

WORK AS WORSHIP
A Theology of Work
Genesis 2:1-15

I recently was a part of a MISSION TRIP to POLAND, where one of our PRIMARY GOALS was to help Christian businessmen and businesswomen develop a BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE on their WORK. It was a FANTASTIC trip! It was so much fun to see them begin to understand and embrace a completely different viewpoint about the relationship between WORK and WORSHIP; two concepts that they thought could never be truly BROUGHT TOGETHER! Maybe YOU struggle with the same thing?

*There seems to be a DIVIDE between work and worship.

-It is almost like the idea of the SEPARATION of CHURCH and STATE!

[BY THE WAY, this idea is a MISREPRESENTATION of the Founder's intent!]

*Many struggle with HOW we can bring worship and work together w/o being TOKEN or extremely AWKWARD. Some think that the only way to combine the two is to actually be employed at some church or a Christian ministry.

How many people here are in the Christian ministry right now? (Raise your hands.)

How many of you here would say that you are a Christian? (Raise your hands.)

I have heard so many Christians who have said that they WISHED they could be in the ministry. They LOVE serving God on Sundays as they teach a class or greet people or lead in worship, but THEN they have to GO BACK TO THE OFFICE on Monday where it all comes to an end. BUT DOES IT? I don't think so!

I SAW a beautiful EXAMPLE of WORK AS WORSHIP in ALASKA last week:

Bill & Melanie Betts [Show PICTURES: 1) Scenery, 2) Bill, 3) Melanie/Cole]

*They demonstrated the powerful truth that you can LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart AND love your neighbor as yourself BY THE WAY YOU WORK!

Key Question to answer in series: How do you and I remove the DIVISION between WORK and WORSHIP that we feel?

*How can I begin to SEE my work AS worship and not just as a means of making money?

*In what WAYS should my FAITH be EVIDENT at my WORKPLACE?

*What does my WORK have to do with LOVING GOD and LOVING OTHERS?

Billy Graham once stated that he thought that the next great revival to come in the United States would begin in WORKPLACES scattered across our nation! Did you know that most of the miracles in the book of Acts occurred OUTSIDE of any church building? Most of the PARABLES of Jesus are about WORKPLACE contexts! God wants to DISPLAY HIS GLORY throughout the week and not just on Sunday!

I believe that it is TIME for us to build a NEW VISION for work that UNITES our WORK with our FAITH. **I believe that this BEGINS by each of us developing a proper THEOLOGY of work.** That is, we must learn what the Bible actually teaches about God's original plan for work in this world.

How do you think GOD views your work? Is he indifferent to it? Does it have ANY IMPACT on the KINGDOM OF GOD in this world? I believe that it does. But we have to go back to the ORIGINAL PLAN OF GOD for work in this world at the moment of CREATION. Many of us may believe that the Bible does indeed talk about WORK in the beginning of Genesis, but most often they are not looking far enough back. Many think that WORK was a RESULT of the CURSE that came as a CONSEQUENCE of SIN. Some assume that work did not really become necessary until Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden and were then forced to GET A REAL JOB now that they were no longer in Daddy's house! Well, that AIN'T TRUE! Is your job a CURSE? {I hope your boss is not here!]

But we need to back up even further than you may think. Some know that work was a part of the ORIGINAL PLAN of God in creation, but they believe that work started right after Adam and Eve were "born." That AIN'T TRUE either! You have to go back to the VERY beginning. Adam was not the first worker. (Neither was Eve!)

God MODELED work for us.

Actually, GOD was the FIRST WORKER in the universe. God worked. He still works.

*In **Genesis 2:1-3 NASB**, Creation is described as God's WORK.

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

-All of Creation is the DISPLAY of God's WORKMANSHIP! Master Builder

*We ourselves are called the WORKMANSHIP of God in this world today!

-God modeled the proper BALANCE between work and rest: [Sabbath Day](#).

***Genesis 2:5-8 NASB**: God PLANTED the Garden and THEN placed man there.

5 Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. **6 But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. 7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man** whom He had formed. **9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

- God created the CONTEXT for WORK. [EDEN was Adam and Eve's OFFICE!]
- God created FULL GROWN TREES and PLANTS for the earth, but he did not bring forth CULTIVATED PLANTS until AFTER he created Adam and Eve.
- *"Shoots" = To sprout forth, a bud, a seedling that sprouts. [Vs. 5]

***Genesis 2:9** says that God THEN caused all sorts of plants and grains to grow up out of the ground that he had planted in the garden of Eden.

- God PREPARED that context for Adam and in his sight so he could see it grow.
 - Creation was GOOD, but it was not PERFECT or even FULLY DEVELOPED.
 - Creation gave mankind the BEST RAW MATERIALS for work imaginable. [Who knew that a SOYBEAN could be made into TOFU or a CAR DOOR?]
- God then DEMONSTRATED the method of CULTIVATION by producing sprouts.
 - God PLANTED the Garden of Eden.
 - *This implies that WORK had to be MODELED for Adam/Eve to know how to do it properly! [PARENTS: TAKE NOTE!]

*We are made in the IMAGE OF GOD. We are CREATED with the ability to CREATE!

God COMMANDED us to WORK.

***Genesis 1:27-30; 2:15 NASB** says that God instructed Adam and Eve to CULTIVATE and GUARD (Keep) the garden and to exercise DOMINION over earth.

27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and **subdue it**; and **rule over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. 15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden **to cultivate it and keep it.**

- Adam/Eve were given DOMINION over the earth to OVERSEE and DEVELOP it!
 - *There is a MASSIVE difference between MANKIND and the rest of Creation!
- Adam and Eve were given the freedom to CULTIVATE whatever PLEASED them in the Garden. They could produce BEAUTY and BOUNTY as they ruled the earth!
 - *Imagine PUMPKINS grown in the Garden of Eden! 10,000 lbs!
 - *No CURSE to slow down growth. A MIST that came without irrigation!
 - *This passage also mentions the **mineral resources** (gold/stones) in Eden.
- We are also commanded to PROTECT ("Keep") the earth as we cultivate it!

God BLESSES our work.

*Our work is a BLESSING to US!

-Our work is a means of FULFILLMENT to us.

*We discover how God shaped and skilled us, and we JOYFULLY run with it!

*This is why work is often called a VOCATION [**Vocation=CALLING**]

-Our work is a LIFELONG CALLING.

*To live without working is NOT a blessing! [**Lottery winners who quit!**]

*To live without working is a LOSS of PURPOSE!

-However, work now is done with a CURSE attached to it. **Genesis 3:17-19 NASB**
17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

*Our work is a blessing, but it is now done in an IMPERFECT, laborious setting.

-Work is now a TOILSOME act of SURVIVAL as well as a FULFILLING act of CREATION! [**There will be a TENSION between fulfillment and frustration**]

- Work was commanded even BEFORE it was necessary for SURVIVAL!
- [**Heaven will restore work to its original status!**]

*Our work is a BLESSING to OTHERS! [Refer to OPENING VIDEO]

Have you ever considered the idea that the WORK that YOU do could possibly be the ANSWER to someone else's PRAYER? Martin Luther was the Catholic Priest who became a catalyst for the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. He had a powerful perspective on the importance of the "common" work that men and women do in this world. His commentary on **Psalm 147:13-14 NKJV**

"For God strengthens the bars of your gates, he blesses your children within you. He makes peace in your borders, he fills you with the finest of wheat."

Of these verses, Luther asked the question, "How exactly does God DO these things?"

*He **strengthens the bars of your gates** by city planners and architects, and by politicians that pass good laws to protect the city.

*He **blesses our children within our midst** through the work of teachers and caregivers and pediatricians.

*He **makes peace within our borders** by means of good lawyers and judges and policemen.

*He **fills us with the finest of wheat** by farmers and truckers and factory workers and restaurant owners and servers.

Luther taught that our professional workers are the “MASKS God wears in caring for the world. He said this: “When we pray the Lord’s Prayer we ask God to “give us this day our daily bread,” and he does give us our daily bread. He does it by means of the farmer who planted and harvested the grain, the baker who made the flour into bread, the person who prepared our meal.” This is how God answers our prayer for daily bread. It is a beautiful perspective on work and how it blesses others around us! This also PLEASES God.

***Our work is a blessing to GOD!**

-He finds JOY in our good work!

-Work carried out as WORSHIP is a means of demonstrating LOVE to God!

The two greatest commandments on earth are this: **Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself.**

Work allows you to do both of these. Your work can be an act of worship toward the God who made you and called you to be PRODUCTIVE and CREATIVE. And your work can be a DAILY act of OBEDIENCE to God and a BLESSING to others as you create that which meets the needs and fulfills the desires of the people around you.

HOW ARE YOU FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS IN YOUR WORK?

EVERY DAY, YOU ARE CREATING SOMETHING AT WORK.

-What are your HANDS producing?

-What is your MIND imagining?

-What is your HEART inspiring?

-What is your MOUTH communicating?

Is YOUR WORK an act of WORSHIP to the God who created you, AND an act of love toward those who live around you? It can be.

Let’s pray.