



WORK — Purpose, — — AND — PROGRESS



A PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN
WORK READINESS CURRICULUM



DIRECTION
THAT CLARIFIES



SKILLS
THAT PREPARE



CONFIDENCE
THAT GROWS



FAITH
THAT SUSTAINS



A FUTURE
THAT ADVANCES

— WORK. PURPOSE. PROGRESS. —

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SESSION 1 | 90 MINUTES

Lesson 1: Understanding Work, Purpose, and Progress

A 90-Minute Instructor Guide with Printable Participant Handouts, Activities, Scenarios, Quiz, and Weekly Application

Clear Lesson Focus: Work is introduced as one part of a stable life: a place to practice faithfulness, serve others, provide responsibly, and grow one step at a time.

A Biblical Perspective on Work Readiness, Purpose, Responsibility, and Long-Term Progress

Category	Lesson Details
Target Audience	Adult learners in Christian basic adult education, compassion ministry, life skills, job readiness, GED®/HiSET®, ESL, recovery, reentry, mentoring, and discipleship settings.
Suggested Class Length	90 to 120 minutes. For shorter classes, teach the opening, biblical foundation, one activity, one scenario, and the handout.
Lesson Purpose	To help participants practice understanding work, purpose, and progress in ways that strengthen work readiness, daily responsibility, and hopeful progress.
Main Scripture	Colossians 3:23 - "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..."
Supporting Scriptures	Genesis 2:15; Proverbs 16:3; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:6

Learning Objectives

- Explain the lesson skill in simple, practical language.
- Identify one current strength and one growth area related to this skill.
- Practice a respectful workplace sentence or decision-making step.
- Apply the skill to home, class, ministry, family, transportation, technology, or workplace life.
- Complete one personal next step before the next session.

Key Vocabulary for Adult Learners

Key Word	Simple Meaning
work stability	a dependable pattern of showing up, learning, and following through
purpose	the reason effort matters beyond the immediate task
progress	small steps that move life in a better direction
responsibility	owning what belongs to me and taking the next right step
support	safe help from wise people and helpful resources

PART 1 | INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

Opening Welcome

Instructor Script

This first lesson creates the doorway into the course. Before participants practice applications, interviews, schedules, or workplace conversations, they need a hopeful reason to believe progress is possible.

Welcome everyone. Today we are learning about understanding work, purpose, and progress. This skill matters because work readiness is not built in one big moment. It is built through small faithful choices: showing up, listening, asking for help, practicing, and returning after setbacks. In this class we will not shame anyone for where they are starting. We will look honestly at today and choose one next wise step.

Opening Prayer

Prayer

Lord, thank You for every person in this room. Give us wisdom to learn, courage to practice, humility to receive correction, and hope to keep moving forward. Help our work, our words, and our choices honor You and bless the people around us. Amen.

Expanded Instructor Teaching Guide

Step 1 | Connect the Lesson to Work Stability

Explain how today's lesson supports stable employment. Explain that getting hired is only one part of work readiness. A participant also needs habits, judgment, communication, and support that help them keep moving when pressure rises. Today's skill gives the class a practical way to strengthen that foundation.

Step 2 | Name the Common Challenge

Say to the class: "We are going to look honestly at this area without using shame. Many participants see work only as a paycheck or view past job problems as proof that they cannot succeed. That pattern may have understandable reasons, but it can still limit opportunity. Our purpose is to notice what is happening, learn a better response, and practice it before the stakes are high."

Step 3 | Use an Everyday Example

Invite participants to think about the skill in home, class, volunteer, ministry, and work settings. Use this example: a participant who has been out of work for several years can begin building work readiness by attending class, keeping one appointment, and completing one promised task. Point out the specific behaviors that an employer could see. This helps learners move from a broad idea to observable actions that can be practiced and repeated.

Step 4 | Correct the Misunderstanding

Address this common misunderstanding: Progress must be dramatic before it counts. Explain that growth becomes more manageable when the class separates identity from skill. A person is not a failure because a skill is weak. They is a learner who needs clear instruction, safe practice, honest feedback, and another opportunity to try.

Step 5 | Introduce the Lesson Tool

Introduce the PROGRESS Path as the lesson's organizing tool. Display it where everyone can see it and walk through one fictional example before asking for personal application. Slow down at each step. Ask, "What information do we know? What are we assuming? What is the first action? What support or backup plan is needed?"

Step 6 | Model Useful Language

Write this sentence where the class can read it: "I do not have to solve everything today. I can take the next responsible step." Read it once in a calm tone, then ask the group to repeat or rewrite it in words that sound natural to them. Explain that prepared language is especially helpful when stress makes it difficult to think clearly.

Step 7 | Guide a Short Analysis

Ask participants to identify the immediate problem, the longer-term goal, and the difference between them. Then have them name one present responsibility, one barrier, one support, and one action that can be completed within seven days. Remind them that a smaller action is not an unimportant action; it is the bridge between intention and follow-through.

Step 8 | Summarize and Transition

Before moving on, say: "Today we are not trying to make everyone's situation look the same. We are learning a repeatable process." Reassure participants that they may work with a fictional scenario, write privately, or ask for individual help. The class should challenge unhelpful patterns while protecting dignity, safety, and choice.

Teaching Guidance for the Instructor

- **Teach Through Practice.** Use concrete documents, calendars, cards, sample messages, or job situations whenever possible. For Purpose and Progress Map, demonstrate the first round yourself so participants can see what the finished process looks like before they are asked to perform it.
- **Identify the Real Barrier.** Watch for the difference between a knowledge gap and an access barrier. A participant may understand the lesson but lack transportation, childcare, identification, work clothing, internet access, a quiet place, or safe support. Ask enough questions to identify the real barrier, then help them choose an action that fits their actual circumstances.
- **Reduce Overload.** Watch for overload. When a participant cannot compare many choices, reduce the number of options without taking away their voice. Offer two or three realistic paths, write them down, and compare them using the same facts. The goal is not for the instructor to make the decision; the goal is for the participant to learn a process they can use again.

- **Make the Goal Observable.** During pair and group work, circulate and listen for vague goals such as “do better,” “get ready,” or “try harder.” Help participants make the action observable: what will be done, where, when, with what materials, and who will know it is complete. If an action depends entirely on another person, add a second step that remains within the participant’s control.
- **Close With Faithfulness and Hope.** Say: “God can use ordinary preparation, honest correction, and small responsible choices. We may not control every response from an employer or every difficulty at home, but we can practice wisdom in the next step.” Then move directly into the hands-on activity while the lesson is still concrete.

Key Teaching Points

Teaching Point	Instructor Emphasis
Work readiness is built in layers.	Habits, communication, planning, attitude, and follow-through work together.
Progress must be practical.	Participants need a step they can practice this week, not only an idea.
Shame does not create stability.	Honest responsibility works better than humiliation.
Support matters.	Wise people, clear instructions, and local resources help participants stay connected.
Faithfulness counts.	Small repeated choices can become a stronger future.
Key Teaching Point The goal of this lesson is not to solve every work barrier in one class. The goal is one biblical truth, one practical tool, and one next wise step.	

Biblical Foundation

Read the main Scripture aloud: Colossians 3:23 - "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..."

Instructor Script Ask participants to listen for one word or phrase that stands out. After reading, pause for a few seconds. Then ask, “What word or phrase did you notice?” This allows every participant to engage Scripture without feeling put on the spot.		
Bible Example	What Happened	Lesson for Today
Ruth in the fields	Ruth worked faithfully in a humble setting while God was still writing a larger story.	Ordinary work can become part of provision, dignity, and future hope.

Bible Example	What Happened	Lesson for Today
Joseph in Egypt	Joseph served with integrity in difficult places and grew through responsibility.	Faithfulness can be practiced even when circumstances are not ideal.
Nehemiah rebuilding	Nehemiah prayed, planned, organized people, and kept working despite opposition.	Progress requires prayer, planning, courage, and steady effort.
Lydia in Acts 16	Lydia used work and resources to support others and open a home.	Work can become a way to serve God and strengthen community.

Bible Discussion Questions

- What does this Scripture show us about God’s wisdom for everyday life and work?
- Which Bible example feels most connected to real life today?
- What does this passage teach about faithfulness, responsibility, communication, or perseverance?
- What is one way this truth could change a home, classroom, volunteer role, or workplace?
- What might make this truth difficult to practice, and what support would help?

PROGRESS Path

Step	Practice
P - Pray and prepare	Begin with God, honesty, and willingness to learn.
R - Recognize my starting point	Name strengths, needs, supports, and barriers without shame.
O - Organize one next step	Choose one action instead of trying to fix everything at once.
G - Grow through practice	Repeat small habits until they become steadier.
R - Receive feedback	Let correction become information, not rejection.
E - Expect setbacks	Plan how to return when life gets hard.
S - Stay connected	Use safe support and accountability.
S - Serve with purpose	Remember that work can bless people and honor God.

Instructor Script

Walk through each step of the PROGRESS Path slowly. After each step, give a simple example from home, class, ministry, transportation, technology, or workplace life. Then ask participants to choose the step that would be most helpful this week. Do not rush this section. This is where the lesson begins to become usable.

Real-Life Examples for Discussion

Setting	Example	Discussion Prompt
Home	A family responsibility or household problem makes work preparation harder.	What is one wise first step?
Class or Ministry	A learner needs to practice the skill before trying it at work.	How can the class become a safe place to practice?
Workplace	A supervisor, customer, or co-worker creates pressure.	What response would be respectful and clear?
Digital Life	A text, email, app, or AI tool could either help or create risk.	How can the learner use technology wisely?
Transportation / Planning	An appointment, bus, ride, or schedule change creates a barrier.	What backup plan would protect progress?

Class Activity: Purpose and Progress Map

Purpose: Practice the lesson skill in a safe, structured way before participants try it in real life.

Give each participant four cards labeled **Strength, Barrier, Support, and Next Step**. Ask them to place one realistic example on each card, then arrange the cards in the order they need to address them. In groups of three, participants may use a fictional example and help turn a broad hope into one action that can be completed this week. End by asking each participant to write a date beside the next step.

Instructor Note

Allow participants to pass if an activity feels too personal. Offer options: write privately, talk with a partner, or discuss a fictional example. Keep the activity focused on skill practice rather than personal disclosure.

Activity Debrief Questions

- What part of the activity felt most useful?
- What part felt hard or uncomfortable?
- What would make this step easier to practice during the week?

- Who could provide safe encouragement or accountability?
- How does this activity connect to the next lesson in the course?

Scenario Practice

Use these scenarios for pairs, small groups, or whole-class discussion. Encourage participants to practice calm, respectful, specific words. Do not require acting if participants are uncomfortable; they may write a response instead.

#	Scenario	Practice Response
1	A participant believes past work problems mean success is no longer possible.	Write or say one respectful next step. What words would help the situation move forward?
2	A participant feels embarrassed after having never held a job longer than a few months.	Write or say one respectful next step. What words would help the situation move forward?
3	A class member thinks purpose only matters if the job is impressive.	Write or say one respectful next step. What words would help the situation move forward?
4	A participant wants change but does not know where to start.	Write or say one respectful next step. What words would help the situation move forward?
5	A participant wants work stability but feels overwhelmed by all the steps.	Write or say one respectful next step. What words would help the situation move forward?

Debrief Questions

- What made this situation difficult?
- What was the first wise step?
- What words could help keep the conversation calm?
- What boundary, apology, clarification, or request might be needed?
- When would this situation require outside help or a safer setting?

PART 2 | PRINTABLE PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Participant Handout: My Work, Purpose, and Progress Starting Point

Directions: Complete this page privately. Share only what you feel comfortable sharing. The goal is to leave class with one practical step you can use this week.

Today's Big Idea

Work is introduced as one part of a stable life: a place to practice faithfulness, serve others, provide responsibly, and grow one step at a time.

This lesson is connected to the course because work readiness grows through a steady path. Each lesson is one layer: purpose, strengths, habits, reliability, communication, service, boundaries, feedback, conflict, learning, stress planning, wise technology use, calling, and a 30-day plan.

Reflection Area	My Notes
One strength I already have in this area	
One barrier or worry I need to plan for	
One sentence I can practice	
One person who could support or encourage me	
One next wise step I will take this week	

Participant Practice Sentences

Situation	Practice Sentence
When I need time to think	"I want to respond wisely. I need a moment before I answer."
When I need clarification	"Can you help me understand what you need me to do first?"
When I need to own my part	"I see where I missed that step. I will correct it and try again."
When I need to ask for help	"I am working on this and would appreciate clear instructions."
When I need a boundary	"I want to do this respectfully, but I need to follow the policy and stay safe."

PART 3 | REVIEW, ASSIGNMENT, AND WEEKLY APPLICATION

Assignment

This Week

Write one work-related hope statement and complete one small action before the next class.

Write down what you tried, what happened, and what you learned. If the plan did not work, do not quit. Adjust the plan and return to the next wise step.

Quiz or Review Questions

1. What is the main purpose of this lesson on understanding work, purpose, and progress?
2. Name one way this skill can help with work stability.
3. What is one respectful sentence you can practice?
4. What is one barrier that might make this skill difficult?
5. What is one next wise step you can take this week?

Real-World Adult Education Practice

Part	Directions / Notes
Step 1	Read one realistic work or class scenario connected to this lesson.
Step 2	Underline the problem, circle the needed skill, and write one respectful response.
Step 3	Practice reading the response aloud with calm tone, clear words, and appropriate volume.

Exit Ticket

#	Learner Response
1	One word or idea I learned today:
2	One skill I practiced today:
3	One wise step I can try this week:

Closing Encouragement

Growth happens one faithful step at a time. Do not measure success only by whether every problem is solved immediately. Measure growth by whether you are learning to pause, tell the truth, receive wisdom, practice responsibility, and take the next right step.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us practice what we learned. Give us courage to grow, humility to receive correction, wisdom to prepare for work, and hope to continue making progress. Amen.

Connection to the Next Lesson

This lesson prepares participants for the next step: Discovering Strengths and Transferable Skills. The class is learning in order, so today's skill will be used again as the next skill is introduced.