

Holy Work, Holy Rest

Exodus 31:1-18

Pastor GL Wong

True worship transforms the way we work and rest. When we worship God in our work and rest, they are set apart for Him. They become holy work and holy rest. That is the kind of work and rest God desires for us.

How true worship transforms the way we work and rest:

1) Holy Work

2 Principles

a. Work is not slavery, but a calling

v2 – God had called specific people to the task of building (construction and craftwork) the tabernacle. With God the true master in the picture, work no longer becomes slavery, but a calling. No matter the field of work, God is the ultimate boss (Col. 3:23). When we fix our minds on working heartily for God, even if the external situation is tough, it will be liberating and empowering. God calls us to all kinds of labor – good precious work in His eyes, and we must remember that He is the ultimate boss.

b. Work is an expression of true worship

vv3-6 – God called the builders and craftsmen of the tabernacle to excellent work. Any work that God calls us to do must be done excellently. This is a sign of true worship unto God. His plan for excellency includes all kinds of work (Eccles. 9:10). Our excellent labor is the means through which he showers love, care, provision and protection upon the world.

Work as our God intended was never meant to carry the weight of defining our self-worth. The pursuit of excellence at work is not to define our self-worth, but to reflect our treasuring of God's worth. The ultimate reason we should be working hard is because we value God. Our volatile sense of self-worth at work can find a safe anchor when we treasure God's unshakable worth above all.

2) Holy Rest

v12 - Amidst the work God had called His people to do, they also needed to prioritise the sabbath rest. God intends that same rest for us.

2 Principles

a. Rest is not a luxury, but a command

Through God's command to rest, He establishes a new way of life for His covenant community. In His call to worship Him and obey His command to rest, He sets His people apart from all the surrounding civilizations. Not resting from work was punishable by death for the ancient Israelites (vv14-15). In the eyes of God, contrary to human expectations, rest is not a luxury, but a command. God knew that deeply rested people would be far more productive than restless people. His command to rest is to be regarded seriously, with proper attention given to it. It is ultimately not about where we work and rest, but about how we think about them.

b. Rest is refreshing when it flows from true worship

v13, v17 – In establishing sabbath rest as a sign for His people, God points to Himself. God's covenant community can rest because He sanctifies and sets them apart. God alone is worthy of our worship, and the rest He establishes for His people is tied to the treasuring of His worth. He intends for us not just physical rest, but deep rest at a soul level. God's rest is refreshing (v17) and the deep rest He intends for us will revive us spiritually and bless us immensely. That rest flows from true worship.

Deut. 5:15 – The sabbath is not just tied to God's creation, but also His redemption. Sabbath rest is not just the celebration of God our Creator, but also God our Redeemer. The sabbath is a declaration of freedom. The only way this redemption is possible is because of Jesus Christ. On the cross, He offered His holy work for our sake

so that as He rose to life again, He could bring His people holy rest. Answer the call of Jesus to cast your burdens upon Him and find rest in Him (Matt. 11:28)!