

WORK AS WORSHIP

Work As Worship

Part One: Work—It's God's Idea!

Genesis 3:17-19; Genesis 2:15, 19-20; Ecclesiastes 2:24;

Colossians 3:17; I Corinthians 10:31; Exodus 31:1-6

#1 - Work Is Part Of The Curse, Isn't It? Genesis 3:17-19

For many, the vivid language of God pronouncing the curse upon Adam, Eve and all creation because of Adam and Eve's sin gives us the idea that this is when work was introduced to humanity.

I mean, after all, before that moment in time, Adam and Eve just frolicked in the lush fields, taking lazy naps in their matching his & hers hammocks and gazed with wonder at the starry night skies.

Didn't they? Well, to some, that seems to be the case. Let's look at that text and see exactly what God said.

Notice what God says to Adam in verse 17: "Cursed is the ground because of you; In *toil* you will eat of it all the days of your life."

The word "**toil**" translates from the very same word used in verse 16 to describe the woman's pain in childbirth. This word in the Hebrew occurs only three times in the Old Testament, verse 16, 17 and 5:29.

God continues in verse 18 and tells Adam that producing food just got much harder: "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field:"

How many of you enjoy weeding your gardens? That's what I thought. It is brutal, back-breaking work.

God concludes by giving Adam and all of us a descriptive picture of this punishment in verse 19: "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."

What we find in the fall and subsequent curse is not the creation of work, but the creation of *agonizing* work.

"Work isn't the result of the fall—work, being experienced without meaning and fulfillment is the result of the fall." - Erwin McManus

Maybe, what we can say is that, here in the fall of humanity, work becomes something onerous, tiresome and often dreaded. Perhaps, this is where “work” became a four-letter word. But it isn’t here that we find the beginning of work for the human race. To see that we must go back one chapter and look at conditions before the fall in Genesis chapter two.

#2 - Work: It’s God’s Idea, Genesis 2:15, 19-20

It is clear that Adam worked before the fall and before the curse. His labor was free from toil. It provided Adam with purpose and a sense of satisfaction in his life.

In the garden God gives the man a purposeful existence that includes overseeing his environment. Work is a God-given assignment and not a cursed condition.

Look at how the Bible frames the result of good work:

Ecclesiastes 2:24

24 There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.

Solomon recommended that a man enjoy its fruits (eating and drinking are only metaphorical for partaking of all its fruits) and find satisfaction in his work (cf. 3:13; 5:18; 8:15) as he himself had done (2:10).

God Himself worked in creation. The Bible tells us in Genesis 2:2:

2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Even though our work has been burdened by the curse, it is still something from God. Your work matters to God.

Our theme verse for this series is found in Colossians 3:17 and again in I Corinthians 10:31. What Colossians 3:17 and I Corinthians 10:31 teaches us, is that we should see all that we do, including our work, as an act of worship to our great God.

Work—It’s God’s Idea.

Let me lastly share with you how God is involved in the work of people. The story comes from God’s instructions to Moses about the construction of the Tabernacle. Notice how God is engaged with the work of men. It’s found in Exodus 31:1-6.

This is the very first time in Scriptures that we see someone filled with the Holy Spirit. And the purpose of this divine filling is for the work of constructing the Tabernacle. Now, that’s significant when we consider the relationship a Christian should have to his/her work.

We should view work as something given to us by God to provide purpose and meaning into our lives. We should view work as something God wants to redeem from the curse and it should become for us, an act of worship. How do you view work? God tells us, whatever we do, we should do it for God’s glory.