

# What Was the Curse God Put on Creation?

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What was the curse that God put on creation (Rom. 8:20)? One of the most stubborn myths in Western culture is that God imposed work as a curse to punish Adam and Eve's sin (Gen. 3:1-19). As a result, some people view work as something evil. Scripture does not support that idea:

1. *God Himself is a worker.* The fact that God works shows that work is not evil, since by definition God cannot do evil. On the contrary, work is an activity that God carries out. See "God: The Original Worker,? John 5:17.

2. *God created people in His image to be His co-workers.* He gives us ability and authority to manage His creation. See "People At Work,? Heb. 2:7.

3. *God established work before the fall.* Genesis 1-2 record how God created the world. The account tells how He placed the first humans in a garden 'to tend and keep it? (2:15). This work assignment was given before sin entered the world and God pronounced the curse (Gen. 3). Obviously, then, work cannot be a result of the fall since people were working before the fall.

4. *God commends work even after the fall.* If work were evil in and of itself, God would never encourage people to engage in it. But He does. For example, He told Noah and his family the same thing He told Adam and Eve'to have dominion over the earth (Gen. 9:1-7). In the New Testament, Christians are commanded to work (Col. 3:23; 1 Thess. 4:11).

5. *Work itself was not cursed in the fall.* A careful reading of Genesis 3:17-19 shows that God cursed the *ground* as a result of Adam's sin-but not work:

"Cursed is the ground for your sake;

In toil you shall eat of it

All the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,

And you shall eat the herb of the field.

In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

Till you return to the ground,

For out of it you were taken;

For dust you are,

And to dust you shall return.'

Notice three ways that this curse affected work:

1. Work had been a joy, but now it would be 'toil.'? People would feel burdened down by it, and even come to hate it.
2. 'thorns and thistles?' would hamper people's efforts to exercise dominion. In other words, the earth would not be as cooperative as it had been.
3. People would have to 'sweat?' to accomplish their tasks. Work would require enormous effort and energy.

Most of us know all too well how burdensome work can be. Workplace stresses and pressures, occupational hazards, the daily grind, office politics, crushing boredom, endless routine, disappointments, setbacks, catastrophes, frustration, cutthroat competition, fraud, deception, injustice; there is no end of evils connected with work. But work itself is not evil. Far from naming it a curse, the Bible calls work and its fruit a gift from God (Eccl. 3:13; 5:18-19).

The Word in Life Study Bible, New Testament Edition, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville; 1993), p. 552