

Work and God

Genesis 2:1-3, 15

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Work is God's plan for His children. However, many people seek early retirement to avoid the much dreaded and anxiety inducing work. We need to have a biblical perspective of work to make sense of work as God's plan for us.

Biblical Truths about work:

1) God's Design of Work

The very first chapter in the Bible records for us God working; he created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). At the end of His work in creation, God was pleased with it (Gen. 1:31a). God loves the world through His creative thoughtful craftsmanship, and as humans created in His image, we have the same desire and capacity to love this world through excellent work. Even in the perfect Garden of Eden, there was work for Adam to do (Gen. 2:15). Just as God works, so do men as well. Paradise is not a place void of work; it is where work is done for the glory of God. Work is not inherently bad. The frustration that we face in work is a result of sin. God designs us to work! We do not just work to live, but live to work. *'Work is as much a basic human need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality; it is not simply medicine but food for our soul'* – Timothy Keller.

2) God's Purpose of Work

Just as God left work in the Garden of Eden for Adam to do, so does He leave in our world now, vast untapped potential for us to discover and unlock. God has commissioned you and I to continue His work of creation. This is God's way of making us useful and allowing us to experience the excitement and joy of creation. God has also strategically and specifically placed us where we are to work and keep. The work we do and complete is meant to be a blessing to the

people around us and for the flourishing of the world. It is our act of worship unto God.

3) God's Rest from Work

Work is challenging because it has been corrupted by sin. Instead of reaping the sweet fruits of our labour, we get something less along with thorns and thistles. This forces us to turn to leisure activities to find rest from our work. We increase our productivity to get work done quicker so that we have more time for rest. While enjoying leisure activities and increasing productivity are not bad things, deep rest cannot be found in them. In God's creation work, we see a pattern of Him stopping, looking, and then going (Gen. 2:1-3). While most of us are familiar with stopping and going in work, we often neglect looking. Not looking at what we have done in our work would take away the meaningfulness of what we have done. A huge part of our tiredness in work is not the absence of work being done, but the feeling of labouring in vain. When we stop to look at how God has used us to do something good in His Kingdom, we find a sense of rest. We can only find deep rest in the finished work of Christ, not in the completion of our daily 'to-do' list. As long as we rely on what we do to find rest, we will never find it.

Christians are justified and made acceptable to God through our faith in Jesus, not by what we do. We need to connect this truth to our work. God's full acceptance of us in Christ is more than enough! Stop striving to find acceptance in the eyes of people through your work. Find deep rest in the finished work of Christ! As we work, Jesus gives us rest not through what we do but through what He has done (Matt. 11:28).