



Theology of Work

Theology of Work – A Biblical Perspective of Work

- A biblical theology of work includes at least two critical God-given mandates for mankind:
- **Creation Mandate** of Genesis 1-2 to subdue or rule the earth with God
- **Redemption Mandate** of Matthew 28 to reconcile people and the earth to God

Definition of Work

- Any activity in which one exerts strength or faculties to do or produce something.
- A medium through which one can translate divine enablement and vision embedded in his/her attitude, skills and knowledge into money.
- Done in offices, homes, schools, factories, farms, or ministry.
- An avenue for us to experience God's blessings + be a source of blessings to others.

Work – Biblical Perspective

- Mentioned more than 800 times
- God created work and He is a worker.
- Work is God's order for human life
- One's living, one's occupation, a calling to fulfill. (Homemakers and Students too)
- Is the presence of the Kingdom of God in the very heart of the devil's kingdom
- It has a divine purpose and is a divine calling.

Work – Biblical Perspective

- Subject to God and to God's purposes
- In imitation of God, man would rest one day & work the other six days
- **Work is holy** – Is to be part of that worship of our lives by which we do all things to the glory of God
- Work originates in God himself and to be a worker is part of what it means for man to have been created in God's image and likeness.

Work in Christian Writing

- **Early Christian writing** – Christians working out their holiness in the ordinary callings of their lives.
- John 5:17
- Matt. 13:55 & Mark 6:3
- 1 Corinthians 7:17
- Titus 2
- Col. 3:7
- 2 Thessa. 3:10-13 NKJV
- 1 Thessa. 2:9
- 1 Thessa. 4:11-12

Work in Christian Writing – Changed in 4th Century

- “Two ways of life were...given by the law of Christ to his church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, child-bearing, property nor the possession of wealth, but, wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone in its wealth of heavenly love! And they who enter on this course appear to die to the life of mortals, to bear with them nothing earthly but their body, and mind and spirit to have passed to heaven....Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life. And the other, more humble, more human, permits men to join in pure nuptials and to produce children, to undertake government, to give orders to soldiers...; it allows them to have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests as well as for religion; and it is for them that times of retreat and instruction, and days for hearing sacred things are set apart. And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them, giving just such help as such lives require, so that all men...have their part in the coming of salvation, and profit by the teaching of the gospel.” [*Demonstratio Evangelica*, I, viii cited in W.R. Forrester, *Christian Vocation*, 43]

Work in Christian Writing – Reformation & Rediscovery

Martin Luther:

- “When a maid cooks and cleans and does other housework, because God’s command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns.” [Cited in Forester, 148]

Creation & Redemption Mandates

- Creation Mandate not diminished by the Great Commission.
- The Great Commission does not replace the Creation Mandate
- The Great Commission is *re-creative*; restores man to enable him to fulfill his purpose as the servant of God and do God's pleasure in the world – creation mandate fulfillment.

Creation & Redemption Mandates

- **The two mandates belong together** - man serving God in the world that God has made for him.
- Work is not only our service of God - also instrument of his care & provision for us.
- God gifts men and women for the fulfillment of their vocations.
- God prepares and equips men and women to do certain kinds of work.