

# Session 6

## The Way in Which We Live: Our Time and Our Work

### ► Before You Begin

Share insights from your prayer time and daily Bible reading.

**W**e can think of stewardship as the practical result of discipleship. The root meaning of the words “disciple” and “discipleship” is a person who is a “learner.” A disciple is someone who commits his life to learning about Christ and to living a disciplined life based on God’s values and principles in order to honor and please him.

As members of the Church, Jesus calls us to be disciples. This has astonishing implications:

- Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost.
- Christian disciples experience conversion—life-shaping changes of mind and heart—and commit their very selves to the Lord.
- Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live.
- *To Be a Christian Steward, A Summary of the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*, National Conference of Catholic Bishops

During these next two sessions, the phrase “the way in which we live”—taken from the above quote—will be our focus. Think about your daily life. Relationships, work, play, and possessions—all are part of our lives, and all represent the use of our time. Of course, we do not want to spend our lives foolishly. We want to invest them in living each day in a way that is pleasing to God. So let’s begin by looking at values and principles that speak about investing our time.

## Our Time

1. (a) Compare and contrast the way Christians are called to live with the way the nonbelievers were living as described in Ephesians 4:17-24.

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(b) Based on this passage, describe the cause-and-effect relationship illustrated by these examples. How do our minds and thoughts ultimately lead to either good or bad actions?

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2. The Bible, and especially St. Paul's letters, are filled with practical advice on how to live as a disciple of Jesus. What principles for Christ-like behavior do you find in Ephesians 5:8-20?

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3. Paul was not interested in time because he was overly efficient or particularly concerned about time management. What was Paul's real concern, as indicated by Colossians 4:2-6 and Ephesians 5:15-17?

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So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

—Psalm 90:12

Always remember your end, and that lost time never returns.

—Thomas á Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, Book I, Chapter 25

We spend much time interacting with others. Christ's concern for us is that we should extend his gospel of love and compassion to others rather than allowing any sinful influences from others to draw us away from Christ.

By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope, and charity, they must manifest Christ to others.

—Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 31

4. What do the following verses teach us about our relationships with others?

Mark 2:15-17:

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Proverbs 4:13-15, 18-19:

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Luke 10:30-37:

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Jesus gradually reveals the characteristics and demands of the kingdom through his words, his actions and his own person. . . . The kingdom aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another. Jesus sums up the whole Law, focusing it on the commandment of love.  
—Pope John Paul II, *Mission of the Redeemer*, 14

5. (a) Much of our time also should be invested in relating to the family of God, the body of Christ. While we cannot possibly discuss all the passages describing how we should relate to other Christians, identify the principles emphasized in the following three passages.

Colossians 3:12-15:

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Galatians 6:1-5:

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Galatians 6:7-10:

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(b) Which of these principles do you believe is the most difficult for a disciple to follow?

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## Our Work

The New Testament knows no distinction between the “sacred,” over which Christ has control, and the “secular,” which is up for grabs. Instead, Christ expects us to live all of our lives under His lordship. . . .

As a Christian, then, you have more reason than most to view your daily work as profoundly significant. You are a servant of Christ, and He is using you and your work to accomplish His purposes. . . .

Therefore, everything about our jobs should be directed toward Him—our purpose and motives, our profits and their use, our decisions, our problems, our relationships with coworkers and customers, our plans, our goals, our equipment, our financing—*everything*.

—Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Work Matters to God*, p. 114-115

6. (a) Many people today spend the majority of their time working at their jobs and caring for their families. Yet somehow everything we do in our lives should glorify God. Read Matthew 22:36-37 and Colossians 3:17. What do these passages teach us about what our attitude should be in every activity in our lives?

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- (b) Why do you think God cares about the “way in which we live” when it comes to our jobs?

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7. (a) What further insight does Philippians 2:12-15 provide for how we are to live our lives, even at work?

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- (b) What motivations can you discover in these verses for living life with a positive attitude, free of complaining?

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### ► Preparation for Session 7

1. Continue to read and mark your Bible daily, and record your thoughts in your prayer journal.
2. Complete questions 1-10 on “The Way in Which We Live: Our Finances and Our Words,” pages 72-77.