

WORK IS WONDERFUL!



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

1A. THE CALLING OF WORK: Gen. 1:28; 3:17-19

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.

¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

1b. Work is demanded by God in paradise: Gen. 1:28

2b. Work is designed for human prosperity: Gen. 1:29-31

3b. Work is disfigured by human sin: Gen. 3:17-19

4b. Work is developed by early man:

1c. The compliance of work:

Whatever divine commandments early man violated, the command to work and the directive for procreation are not among them. Adam and his descendants used their God-given minds and skills to develop an advanced civilization before the flood.

1d. Abel: Gen. 4:2

2d. Cain: Gen. 4:2, 17

3d. Jabel: Gen. 4:20

4d. Jubal: Gen. 4:21

5d. Tubal-Cain: Gen. 4:22

6d. Noah: Gen. 6:14, 22

2c. The consequences of work: Gen. 5:29

Benefits

Blessings

1d. The natural result of diligent labor is wealth: Gen. 13:2; 27:28, 29; 30:34

2d. The possession of wealth and inheritance of wealth carry no dishonor and may be the direct result of God's blessing: Gen. 27:39

Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:
"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,
And of the dew of heaven from above.

5b. Work is demanded in the Mosaic Law: Ex. 20:9

"Six days *shalt thou labor*, and do all thy work. . . "

1c. Labor is a commanded activity:

2c. Labor is a regular activity:

6b. Work is discussed in great detail in the New Testament:

1c. The vices connected with work:

1d. The vice of idleness—**ABSTINENCE** from work:

"An idle brain is the devil's workshop."

"Activity may lead to evil, but inactivity cannot lead to good."

"Idleness is the sepulchre of virtue."

"Men are naturally tempted by the devil but an idle man positively tempts the devil."

1e. Idleness is a form of impiety: 2 Thess. 3:6, 8

2e. Idleness results in the vice of being a busybody: 2 Thess. 3:11

3e. Idleness is tantamount to a denial of the faith: 1 Tim. 5:8

4e. Idleness is worse than infidelity: 1 Tim. 5:8b

5e. Idleness frequently parades under the guise of religious devotion: Mark 7:9, 13

6e. Idleness is a special vice of young women: 1 Tim. 5:11-13

7e. Idleness robs people of happiness: Gen. 1:28-31

"Occupation was one of the pleasures of paradise and we cannot be happy without it."



2d. The view of sloth—**AVERSION** to work:

1e. Described in Proverbs:

- 1f. Slothfulness is a great waste: Prov. 18:9
- 2f. Slothfulness finds constant excuses: Prov. 22:13
- 3f. Slothfulness makes no preparation: Prov. 6:6
- 4f. Slothfulness is manifested in excessive sleep: Prov. 6:9-11; 19:15; 26:14

2e. Denounced in the New Testament:

1f. By Christ: Matt. 25:26

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed."

2f. By Paul:

Rom. 12:11

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

1 Thess. 4:11-12

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

3f. By the author of Hebrews: Heb. 6:12

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

3d. The virtue of work:

1e. Every person's labor is a divine calling: 1 Cor. 7:20

Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

2e. Our life will best be recognized when it is directed toward this mark.

3e. The work of the unsaved, no matter how necessary or noble, is sin: Prov. 21:4

4e. All activity can be performed to the glory of God:



1 Cor. 10:31

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

1f. The injunction:

2f. The implications:

3f. The importance:

7b. Work is discovered by the Reformers:

1c. The New Testament work ethic:

"Christianity has undoubtedly given new vigor and dignity to the belittled world of work. With its penetration of the pagan West, the Christian religion etched a halo, as it were, around man's daily labor. In stead of being just a time-consuming routine, a drab, monotonous sparring for subsistence devoid of ultimate meaning and laden only with burden and uncertainty, the workaday world was now interpreted as a divinely appointed sphere where man as a worker is ordained to glorify God, and in His name to serve his fellow man. Upon the humblest carpenter shop Christianity bestowed something of the radiance of Nazareth; through the tired limbs of even the lowliest slave the Gospel sent a surge of glory" (Henry, *Aspects of Christian Social Ethics*, 31-32).

2c. The Protestant work ethic:

"Over against Rome's distinction between the religious and the secular, which granted spiritual merit only to those in specifically designated religious pursuits, the Reformers insisted that every believer's calling is sacred. The Reformation intention, as Alexander Miller notes, was not to do away with all priests, but rather 'to make all Christians priests.' The layman has a calling in Christ no less than the minister, and the daily labor of both, performed as a consecrated sacrifice, is equally acceptable as spiritual service. On this basis, Martin Luther is said to have liberated not only the monks in the monasteries but all men to fulfill their divine vocation. The Reformation did not eliminate the priesthood but rather did away with a non-priestly laity; every follower of Jesus Christ was reminded anew of his calling to full-time priestly service. This emphasis did not so much secularize the ministry as it sanctified the laity. The Christian workman becomes a priest among his fellowworkers; he serves both God and neighbor by offering God the labor of his hands as a daily sacrifice." (*Ibid.*, 42).





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1d. Luther's position:

"Yet Luther told his followers: 'God even milks the cows through you.' and restored to man's work the music that Christianity first put into the working man's heart. English fishermen and Russian harvester often broke into song as they labored. And in Iowa, American farmers had a saying that even the cows know the difference when a dairyman was converted" (*Ibid.*, 42)

2d. Calvin's position:

"It is remarked that the Lord commands every one of us, in all actions of life, to regard His vocation. For He knows with what great inquietude the human mind is inflamed, with what desultory levity it is hurried hither and thither, and how insatiable is its universal confusion being produced by our folly and temerity, He has appointed to all their particular duties in different spheres of life. And that no one might rashly transgress the limits prescribed, He has styled such spheres of life vocations, or callings. Every individual's line of life, therefore, is, as it were, a post assigned him by the Lord, that he may not wander about in uncertainty all his days. . .He that is in obscurity will lead a private life without discontent, so as not to desert the station in which God has placed him" (*Calvin's Institutes*, III, X, 6, emphasis in the original).

2A. THE CONDUCT IN WORK:

Col. 3:22-25

²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of *heart*, fearing God.
²³ And whatever you do, do it *heartily*, as to the Lord and not to men,
²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.
²⁵ But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Eph. 6:5-9

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of *heart*, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from *the heart*, ⁷ with *goodwill* doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is a slave or free*.
⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

1b. The action in work:

- 1c. Obeying:
- 2c. Obeying in all things:

2b. The attitude in work:

- 1c. The attitude of work negatively: Not superficiality
 - 1d. Not with eye service:
 - 2d. Not as men pleasers:
- 2c. The attitude of work positively: In sincerity:
 - 1d. In singleness of heart: Col. 3:22
 - 2d. Heartily: Col. 3:23
 - 3d. With a good mind: Eph. 6:7

3c. The anticipation in work:

- 1d. Recognition: Eph. 6:6

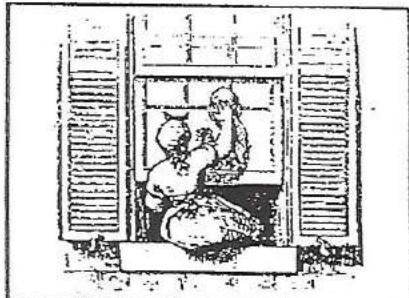
"Doing the will of God from the heart."
- 2d. Rewards: Eph. 6:8

⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.
- 3d. Recompense: Col. 3:24

²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

"The inscriptions and drawings in the catacombs discovered in Rome in 1578 depict believers in the course of daily work. . .the Christian movement was not embarrassed by the scarcity of philosophers in its ranks. Nor was it embarrassed because its first disciples included fishermen and a tax-gatherer, and because its greatest apostle was a tentmaker. Had not the Redeemer himself been a carpenter? First generation Christians reflected in daily living the biblically inspired conviction that manual work is noble" (Henry, 53).

According to the Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3 passages, any activity is pleasing to God as long as it is done—



--Ethically
--Enthusiastically
--Energetically
--Expectantly

3A. THE COMPENSATION FOR WORK:

The **CALLING OF WORK** makes it wonderful; work belonged to the pleasures of paradise.

The **CONDUCT IN WORK** makes it a **witness**; our conduct displays how clearly we see our relationship to Christ as Savior and master.

The **COMPENSATION FOR WORK** makes it **worthwhile**; the rewards are held up for each believer as incentives to diligence.

1b. The suggestion for rewards:

Eph. 6:8

⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

Col. 3:24

²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Any of our activities, whether in the “sacred” or “secular” realm, will either merit or forfeit a reward.

2b. The setting of rewards:

The judgment seat of Christ

The judgment seat of Christ is one of the most misunderstood prophetic events. Rather than it being a “protestant purgatory,” it is a time of rewards when the believer will be decorated for the next event, the marriage of the Lamb. While it may be a time of remorse and regret for missed opportunities, it is not a time of punishment for sins but a time of rewards for those things done for the Lord. It is a time of triumph rather than tragedy, glory rather than gloom.

Though some would use the judgment seat as a club to force people into greater faithfulness, the Scriptures hold out the judgment seat of Christ as the crowning event of the faithful life. The Apostle Paul closes the discussion of the judgment seat of Christ in the lengthiest Scripture passage referring to it with these words: **“Then shall every man receive praise of God”** (1 Cor. 4:5c).



JUDGMENT SEAT
OF CHRIST



MARRIAGE OF
THE LAMB

3b. The securing of rewards:

1c. Special rewards:



- 1d. The wreath of incorruptibility: 1 Cor. 9:25
- 2d. The wreath of life: James 1:12; Rev. 2:10
- 3d. The wreath of glory: 1 Peter 5:4
- 4d. The wreath of righteousness: 2 Tim. 4:8
- 5d. The wreath of rejoicing: 1 Thess. 2:19



2c. Individual rewards:

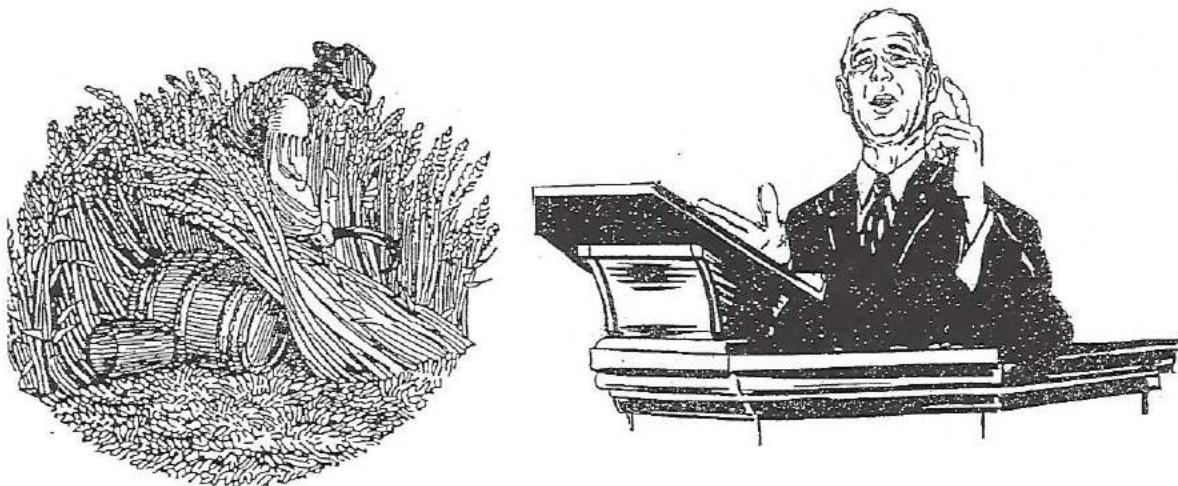
- 1d. "Whatever ye do" Col. 3:23
- 2d. "Every good thing" Eph. 6:8
- 3d. "Eating and drinking and whatsoever ye do" 1 Cor. 10:13



3c. Universal rewards:

- 1d. Divine affection: 1 Thess. 4:17
- 2d. Divine appointment: 1 Cor. 6:2, 3
- 3d. Divine approval: 1 Cor. 4:5

WHOSE WORK IS MORE IMPORTANT?
WHO WILL RECEIVE THE GREATER REWARDS?



CALVIN'S POSITION ON WORK:

"It is remarked that the Lord commands every one of us, in all actions of life, to regard His vocation. For He knows with what great inquietude the human mind is inflamed, with what desultory levity it is hurried hither and thither, and how insatiable is its universal confusion being produced by our folly and temerity. He has appointed to all their particular duties in different spheres of life. And that no one might rashly transgress the limits prescribed, He has styled such spheres of life vocations, or callings. Every individual's line of life, therefore, is, as it were, a post assigned him by the Lord, that he may not wander about in uncertainty all his days. . . . He that is in obscurity will lead a private life without discontent, so as not to desert the station in which God has placed him."

Calvin's Institutes, III, X,6.



CALVIN

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ΕΚ ΡΣΕΥΧΗΣ

COLOSSIANS 3:22-25

²² Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of *heart*, fearing God:

²³ And whatsoever ye do, do *it heartily*, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

²⁵ But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

ΕΥΝΟΙΑΣ ΚΝΟΥΣ

EPHESIANS 6:5-9

⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

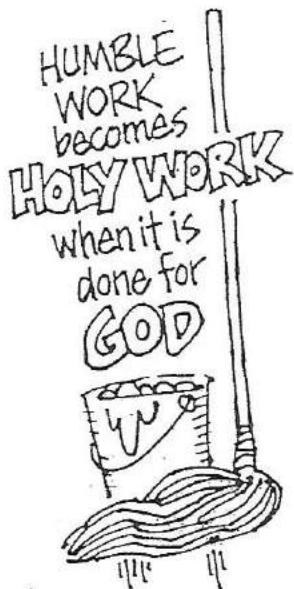
⁶ Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

⁷ With *good will* doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

DIVINE SERVICES
CONDUCTED HERE
THREE TIMES DAILY



THE BUSY MAN

If you want to get a favor done
By some obliging friend,
And want a promise safe and sure,
On which you can depend,
Don't go to him who always has
Much leisure time to plan;
But if you want your favor done,
Just ask the busy man.

The man with leisure never has
A moment he can spare;
He's always "putting off" until
His friends are in despair.
But he whose every waking hour
Is crowded full of work;
Forgets the art of wasting time;
He cannot stop to shirk.

So when you want a favor done,
And want it right away,
Go to the man who constantly
Works sixteen hours a day.
He'll find a moment sure somewhere
That has no other use,
And help you, while the idle man
Is framing an excuse!

— Author Unknown

"It is said that John Wesley traveled 250,000 miles on horseback...averaging 20 miles a day for 40 years, preached 40,000 sermons, and produced hundreds of books. At 83 he was annoyed that he could not write more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes, and at 86 he was ashamed that he could not preach more than twice a day... He complained that there was an increasing tendency on his part "to lie in bed until 5:30 in the morning." Amazing that Wesley lived to be the same age as Dr. Fetcham when he died.

