



Work as Worship

Genesis 2:5, 7-8, 15

I've got mixed feelings when it comes to *work*. I have this **love-hate** relationship with *work*: I *love* the work that I do. But I *hate* the fact that it never seems to be enough.

These are just some of the experiences that shape us personally and form the way we think about our ***work***.

When it comes to "***work***" or *what we do to earn a living*, we often choose one of two extremes:

Most people either **live to work, or they work to live**. If we *live to work* then we end up worshipping work. And if we *work to live* then we work hard to avoid it.

People who make '*work*' their god and worship at the altar of their job, believe that if they invest the best *hours* of their day, give their best *talents*, and sacrifice their *time for money* - their work will provide them with

financial security, personal identity, emotional affirmation, spiritual satisfaction and purpose in life.

Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, says, *"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."*

"Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."
- Confucius

It sounds good, even to those of us in the Church, because many of us have bought into **the idols of our culture**.

Living to work can be tempting. So we invest our best love and energy in our work, and often at the expense of our most important relationships in life.

King Solomon has something to say to North Americans who *worship work*.

*"My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.
¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 2:10-11).*

What's he saying? **Work will not satisfy your soul.** It must not, therefore, be the object of your worship, or what you produce will be meaningless. Like chasing after the wind.

"Making money is important. But if that becomes your purpose in life you will leave this world very unhappy."

Marcus Lemonis, CEO Camping World and star of hit TV show "The Profit".

"I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands" (Jeremiah 1:16).

Then you have the people that work to live, but deep down inside they hate their work and some even believe that work is a curse from God.

The Bible describes these people like this - *"Despite their desires, the lazy will come to ruin, for their hands refuse to work" (Proverbs 21:25).*

Their heart is bent on making excuses for not working to put food on their table. **Proverbs 10:26** says, *"Never get a lazy person to do something for you; he will be as irritating as vinegar on your teeth or smoke in your eyes."*

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and it looks like work. **Thomas A. Edison**

So worship work or work hard to avoid it. Live to work or work to live.

Which is it? **Are these our only choices in life?**

Can we find purpose and joy in our work without turning it into an idol we worship? Is work a curse from God we should work hard to avoid? Or can ***our work become an act of worship to God?***

Genesis 2:5, 7-8, 15

⁵ Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. ⁷ Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ⁸ The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. ¹⁵ Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Genesis 2:5, 7-8, 15 - *...Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*

The first thing I want you to notice in this passage is that God himself is a worker.

We're told in **Psalm 145:16** that God "*opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.*" **Hebrews 1:3** says, "*He upholds the universe by the word of His power.*" And Jesus said in **John 5:17** - "*My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working*".

Immediately after creating the Garden of Eden, He '**places**' the man in it to *cultivate* it and *keep* it. The word '**place**' means - *to intentionally establish*.

Acts 17:25-26

He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.

In **Acts 17:25-26** - *"He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live..."*

God intentionally establishes his people in specific places to work for His divine purpose. And he calls this GOOD.

Bringing pleasure to God is called worship. The Bible says, "*The Lord is pleased with those who worship him and trust his love*" (**Psalm 147:11**).

Your work becomes worship when you do it to please God.

Colossians 3:23-24 - *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve."*

When Jesus becomes your boss, your work becomes your worship.

Rich Marshall, author of God at Work, tells a story about a trip in a taxi...

When we work as worship our daily life is an assignment from God.

This not only gives our *work* intrinsic meaning, but it means each one of our days is filled with eternal purpose.

Everything we do in life becomes a labour of love for God.

When your work is an act of worship to God, your work will be uniquely better than the rest.

While others are doing just enough to get by, the bare minimum...

When others are whining and complaining about your boss...

When others are slacking off at work and fooling around at work...

God's love changes the way we work. And our labour of love becomes an act of worship to God.

So let me give you **3 questions** you can ask yourself on a regular basis:

1. Do I perform my work as if Jesus is my boss?
2. Do I treat others in my workplace like Jesus does?
3. Is my work an act of worship for the one I love?