

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 2/4/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

There is a parable told by Christopher Wren, one of the world's greatest architects, about three men who were laying bricks. Each was asked what they were doing. The first said, "I'm a laborer and I'm working to earn money." The second said, "I'm a builder. I'm constructing a wall." The third, with a gleam in his eye replied, "I'm a church builder. I'm building a cathedral to the Almighty."

Those three reveal the mindsets that people can have about the tasks they face each day. The first man had a job; the second, a career; and third had a calling. People who have "jobs" see their work as a chore and their paycheck as a reward. They work because they have to and look forward to being away from work when they can spend what they've earned. Those who see themselves as having a "career" recognize the need to work, but also strive to advance and succeed at what they are doing. They are invested in their work and want to do well. Those who have a sense of "calling" understand their work as an end unto itself. Their labor is personally fulfilling because they feel that they are contributing to a greater good. They draw on personal strength, gain satisfaction from their work, and find meaning and purpose from what they do. They often work longer and harder both from a sense of true joy about what they are doing and from how their work benefits others.

If you find yourself to be one who looks at things as burdensome tasks, don't despair. It is possible to motivate yourself from job, to career, to calling, even in the smallest and most mundane chores. You can do this by taking a few moments to consider the potential meaning in what you do. Cleaning up a mess saves others from having to do so and makes the area more attractive. Mowing the lawn can become beautifying the neighborhood and raising both your property value and that of others. Cooking a meal can bring joy to those who share the food, especially when effort goes into making the food particularly flavorful. Looking at the benefit that you and others receive can help to elevate those tasks that seem purposeless or boring.

You can be even more intentional about this, whether it's your employment or household tasks. Take a sheet of paper and turn it horizontally. On the lefthand side, write down the thing that seems lacking in meaning. On the righthand side, write down the answers to questions like, "What is the purpose of this chore?" "What does it accomplish?" "Who benefits from this labor and how?" Keep doing this until you can finally find a result that is meaningful to you.

My nephew used to work at a Target department store as a checker. He told me how much he disliked his job because it was boring and didn't excite him. I asked him to think about his job in a larger way. "What is the thing that God needs you to do at Target?" He said he didn't know but he'd think about it. A couple weeks later, I saw him again and he came up to me beaming. He said, "I know what God has me doing at Target. Every day, most of the people that work at Target stop by my register to say, 'Hello' to me. They seem to enjoy seeing me

each day and my recognizing and greeting them. I make their day better. And I can do that with the customers, too.” My nephew had moved from having a job to having a calling.

We all can do this with just a bit of reflection and find purpose and joy in whatever work that comes before us.

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey