

Week 1 A Theology of Work

Introduction:

For many Christians, there seems to be a major disconnect between what they learn and how they feel during a Sunday worship service, and how they live their lives from Monday to Friday in the work environment. This series aims at helping us to think through how the gospel should impact and apply to our work lives. As practice follows belief, it is important that we first set a good theological framework on which to build, so this week's study aims to do just that.

Before starting the study, do a quick survey with your Gospel Community to find out their thoughts about their current work situations by asking them the following questions:

- Q: How many of you genuinely enjoy your work (for the most part)?
- Q: What is the most satisfying emotion/experience that you get from your work? (e.g. productivity, creativity, accomplishment, security, success, identity, purpose, ability, ingenuity, etc.)
- Q: Do you think it is possible for people in the most basic jobs, with poor wages and long or unreasonable working hours, to experience the same level of job satisfaction? Explain your answer.

1. The God Of The Bible Is A Worker God

- Read Genesis 1:1-5 & John 5:17

God works and therefore work is a good thing.

- i. God worked in creation, not because he had to but because he wanted to. Work was good.
- ii. All three members of the trinity *continue* to work:
 - The Father - rules and reigns over the nations (Psalm 22:28).
 - The Son – worked just like every other man during his life on earth. First, he was a carpenter and then he went into a season of ministry. Now, as Christ waits to return, he is preparing a place for us (John 14:1-3), he intercedes for us before the Father (Romans 8:34), and he is getting ready to judge the nations. He is not sitting around doing nothing – he is working.
 - The Holy Spirit – is continually at work in our lives:
 - He convicts us of our sin (that there is no righteousness in us and that we deserve God's judgement) (John 16).
 - He calls us to come to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith, and he takes us from being dead spiritually to being alive spiritually (Eph. 2:1-6).
 - He secures our salvation by marking and sealing us with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee, until the day that Jesus comes back to redeem us once and for all (Eph. 1:13).
 - He witnesses in us that we are God's children (Rom. 8:16).
 - He gives each of us gifts to benefit and build up the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12 & Eph. 4:12).
 - He illuminates the mind with the knowledge of God (Psalm 143:10), by giving us wisdom and revelation so that we can know God (Eph. 1:17).

❖ Q: Why do you think we so often struggle to see work as a good thing?

❖ Q: Why is it important for us to know that God works?

2. We Are Made To Work In God's Image

- Read Genesis 1:26-28

We are created in God's image, which means that we are also called to work. God created, laboured and then rested, and we are called to do the same.

- There was never a time when human beings didn't work – work was part of life before the fall of man, and it was meaningful.
- There will never be a time when human beings do not work – even when we are with Christ in eternity, we will be working and cultivating, as full image bearers. This vision of future work gives us meaning in our current work.

- ❖ Q: How does our work reflect God's image?
- ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to know that work was given to mankind before sin entered the picture and distorted everything?
- ❖ Q: In what way does it help us to view our current work with more meaning, when we consider that we will always be working, even when we are with Christ, in eternity?

3. We Need A New Perspective On Work

- Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

Most of us think in one of two incorrect categories regarding our work lives. We either under-value work and feel it is meaningless or we over-value work and believe that it gives us meaning in life. Instead, we should view work as *worship*.

- Embrace work as a gift – work itself is not a curse, and we should repent of any begrudging attitudes towards it.
 - Reject work as a god – work should never define us. If it does, we are enslaved to it, which makes us miserable.
 - Envision work as a calling - our jobs allow Christ to be known and experienced in every sector of society.
 - Start working well – our first responsibility as Christians in the work place is to work as though we are Christians, by working hard, with integrity.
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- ❖ Q: Why is our work a form of worship to God?
 - ❖ Q: Which of the two categories do you fall into: those who under-value and begrudge work, or those who over-value work and get their identity from it?
 - ❖ Q: Which of the 4 aspects of work-as-worship do you do best and which do you need to work on the most: embracing work as a gift, rejecting work as a god, envisioning work as a calling or working well?