

Your Work Matters (Part 1)

Does our work during the week really matter to God?

The Theology of Work

Work: effort exerted in some purposeful activity. Work is a person's particular contribution to God's good world and to the common good. Work is of great importance to humanity, to people's purpose in the world, and to God's redemptive mission in the world.

People were made for work

Gen. 1:27-28; 2:5-7,15

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 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."

Genesis 1:26-28

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. But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. 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.

Genesis 2:5-7

Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Genesis 2:15

Sin has greatly distorted work

Gen. 3:17-19

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. "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 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."

Genesis 3:17-19

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness in His work

Matt. 5:17; Mark 6:3

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Matthew 5:17

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

Mark 6:3

Christians glorify God and serve Christ through work **Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 10:31**
Col. 3:1-4, 22-4:1; Eph. 2:10

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

Colossians 3:23

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Ephesians 2:10

Believers will eternally worship Christ with work **Rev. 22:3-4**

There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.

Revelation 22:3-4

Keep Christ at the center of your work and your work becomes worship.

My personal application of this message:

Questions for individual study and Fellowship Families:

1. Before we started our study of the theology of work, what did you think about the value of your work? To what degree did you think that, "Your work matters"?
2. How do we know from Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:5-7,15 that people are made for work? What do these passages teach us about the value of work?
3. What effect has sin had on work and how we relate to it according to Genesis 3:17-19?
4. What was Jesus' occupation prior to beginning His public ministry at age 30? (see Mark 6:1-3) In what ways did these experiences shape Him? What kind of work related scenarios would Jesus be involved in where He would "fulfill all righteousness" and the "Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 5:17)?
5. Can you recall some of the parables that Jesus gave that may have had a very personal connection with Jesus' earlier occupation?
6. How do Christians glorify God and serve Christ through their work? Would you say that every Christian is in the ministry, whether they know it or not? Why or why not?
7. What does Revelation 22:3-4 reveal about believers' activities in the final state?
8. How does understanding the theology of work influence how you go about your day tomorrow? What will change in your attitudes and actions as you rely on Christ and realize that, "Your work matters"?