can kind of extrapolate other things that you could do. So whatever you’re doing to fudge, whatever that might be, make a commitment to deal with it**.**

**The second one, is pray and ask God to reveal your real motivation in your work life.** Is glorifying God a primary motivator for you? Or are you driven by the desire for a promotion, financial gain, prestige, or any other reason. Write out a prayer to God expressing your desire to be motivated by your love for him and that your work would bring him honor. Now as you do one of those two challenges this week, you do it to discover God in your work life, we would love to hear your story, so get on our website, let us know your story, and read the stories of other people. It’s an amazing thing to see what God is doing as we begin to discover him at work.

{Discussion of different affinity groups that are starting to meet. No need to hear or read.}

Let’s pray together. *Father we come thanking you for your word that we’ve heard today from the prophet Daniel about these three men. Father, both individually and corporately, would you help us to stand firm in the faith, to be men and women of courage and to live a life of love for you, Father. We pray these things in your name, the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*