

Does Our Work Matter to God?

(Jeff Jones – Men's Life Bloomington)

Overview: Many Christians go to work daily without an understanding of the connection between their work and careers, and what is God's plan and purpose for their life. Most Christians separate their work and faith lives. And every Christian at work or in business faces challenges and test that makes it difficult to live a Christ like lifestyle. Our work does matter to God, and God does want us to work, so how do we fit our faith into our work, our work into our faith, and understand how our work is fulfilling God's will for us?

Most of the time we want to focus on the 7th day, the day of rest. Today I want to focus on the remaining six days of our week, the work week and how it fulfills God's plan for us.

Today, through our daily work we serve God. God is Lord of all of life so therefore every event in our life comes under His concern. In the book *Your Work Matters To God*, by Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, they write, "God uses everything in the workplace to train our character. He uses the evils we face, the people we cannot stand, the circumstances of tension and pressure, the tedium of long afternoons, the solicitations to compromise, the irritations of angry customers, the interruptions, the financial reversals, the deals that fall through, even the traffic on the way home (when all the students are back)—He uses all of it to make us more like Jesus." God uses the workplace to train us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

So our needing to work, like everything else in this universe, was designed, created and is overseen by God. To me, work is something that falls into the same category as death and taxes. It is part of life, whether it is at a paying job, or taking care of your home on Saturday, it is part of God's plan. You just cannot get around that fact that God wants us to work, He commanded us to work, and literally on day 1, God modeled for us how to work.

Genesis 1: 1-3 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light."

This began the act of working. Then over the next 5 days he separated the light from darkness, created evening and morning, He created land, vegetation, stars, living creatures in the water and on land, and then God created man.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

God's week was no vacation, it was work, and it pleased God when his work week was done and His job was done well.

Genesis 2: 1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so, on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

And after this work was done, God took up his seat in the "C Suite", and as we read in Genesis 1:26, God commanded man to go to work following the day of rest. So, man got his marching orders on what to do starting Monday morning. God clearly was, and is, in charge. But he wanted leaders, and partners on earth to run the day to day of this operation.

Questions:

- 1) Why do you think many Christians feel that their work does not matter to God or that their job seems second class in the Kingdom of God?
- 2) Your work has results:
 - a. If we believe that our work does not matter to God, then what will be our results? How will we likely feel?
 - b. If we believe that our work does matter to God, then what will be our results? How will we likely feel?
- 3) Work is the means to several ends. Go through these five primary reasons that God gives us to work, and address how each relates to your life and God's command.
 - a. My work serves people. (Who, how, how far reaching?)
 - b. My work meets my own personal needs. (And what are those needs?)
 - c. My work takes care of my family's needs. (And what are those needs?)
 - d. My work earns money to give to others. (In what ways does your support help?)
 - e. My work shows my love for God and helps me realize his love for me. (How?)
- 4) Can you see how God uses the workplace to train us to be conformed to the image of his son? Explain.
- 5) Using a personal illustration, how might our work or our attitude toward work improve if we saw God as a co-worker?

Relevant Verses - "Your Work Matters to God"

- 1) Genesis 1:1-3 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light."
- 2) Genesis 1:26 "Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,^[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."
- 3) Genesis 2:2 "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."
- 4) Genesis 2:15 "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."
- 5) Psalm 90:17 "May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us— yes, establish the work of our hands."
- 6) Proverbs 12:11 "Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense."
- 7) Proverbs 12:24 "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labor."
- 8) Proverbs 13:4 "A sluggard's appetite is never filled, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied."
- 9) Proverbs 14:23 "All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."
- 10) Proverbs 16:3 "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."
- 11) 2 Thessalonians 3:10 "“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.’”
- 12) Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,"
- 13) Ephesians 4:28 "Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need."
- 14) Ephesians 6:5-9 "⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free."
- 15) John 6:27 "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."
- 16) Galatians 6:4-5 "Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, **5** for each one should carry their own load."
- 17) Philippians 4:13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."
- 18) 1 Timothy 5:8 "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
- 19) 2 Timothy 2:6 "The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops."