

Small Group Study Quote Sheet

Quote #1

Workaholics are consumed by this inner drivenness and cannot play without feeling guilty. They have to work at play and cannot play at work. Work is too serious a matter. It often becomes misdirected worship as they use work to fill the God-shaped vacuum in their souls. A definition of idolatry is simply making something one's ultimate concern, other than the One who is ultimate. Even on vacations (if they take them at all) workaholics plan the next piece of work. Amos may be describing them when he rails against the people who spend their Sabbaths figuring out how to make more money as soon as it is over (Amos 8:5). The whole of life is oriented around what becomes one continuous workweek. But the outside effect of the workaholic is the same as the idler: *they are a burden* to all around them.

Workaholics have nothing to give because their lust for work consumes all other loves. They require those around them to adjust their lives and priorities to the all-consuming nature of the workplace. Except for money they have nothing to give to those with whom they live: no affection, no joy, no friendship, no companionship, no love.

From R. Paul Stevens, "Seven Days of Faith"

Quote #2

Calvin Seerveld tells a moving story illustrating the mystery of working in faith:

My father is a seller of fish. We children know the business too having worked from childhood in the Great South Bay Fish Market, Patchogue, Long Island, New York, helping our father like a quiver full of arrows. It is a small store, and it smells like fish. I remember a Thursday afternoon long ago when my Dad was selling a large carp to a prosperous woman and it was a battle to convince her. "Is it fresh?" It fairly bristled with freshness, had just come in, but the game was part of the sale. They had gone over it anatomically together: the eyes were bright, the gills were in good color, the flesh was firm, the belly was even spare and solid, the tail showed not much waste, the price was right...Finally my Dad held up the fish behind the counter, "Beautiful, beautiful! Shall I clean it up?" And as she grudgingly assented, ruefully admiring the way the bargain had been struck, she said, "My, you certainly didn't miss your calling."

Unwittingly she spoke the truth. My father is in full-time service for the Lord, prophet, priest and king in the fish business. And customers who come into the store sense it. Not that we always have the cheapest fish in town! Not that there are no mistakes on a busy Friday morning! Not that there is no sin! but this: that little Great South Bay Fish Market, my father and two employees, is not only a clean, honest place where you can buy quality fish at a reasonable price with a smile, but there is a spirit in the store, a spirit of laughter, of fun, joy inside the buying and selling that strikes the observer pleasantly...When I watch my Dad's

hands – big beefy hands with broad stubby fingers each twice the thickness of mine, they could never play a piano – when I watch those hands delicately split the back of a mackerel ...when I know those hands dressed and peddled fish from the handlebars of a bicycle in the grim 1930's...twinkling at work without complaint, past temptations, always in faith consecratedly cutting up fish before the face of the Lord – when I see that I know God's grace can come down to a man's hand and the flash of a scabby fish knife.