

Finding Value in Your Work

The Eternal Value of Work—part 1

October 27, 2019

1. The world of work seems to have three reactions to it:
 - a. “I’m passionate about what I do. Either it clearly serves a good purpose and/or I get to utilize my passions and skill.”
 - b. “I’m glad I have a paycheck. It provides for my family.”
 - c. “I can’t wait til Friday.”

This week we’ll look at how work has value, eternal value that can change my attitude about work and help me be more purposeful in my work.

DAY 1: The Divine Mandate

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

1. In our current culture, when most people these verses their minds go to “saving the planet.”

Though it is true that we have a stewardship of everything God gives us, from God’s point of view, everything that He has created:

- Is a gift to be used by people,
- The platform on which God makes Himself known to people,
- Allows us to further His purposes in the earth, and
- Provides for the sustenance and welfare of people.

2. How do the items above alter how you think about God’s creation?

3. When God tells us to “rule” over creation these are some of the things we can do:

- Tame what is wild (parenting, shepherding people)
- Bring order to chaos (cleaning, organizing)
- Make this a better place (planning, leading, delegating)
- Utilize resources to sustain life (farming, shopping, paying bills)
- Utilize resources for the betterment of people. (Giving, serving, loving)

4. What else would you add to this list?

5. Does the “divine mandate” change how you think about your work?

DAY 2: God as worker

1. Where did work originate? With Adam in the Garden of Eden? Nope. Looooong before that!

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2. God who made the universe and mankind, is a worker.

3. Many people think that work is the punishment given to Adam after the fall. But, as we've seen work began with God Himself.

4. And, work was given by God to man before Adam and Eve sinned!

Genesis 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

5. This makes work *sacred!*

6. God as worker did not end with creation. Notice how Jesus sees God at work.

John 5:16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.

¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

7. The value of work is elevated as high as it can be elevated.

a. God was and is a worker,

b. God mandated that we work.

c. This makes work *sacred*.

8. How do you typically view your work?

9. What would you like to change about how you view your work?

DAY 3: Work is meant to be hard

1. After Adam and Eve sinned, the world of mankind dramatically changed. Theologians call this change “the fall.”

2. After man rebelled ***painful*** toil entered into work.

*Genesis 3:17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through ***painful toil*** you will eat of it all the days of your life.*

¹⁸ *It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.*

¹⁹ *By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

3. The Hebrew word for “painful toil” is “itstsabown.” This Hebrew word has different shades of meaning depending on the context in which it is used. It can rightfully be translated as any of the following:

- a. Worrisome,
- b. Labor,
- c. Painful,
- d. Sorrowful or
- e. Toil.

4. What strikes you from this list about your work?

5. The illustration of the painfulness of work is applied to Adam in the only sense of work he knew: agriculture. The details of verse 17-19 suggest the following realities in all of work:

- a. Problems will continue to “pop up,” like weeds do.
- b. The same problems will have to be dealt with again and again, like weeds. Don’t be surprised by a sense of futility in your work!
- c. It will create frustration and irritation, like thorns do.
- d. It will be demanding, whether that is *physical* painful toil, or *emotional* painful toil, like stress, deadlines, conflict, etc.

6. I wonder how often we just “naturally” *expect* work “to work,” to not be so hard. How would you describe how you “naturally” *expect* your work “to work?”

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: How we are to think about work—part 1

1. We've seen that work has value because:

- a. God is a worker,
- b. Work is sacred,
- c. God gave us all work to do,
- d. Work allows us to move the purposes of God forward, and
- e. The work He gave us to do provides betterment for people.

2. We've also seen that work will be:

- a. Worrisome,
- b. Laborious,
- c. Painful,
- d. Sorrowful, or
- e. Toilsome.

3. A third way we are to think about work has to do with our ultimate Boss!

a. We work for the Lord!

Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men ...

b. We will receive a reward for our work!

Colossians 3:24 ...since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

c. We have the opportunity to please the Lord!

Galatians 1:10 Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

4. Look back at the three extra motivations for work in point 3a, 3b, and 3c. What strikes you from these three motivators?

DAY 5: How we are to think about work—part 2

1. There are a few miscellaneous factors that affect our work attitude.

a. As we work, we reflect the character of God the worker in whose image we are made.

*Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man **in our image**, in our likeness, and **let them rule** over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."*

b. We are designed by God to experience a legitimate sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, as we are doing something productive.

c. Sometimes we torpedo our own work ethic by poor work habits:

- Laziness,
- Slothfulness,
- Going the “easy way”
- Putting in “just enough to get by,”

d. We provide for ourselves, our family, the work of God and the needs of people.

e. We become a ‘contributor’ not a ‘dependent.’”

f. As we work we fulfill a part of who we are and why we’re here.

2. As we finish our week, jot down the most important items you’d like to remember or change regarding your work?