

Trials of the Christian Life

The Struggle is Real

Thank God it's Monday!

U.S.A. job stats:

- ____% of US workers suffer from work-related stress.
- About one million Americans miss work each day because of stress.
- ____% of US workers report that workplace stress affects their personal relationships.
- U.S. workers are among the most stressed in the world.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON WORK

- We have a responsibility to work – 2 Thess. 3:10-11; 1 Thess. 4:11-12 (a good testimony); Col. 3:23-24 (*who we serve*).
- Contrary to popular opinion, work is NOT a _____.
 - God is a worker:
 - We first see Him moving – Gen. 1:2.
 - Then we see Him creating for 6 days – Ge. 1:3-31.
 - Consider all the kinds of work He did: artist, designer, strategic planner, biologist, chemist, linguist, engineer, physicist, geologist, botanist, meteorologist, physician, and that's just naming a few!
 - NOTE: it is important to **REST** – Gen. 2:2-3!
 - He continues to work by _____ – Ps. 104:10-24, 136:25, 145:15-16; Col. 1:17.
- God created us in His image (Gen. 1:26-27) along with a whole world of resources for us to use. He gave mankind dominion over it all – Gen. 1:28! Note that God gave Noah the same mission He did to Adam after the flood – Gen. 9:1.
- God established work before the fall and commanded it after the fall – Gen. 2:15, 20.
- Work itself was not cursed but it certainly was affected by it – Gen. 3:17-19.
 - Work had been a joy, now it would be "sorrow".
 - *Thorns and thistles* – obstacles and difficulties while trying to exercise dominion.
 - *Sweat* – more effort and energy would be required.
- Work is actually a _____. It is a means of supplying what we need. Think historically – hard work brought good health, good food, good work ethic, important skills – Ecc. 3:13, 5:18-19.

YOUR WORKMANSHIP

- You will be known (good or bad) for your work testimony - 2 Kings 22:4-7; Luke 16:10-12.
- Always see the real work even when the "product" has no eternal value - Col. 3:1-2.
- Joseph's example:
 - He always maintained his _____ – Gen. 39:1-13.

- Unjust circumstances did NOT create an unjust _____ – Gen. 39:14-23.
- He used his ultimate position of authority and power _____ – Gen. 41-47.

CONNECTING YOUR WORK WITH GOD'S WORK

Our real work is to glorify God. The key to accomplishing this is by following the 2 greatest commandments He gave us:

Matthew 22:36-40

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.** This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Our rewards for a job well-done also tell us how to earn them:

- Incorruptible crown – 1 Cor. 9:19-25.
 - Your living testimony and witnessing for Jesus Christ – 2 Cor. 3:3.
 - A servant's heart and attitude – 9:19; 2 Tim. 2:24.
 - "made all things to all men" – 9:22; using every possible endeavor that some might be saved– 1 Cor. 10:33.
- Crown of rejoicing – 1 Thess. 2:19; Phil. 4:1.
 - Drawing people to Christ; making disciples
 - Rejoicing over the lost who become found – Luke 15:4-7.
 - Rejoicing over fellow believers walking closer with the Lord – 2 Cor. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:1-5.
- Crown of righteousness – 2 Tim. 4:8.
 - Those that love His appearing – waiting for "that day."
 - Not just living for or investing in today, but in eternity – Matt. 6:19-20; 1 Tim. 6:18-19; Col. 3:1-2.
- Crown of life – James 1:12; Rev. 2:10.
 - Those who die for Christ and/or endure temptation.
 - Dying to self, living for Christ – 1 Cor. 15:31; James 1:2-4, 5:11; Ps. 119:71.
- Crown of glory – 1 Peter 5:4.
 - For those who shepherd or lead others.

Notice how these crowns break down into 2 categories!

Loving God

Crown of righteousness
Crown of life

Loving Your Neighbor

Incorruptible crown
Crown of rejoicing
Crown of glory