

# Work, Economics, and Government

Our Biblical Worldview—part 8

October 25, 2020

## **DAY 1: The Cultural Mandate Genesis 1: Work is sacred.**

1. When I was a young adult, and a young Christian, I thought of work in two categories. Some work was “secular,” and some work was “spiritual.” That distinction is not biblical.

2. Just after creating the world, and then Adam and Eve, He speaks to both of them.

*Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

<sup>29</sup> *Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."*

<sup>30</sup> *And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.*

3. This is what theologians call “The Cultural Mandate.”

4. God is the owner of everything, and we are given “stewardship” of what is His.

5. Notice, that the Cultural Mandate is given *before* Adam and Eve sinned, and *before* the world fell.

Work is sacred.

6. We can err in two ways.

a. If we make work our top priority, assuming it will bring the success, prosperity, and fulfillment we are seeking, then work will inevitably mirror Solomon’s experience in Ecclesiastes. It will not only disappoint us, but will leave us empty.

*Ecclesiastes 1:2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." <sup>3</sup> What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?*

b. If we make too little of work, if we just “clock in and clock out,” we will be updating our resume frequently.

*Proverbs 10:4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. <sup>5</sup> He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.*

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

## **DAY 2: What qualities prosper your work and finances?**

### 1. Work your land.

*Proverbs 28:19 He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.*

### 2. Diligence and Industry.

*Proverbs 10:4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. <sup>5</sup> He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.*

*Proverbs 6:6 (RSV) Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. <sup>7</sup> Without having any chief, officer or ruler, <sup>8</sup> she prepares her food in summer, and gathers her sustenance in harvest. <sup>9</sup> How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? <sup>10</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, <sup>11</sup> and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond, and want like an armed man.*

### 3. Whole-hearted work for your boss. Your work needs to please your boss.

*Ephesians 6:6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. <sup>7</sup> Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, <sup>8</sup> because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.*

### 4. Whole-hearted attitude

*Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

### 5. Handle your responsibilities.

*Galatians 6:5 (RSV) For each man will have to bear his own load.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, <sup>12</sup> so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

### 6. Planning and Thoroughness

*Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.*

### 7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

### **DAY 3: What qualities diminish your work and finances?**

As you read today's verses, underline the characteristics and principles that strike you.

#### 1. Small compromises

*Proverbs 24:30 (RSV) <sup>30</sup> I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man without sense;*

*<sup>31</sup> and lo, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.*

*<sup>32</sup> Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction.*

*<sup>33</sup> A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,*

*<sup>34</sup> and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

#### 2. Mere talk

Proverbs 14:23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

#### 3. Chasing fantasies

Proverbs 28:19 He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.

#### 4. Laziness

Proverbs 10:4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

<sup>5</sup> He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

Jeremiah 48:10 (RSV) "Cursed is he who does the work of the LORD with slackness; and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from bloodshed.

#### 5. Haste

Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

#### 6. Dishonesty.

*Proverbs 21:6 A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.*

#### 7. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 4: Work, economy and role of government

1. Several weeks ago we looked at the biblical role of government. This is how our Founding Fathers summarized it.

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity,..."

3. Government can either foster work ("the general Welfare" and "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity") or hinder work. Government can make it easier to do business or much harder.

4. In our country, there are two political movements at work with very different philosophies about government's role in work, employment and the economy (both the national economy and your economy)

a. One sees itself as compassionate, caring and concerned for people. With the best of intentions these politicians seek to enact laws and mandate regulations that they think will be compassionate and caring for workers. If the laws and policies, however well-intentioned, make it more and more difficult for a business to stay open, employees get laid off, lose wages, and thus have a difficult time supporting their families.

b. The other sees itself as rooted in the reality of how an economy functions, and the realities and difficulties of running a business and staying in business. The easier it is for companies to do business, the more people are employed, earn wages and can support their families.

5. It is not enough to be well-intentioned. One must also have what the bible calls "wisdom," and its close cousin, "understanding." When Solomon realized he had been named king after King David's death, notice his prayer.

*2 Chronicles 1:10 (RSV) Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this thy people, that is so great?"*

*Proverbs 8:5 You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding.*

6. It is not enough for government to be compassionate, caring and concerned. It has to be wise. It has to have what Proverbs calls "understanding." It is incumbent on government to deal with the reality of work and economics. Too often, politicians who have never run a business make ivory tower policy decisions that sound compassionate, concerned and caring but end up making the burden and cost of running a business so heavy, that it becomes impossible to stay in business. When people lose their jobs it is no longer fair to stand in your ivory tower and spout off about your compassion, care and concern for people.

7. In our country we are fortunate and have the privilege electing politicians who more closely align with our biblical worldview in enacting laws and making policy regarding work.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## **DAY 5: Government, work, and the economy**

1. When King Solomon died his son Rehoboam was asked by the people how he would rule. Rehoboam asked for advice from his advisers.

*1 Kings 12:7 They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."*

*<sup>8</sup> But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him."*

2. Here was King Rehoboam's response to the people.

*1 Kings 12:11 My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions."*

3. In the modern world government can be the same way toward work and its people. Here are four ways.

a. Regulations.

There will always be a need for some regulations due to fallen human nature. But overregulating business eats into business labor and time. Instead of being focused entirely on the business, business must take time away from business to fill out endless paper work and red tape. Regulations need to be as limited as possible.

b. Taxation.

c. Minimum wage laws.

d. Government mandated employee benefits.

4. The more a business is taxed, the less money there is for employees' salaries, product, floor space, and expansion. The more the employer is mandated to pay his employee benefits, the less money the business has for product, floor space, expansion and innovation.

5. If you've ever had the responsibility of starting or running a business, you understand how each of these matters affects your ability to keep the business running, and keep your employees paid, customers happy, etc.

6. This is not just business theory. The same principle can be applied with how the government demands from you and your wages and income.