

WORK: WHO NEEDS IT?...(Part 2)
(Exodus 20:8-11, 1 Corinth 7:17, Isaiah 48:17-18)

...When our children were young we would teach them about life through little songs and ditties. One of them involved work, and I can still hear Faith saying to them, "Finish the job, finish the job, get things done!"
...Last week we began our study of work by considering the reality that our God worked, works today, and created work for our good. In every area of life, except one, God calls us to find deep satisfaction in our labors because work is a gift from God. The exception is our salvation. God did this work Himself!
...Today we will see that we were built for work and that it provides us with a dignity regardless of status or pay.

TWO CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT WORK ENCOURAGING YOU TO GIVE YOURSELF TO IT WITHIN GOD'S GUIDELINES.

...Work, and lots of it is an indispensable component in a meaningful life, for it is one of things that give us purpose!

I. Design: You Were Made To Work. (Exodus 20:8-11, Isaiah 48:17-18)

..."Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the 7th day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."

A. God's commandments provide freedom for us to become the men and women God designed us to be in the world He made. Through them He calls us to be what He built us to be.

1. Many today think wrongly about this. Freedom is thought to be the complete absence of any constraints. But think about fish and airplanes...
...Freedom is not so much the absence of restrictions as finding the right ones, those that fit with the realities of our own nature and those of our world.

2. In the same way, human life works properly only when it is conducted in line with the owner's manual, the commandments of God.

...If you disobey God's Word not only do you grieve and dishonor God, you are actually acting against your own nature as God designed you.

3. So it is with work, which in the rhythm with rest is God's command for us. God calls us to live out this part of our design telling us it is not a burdensome command, but rather an invitation to freedom. Work...you were made for it.

B. God's commandments provide limitations upon our work.

1. God is our glorious example who "rested" on the 7th day after creating. (Gen 2:2)
2. Since we are made in His image, we can assume that rest and the things we do at rest are good and life-giving in themselves. Leisure...enjoying God's world and the fruit of your hands. God gives amazing beauty, luscious food, and sweet smells to be enjoyed!
3. Work is not all there is to life. You will not have a meaningful life without work, but you cannot say that work is the meaning of your life. To do so is to make an idol of it!
...Your relationship to the Lord is the most important foundation for your life and indeed it keeps all the other factors: work, family, friendship, leisure, and pleasure from becoming addicting and distorted.

4. Unless we regularly stop work and take time to worship and simply contemplate and enjoy the world, we cannot truly experience meaning in our lives. Many people can't...

II. Dignity: All Work Is Honorable, Not Just Certain Kinds. (1 Corinth 7:17)

A. Some see work itself as demeaning...a necessary evil, or beneath our dignity.

B. The Bible presents a very different picture for work itself is a mark of human dignity.

1. Only human beings were given a job description. "Rule," "Subdue..." We are to bring order out of an undeveloped world, caring for all that God has made.

2. There is dignity in every kind of work, because work is something that God does and we now do it in His place as His representatives.

...His work in Gen 1-2 is manual labor as He forms Adam from dust...plants a garden.

...In the OT God is a gardener and in the NT He is a carpenter!!!!

3. Therefore no task is too small...it is all God's work, as we care for His good creation.
- C. Since all work has dignity, there really is no such thing as secular and sacred work, with the sacred being more valuable. No! God gives different gifts to each of us, and desires that we serve Him by glorifying Him through our competent use of them by caring for His world.

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Work...who needs it? Again, you do!! God made each one of us with differing gifts and abilities and desires that we glorify Him by using them in our labors to be a blessing to others.
2. If you are a Christian, then your redemption from sin ought to cause you to be the very best employee. For now you know that you don't work simply for your boss, but for the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:22-24) "...work heartily, as for the Lord"
3. Learn the importance of God's cycle of work and rest. Work, and work hard, then stop work to worship and enjoy God's wonderful creation and the fruits of your labor.
4. Don't look down on work that you consider lowly, and the people who perform these essential tasks. All work is honorable and we ought to think about it as such and thank those who do such work.
5. Your salvation from sin is the only work you need not concern yourself with, as God Himself has done all that needed to be done. However, there is something you must do, you must receive salvation as "the gift of God." Will you today put your trust in the Lord Jesus who died to pay for your sin?