

GOD AND WORK

Have you ever thought about how God views work and what importance He places on it? Why do we spend so much time doing it? Is work simply a means to an end? Is spiritual work of more importance to God than non-spiritual work? Does God care how we work or just that it happens? Work through this study with a mentor to find out!

GENESIS 1

Skim Genesis 1 and answer the following questions.

What is God's response each time he worked and created something? (v. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).

What did God do in Gen 1:27? What does that mean?

What did God do in Gen 1:28? What are the first things God ever commands mankind to do in this verse? What importance does this communicate?

God, as a blessing, commands mankind to multiply and work in Gen 1:28 which reflects how He made us in His image in Gen 1:27. Therefore, our work has three purposes each and every day:

REFLECT THE IMAGE OF GOD

Our first introduction to God (Gen 1-2) shows us a God at work! Christians working reflect God's work and, in part, what it means to be made in the image of God. God conceptualizes, manufactures, and admires His work. God gets joy in his work of creating and sustaining the earth. We get to do the same!

ANSWER HUMANITY'S FIRST CALLING

Vocation comes from a Latin word meaning "to call." Man's first vocation, calling, or job was to "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" and to "rule" or provide order. God created the perfect Garden of Eden with undeveloped potential. He created you not as a Park Ranger whose job is to preserve, but as a worker whose job is to develop and cultivate to help life flourish. To work is to be human!

LOVE AND SERVE OTHERS WHEREVER GOD HAS PLACED US

In the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13) Jesus teaches us to pray "Give us today our daily bread" referring to our daily needs. Do we realize the amount of work and workers that God uses to answer that prayer of "daily bread?" If praying for literal bread, we're praying for more than we realize! We're praying for the retailer, baker, farmer, irrigation system manager, distributor and so many more people. As Martin Luther said, "God could provide you bread from heaven. But He chooses not to. He has another plan." God answers your prayer through work and workers! Each of these workers works for the good of others, just as God designed it.

How do these purposes affect the way you view work? What reactions do you have?

GENESIS 2

In Gen 2:15, what does God command Adam to do? Did God command Adam to work before or after sin entered the world? Was it "spiritual" work or "non-spiritual" work? What insight does this give you about work?

MORE PASSAGES

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 4:28, Colossians 3:17, Ecclesiastes 5:18

What insight do you gain from these verses? How does God want you to view work?

BIBLE HEROES

The below table lists some of the heroes of the Bible. Review the names and familiarize yourself with their lives and vocations if you are unfamiliar with them and answer the questions below.

MINISTRY LEADERS

Jesus (Luke 3:23)
Moses (Exodus 3)
Peter (Acts 1-12)
Paul (Acts 13-28)
Timothy (1, 2 Timothy)
John the Baptist (John 1)
Samuel (1 Sam 3)
Isaiah (Isaiah)
Elijah (1 Kings 17)

MARKETPLACE & POLITICAL LEADERS

Jesus (Matt 13:55, Luke 3:23)
Adam (Gen 2:15)
Noah (Gen 6:14)
Joshua (Joshua 1)
King David (1 Samuel 16)
Nehemiah (Neh 1-2)
Joseph (Gen 41)
Esther (Esther 2)
Joanna & Susanna (Luke 8:3)

Is it possible to say that one category is more significant than the other? Why or why not?

What are some differences and similarities between the two groups?

What does reviewing this list of Biblical heroes communicate about how God views different vocations?

CONCLUSION

What value does God place on work? Why?

What misconceptions, if any, did this study refute for you?