

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY II

Work/Vocation

*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,
knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance
as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.
Col. 3:23-25*

I. What is God telling us about Himself through “work”?

A. In Creation, God introduces Himself in the context of six days of work, culminating in rest. With this picture, God sets the pattern for His ultimate work.

Gen. 1:1 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen. 1:3 - And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Isa 43:7 - everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

Rev 4:11 - "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Gen. 2:3 - So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Gen. 1:4 - And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

Gen. 1:10 - God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:12 - The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:18 - to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:21 - So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:25 - And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

1 Tim. 4:4 - For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

Gen. 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Gen. 2:7 - then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Gen. 1:31 - And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Gen. 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Gen. 2:8-9 - And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen. 2:10 - A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

Gen. 2:2 - And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

Gen. 2:3 - So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Gen. 2:2 - And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

- Ex. 23:12 - "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.
- Lev. 25:3-4 - For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, ⁴but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.
- Lev. 25:10 - And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.

B. God turns a magnifying glass on the reality and intensity of the curse of the fall as He depicts bondage to manual labor in Egypt, followed by miraculous deliverance toward rest in a Promised Land.

- Gen. 3:14 - The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
- Gen. 3:16 - To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."
- Gen. 3:17 - And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
- Gen. 3:19 - By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
- Eccl. 2:18-26 - I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹ because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? ²³ For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity. ²⁴ There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.
- Ex. 1:13 - So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves
- Ex. 5:7 - "You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves.
- Deut. 6:10-11 - "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹ and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full,
- Ex. 14:30 - "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹ and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full,
- Josh. 3:17 - Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.
- Josh. 5:12 - And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

C. Christ's incarnation reveals the firsthand, personal work of God on behalf of sinners, whereby Jesus breaks the bondage of the curse and ascends to prepare a place of eternal rest.

John 4:6 - Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Mark 6:31 - And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - 13 Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.

14 As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

15 so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand...

Luke 24:44 - Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

John 14:2 - In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Luke 24:51 - While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

D. God continues to depict suffering and toilsome work as the Apostles live and preach His Gospel, but they find a certain rest even in this world as God gives them faith in eternal rest to come. This experience becomes possible for all believers.

Luke 24:52 - And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

John 15:5 - I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Ps. 121:4 - Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Mark 16:20 - And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.

Col. 1:17 - And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1 Thes. 2:9 - For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

2 Cor. 11:24-28 - Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

Prov. 16:3 - Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

Col 3:23-25 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

1 Cor. 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 Cor. 4:12 - and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

E. God actualizes eternal rest for redeemed humanity on the day of Jesus' second coming. This rest includes a blessing of toil-free work.

Rev. 22:20 - He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Matt. 24:36 - "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Rev. 21:3 - And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Rev. 21:1 - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Isaiah 65:17 - "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

Rev. 21:4 - He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Isaiah 65:19 - I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.

Isaiah 65:21-23 - They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them.

Gen. 2:3 - So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

II. How should we reflect God's creative work in our own work?

1 Tim. 4:4 - For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

Because we are designed to work in the likeness of God, we should desire to work in a way that reflects the way God works.

Gen. 1:1 - In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen. 1-2 - Creation.

Gen. 2:2-3 - And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Gen. 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Gen. 1:29 - And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

Gen. 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Gen. 2:19 - Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

III. How does God use our work in daily life?

A. Our "secular" work - ordained and blessed by God as we commit it to Him - is a means by which He blesses others. Simultaneously, He blesses us through others' work.

B. Because we are designed to work in the likeness of God, we should enjoy our work done well.

IV. God's Biblical View of Work

Work is inherently good, as God created it in a sinless world

Gen. 1:4 - And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

- Gen. 1:10 - God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.
- Gen. 1:12 - The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
- Gen. 1:18 - to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.
- Gen. 1:21 - So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
- Gen. 1:25 - And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
- 1 Tim. 4:4 - For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,**

God commands Man to work

- Gen. 1:28 - And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
- Gen. 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Ex. 20:9 - Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, and Woman to help him

- Gen. 2:18 - Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

Due to sinful disobedience, the circumstances of work today are under God's curse

- Gen. 3:17-19 - And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Work should be spelled by rest

- Gen. 2:2-3 - And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Ex. 23:12 - "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.

- Lev. 25:3-4 - For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, 4but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.

- Lev. 25:10 - And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan.

God is powerful to bless men's work

- Gen. 6:14 - Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch.
- Deut. 2:7 - For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing."

Deut. 8:18 - You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Deut. 14:29 - And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

Deut. 15:10 - You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake.

2 Cor. 9:6-11 - The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

Job 1:10 - Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

God is powerful to frustrate men's work

Gen. 11:3-4 - And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

Gen. 11:8 - So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

Deut. 28:15-48 - "But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you...

Jer. 48:10 - "Cursed is he who does the work of the LORD with slackness, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from bloodshed.

Hag. 1:5-6 - Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. 6 You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes.

Hag. 2:17 - I struck you and all the products of your toil with blight and with mildew and with hail, yet you did not turn to me, declares the LORD.

By grace, work may provide temporary satisfaction

Ex. 39:43 - And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it. Then Moses blessed them.

Neh. 2:18 - And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

Prov. 31:10-31 - An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life...

Eccl. 2:10 - And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.

Eccl. 2:24 - There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God,

Eccl. 3:12 - I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live;

Eccl. 5:18 - Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot.

God desires industriousness and denounces laziness

Prov. 6:6-11 - Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. 7 Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, 8 she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. 9 How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Prov. 10:4-5 - A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.

Prov. 12:24 - The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.

Prov. 13:4 - The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.

Prov. 24:30-34 - I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, 31 and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. 32 Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. 33 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 34 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Prov. 31:27 - She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Matt. 25:26 - But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?

God desires excellence in work

Col. 3:23-24 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Prov. 22:29 - Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

Dan. 6:3 - Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Mundane work can serve Godly purposes

Acts 18:3 - and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

1 Cor. 4:12 - and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

1 Thess. 4:11-12 - and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

2 Thess. 3:6-12 - Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

1 Tim. 5:8 - But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Eph. 4:28 - Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Wealth is not the purpose for work.

Luke 12:16-21 - And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' 18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Matt. 6:24 - "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

1 Tim. 3:2 - Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Tim. 3:8 - Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

but it may be the outcome

Prov. 3:9 - Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce;

Prov. 8:18 - Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness.

Prov. 13:11 - Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.

Prov. 14:23-24 - In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty. 24 The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the folly of fools brings folly.

Provision for self and family comes from God through work

Gen. 3:19 - By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Deut. 8:18 - You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

Prov. 12:11 - Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.

Prov. 14:23 - In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.

1 Thess. 4:11-12 - and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

2 Thess. 3:10 - For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

1 Tim. 5:8 - But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Work provides a means to honor God's providence

Lev. 27:30 - "Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD.

Deut. 14:22-29 - "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. 23 And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24 And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, 25 then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to

the place that the LORD your God chooses 26 and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27 And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you. 28 "At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. 29 And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

2 Chron. 31:5 - As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.

Mal. 3:10 - Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

Work provides a means to bless others

2 Cor. 8:3-5 - For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

2 Cor. 8:14 - your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness.

Eph. 4:28 - Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Prov. 31:20 - She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.

and to glorify Christ with thanksgiving

2 Cor. 9:11-14 - You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

Worldly work is in vain

Eccl. 2:18-26 - I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, 19 and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. 20 So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, 21 because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. 22 What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? 23 For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity. 24 There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, 25 for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? 26 For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

but work in the Lord leads to a sure inheritance

1 Cor. 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Workers deserve their wages

Lev. 19:13 - "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

Deut. 24:15 - You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin.

Jer. 22:13 - "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages,

Mal. 3:5 - "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

Luke 10:7 - And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.

1 Tim. 5:17-18 - Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

James 5:4 - Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

Work should be from a pure heart

Prov. 11:18 - The wicked earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward.

Prov. 20:17 - Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.

Prov. 20:23 - Unequal weights are an abomination to the LORD, and false scales are not good.

Matt. 21:12-13 - And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 13 He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

Non-manual tasks can also be demanding work

Ex. 18:13-18 - The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. 14 When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" 15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; 16 when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws." **17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. 18 You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you.** You are not able to do it alone.

Eccl. 12:12 - My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and **much study is a weariness of the flesh.**

Workers should serve their overseers with diligence and humility

Eph. 6:5-9 - Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Col. 3:22 - Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Titus 2:9 - Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

1 Pet. 2:18-21 - Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

faithfulness,

Prov. 25:13 - Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the soul of his masters.

trustworthiness,

1 Cor. 4:2 - Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

honesty,

Titus 2:10 - not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

and respect

1 Tim. 6:1-2 - Let all who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

Overseers should not frustrate their workers

Jer. 23:1-2 - "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD.

Matt. 7:12 - "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Gal. 5:22 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Eph. 6:9 - Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Col. 4:1 - Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

All work should be committed to God

Prov. 16:3 - Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

Col. 3:23-25 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

and glorify Him

1 Cor. 10:31 - So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Peter 4:10-11 - As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

as did Christ's work

John 4:34 - Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

John 14:12 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

Work will be fully redeemed in Jesus' eternal kingdom

Isaiah 65:21-22 - They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

Ezek. 47:10-12 - Fishermen will stand beside the sea. From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets. Its fish will be of very many kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they are to be left for salt. 12 And on the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither, nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

Matt. 25:23 - His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

Acts. 3:21 - whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Rom 8:20-22 - For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

V. FAQ

Is "work" (daily work in the marketplace) real ministry?

Tit 3:14 - Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

Acts 20: 34,35 - You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

1Cor 9:12,18 - "If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. ... What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it."

2 Thess 3: 6-10 - In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

Is household work part of the equation?

What about work for women?

Gen. 2:18 - Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

Gen. 4:1,2 - Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." 2 And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.

2 Chron. 22:15-16 - You have an abundance of workmen: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and all kinds of craftsmen without number, skilled in working 16 gold, silver, bronze, and iron. Arise and work! The Lord be with you!"

Acts. 6:14 - One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

- Gen. 3:17 - And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
- 1 Cor. 11:3 - But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

How do I respond to ungodly employers? Employees?

- 1 Pet. 2:18-21 - Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.
- Rom. 13:1-6 - Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.
- Matt. 5:13-15) "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Must work be physical – of our hands – to be real work?

- 1 Tim. 5:17-18 - Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

What role do trade unions have?

- Isaiah 10:1-2 - Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, 2 to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!
- Gal 5:19-21 - Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

What if I cannot find work?

- 2 Thess 3: 6-10 - In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."
- 1 Tim. 5:13 - Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.
- Eph. 4:28 - Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Prov. 10:4-5 - A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.

John 12:24-25 - Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

Job. 1:21 - And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Deut. 31:8 - It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."