



WHERE'S GOD ON MONDAY

THE MEANING OF WORK

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Matthew 22:34-40

God's design of work is that we, as image-bearers of God, are creating and cultivating LIFE around us.

Great Commandment, Matthew 22:34-40

Jesus sums up the 613 commandments of the Old Testament by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4 (Shema) and Leviticus 19:18. He moves the humanistic standard of achievement to attitude, from what we can do, to the state of our heart. And no one can fulfill these commandments perfectly. Only by God's grace and His infilling presence do we love Him and others. He is calling us to love Him and others with every part of our lives ... even our work lives.

The Toil of Work and the Idol of Work

We often live in the extremes of the toil of work or the idol of work. Our work can be hard, tiring, mundane, even life-sucking. Or we work for an ultimate sense of purpose, value, and worth, which becomes an idol in our lives.

The Design of Work

- Work was included in God's perfect design. It was modeled and commanded by God before the fall, before work was twisted by the brokenness of this world and sin (Genesis 2:2).
- Work was not a necessary evil, as we see in the creation account and the declaration after every day, "it was good." Work was a sheer delight for God.
- Out of all God's creation, it is only people who are given a job: "fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the..." Genesis 1:28
- God also commands Adam to work, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15). We were made to work, as image-bearers of God, creating and cultivating LIFE around us.

"Whatever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand - in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, or his mind, in the world of art, and science - he is, in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before the face of God. He is employed in the service of his God. He has strictly to obey his God. And above all, he has to aim at the glory of his God." Abraham Kuyper

The Brokenness of Work

- Work is not a curse, but a curse is upon it. As we see in Genesis 3:17-19, because of the fall, the ground is cursed, and it will only be from the sweat of our brow that we will eat from it. We should not be surprised by this; we live in a broken world, and we are broken. We should long for God to make it right.

- "In an affluent American society, we often forget that a good portion of the New Testament was written to suffering believers (James, 1 Peter, and Revelation come to mind). The do-what-you-love ethic is unhelpful to such believers in the working class. But 'love Whom you do it for' is different entirely." Jeff Haanen, "God of the Second Shift"
- Followers of Jesus have a unique perspective on work. From the most fulfilling work to the most mundane, our work is an act of love for God (Colossians 3:23).

The Redemption of Work

- The first step of the Redemption of Work is that your boss changes. You now work for God, which often changes your motivation and your bottom line.

"Whatever you are seeking in your work – the city of justice and peace, the world of brilliance and beauty, the story, the order, the healing – it is there. There is a God, there is a future healed world that he will bring about, and your work is showing it (in part) to others." Timothy Keller, "Every Good Endeavor"

- Be a part of God's common good through creation and cultivation. Ask, what am I creating? What am I cultivating?
- What does this look like specifically for me? 'Place of Calling' Venn diagram.
- Your work is your mission field. Love the people well, pray for opportunities to share the love and hope of Jesus.
- The power and influence of your work - "The antidote to the pernicious effects of power is not giving up power; it is using power sacrificially." Sociologist and Gordon College President Michael Lindsay



Prayerfulness at Work

- Start the day in prayer
Heavenly Father, I praise you and thank you for the life and breath that you give me today and the work you have set before me. Fill me with your Spirit so that I may prayerfully do all things with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. Establish the work of my hands for Your greater good and for Your glory. In Jesus name I pray. Amen
- Pray throughout the day
- Reconnecting Prayer (John Eldredge 'One Minute Pause' App)

Discussion Questions (for small groups or the dinner table):



What has been the most difficult job you have ever done? What has been the most fulfilling job?



How are you creating and cultivating LIFE in your place of work?



How can you start to cover your work day in prayer?