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# Life's Work

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Sunday, July 25, 2020 — Biblical Work, Part 2

2. Is it **HONEST**? (The **SELECTION** of our work)

What does God want us to do for work? Something. Anything that is honest.

**Ephesians 4:28 (ESV)** 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.

This is reminding us what our work is for more than just survival, but for sharing as well. Work is to be an “others-centered” activity in our lives.

There is much about our work and economy that is outside of our control (we work for business that make decisions that are out of our control). And due to sin, there are many of those decisions in our commerce that are not scriptural, but dehumanize people and deface creation.

Two clarifying questions about the honesty of our work:

1. Is what I am doing being done to the best of my ability?
2. Is what I am doing worthy of being done?

1. Is what I am doing being done to the best of my ability?

Is what I am doing being done with the best of my ability for the glory of God? If your work is primarily about personal fulfillment, then you will mostly not work to the best of your ability, until you get your “dream job.” Let me give you some reality: your dream job isn't what you think, and doing a poor job at any other job is not Scriptural either.

**Luke 16:10 (ESV)** “One who is **faithful in a very little** is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”

If you cannot work to the best of your ability in your current job and your current tasks, however menial or boring or unfulfilling they may be, you will never learn how to be faithful at a higher level of work. Not all work is fun, much of it is toil. You may not love what you are doing, but are you doing it to the best of your ability for God's glory? We can bring Christ into our work - bringing meaning and purpose in the most menial tasks.

Brother Lawrence was a little monk that was crippled. A book was written about him entitled, "The Practice of the Presence of God." Brother Lawrence was a dishwasher, cleaning dishes and sweeping floors unto Jesus, and experienced a vibrant and inspiring relationship with Jesus, who's witness has lasted hundreds of years. And he was a dish-washer.

What is our witness at work? Is it that we are lazy and apathetic, disengaged and critical just because it is not our "dream job"?

2. Is what I am doing worthy of being done?

Is it worth doing? Where areas of biblical morality are being violated, you need to ask this in order to know whether you should leave or not. If your work is considered sin, please prayerfully consider God's direction in what to do about it.

If it is not sin, trust that God can be at work in you doing your job to the best of your ability for God's glory, trusting that he can lead you on the proper career path He has for you.

3. Does it **CONTRIBUTE**? (The **MOTIVATION** of our work)

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (ESV)** "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, **but the good of his neighbor.**

Society demands you seek your own good (or the good of your own tribe). There is no biblical precedent that gives us the right to pursue our work for your own fulfillment and good only. God is our end and our goal, we serve in obedience to Him for our fellow man. Our work is to be self-giving (for sharing, not just survival).

Are you doing what you are doing for your own good or are you concerned about how it can be used for God's Kingdom work? Many are tyrannized by the desire to possess the right to your own life and your own satisfaction, but it leaves us restless in our pursuit. For the "workaholic" - you will work harder to possess more; for the "sluggard" - you will do whatever it takes to just maintain. Our motivation for work is a heart issue - we work so that we can give ourselves away.

Example: Rich young ruler (Luke 18) - give up what is at the center

Our motivation is key — what motivates us? Is Jesus truly the foundation of our whole lives - our work and our motivations for work? When the motivation is for the good of others, it brings a satisfaction in work even if the work is not satisfying. There is no verse that gives us a promise of God that your work will be fun

4. Is it **THOUGHTFUL**? (The **INTEGRITY** of our work)

**Romans 12:2 (ESV)** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

What does the world say about your work? For much of society, it is a self-centered endeavor. What is the Kingdom alternative to our work? Work cannot be done well for God's glory if Christ is not the center of our focus and attention. Our concentration and reflection on life in Christ enables us to infuse even the menial tasks with the divine. Even "meaningless jobs" can become meaningful in Christ, with our thoughts and prayers. Creativity is not just the ability to imagine things in our minds, but to bring that imagination to life in the world through our work for the glory of God.

**Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (ESV)** Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 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.

5. Is it balanced with **REST**? (The **LIMITATIONS** of our work)

**Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV)** "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

The commandment is not just to take a day of, but sanctify a day of rest and work for 6 days. It is a 6:1 ratio of work:rest. The one holy day provided the holiness for the other 6 days. It wasn't a day primarily of leisure, but a day of restful communion with God.

The key to this principle is that we need rest, we have limitations and we cannot lie to ourselves and think we have none. Man was made for work, but we need rest (not just one day a week), stilling ourselves for the purpose of preparing ourselves for engaging in more work. Sabbath is not relief from our vocations, but it is the end which finds satisfaction in the work that has been done, and refilling for the work that shall be done. Stillness without action is nothing, action without stillness is inhuman.

The Sabbath was a day to be reminded that their life is not defined by their work, it's not their center, but to define their life by their Creator, and work is an outworking of obedience to him, He is the end of their work, He is their goal.

## Conclusion

Jesus disrupts the practices of the Pharisees, reminding us that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Because of the cross and resurrection he can say "Come to me..." Jesus was the perfect balance of continual work and continual rest.

**John 5:17 (ESV)** But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

**John 14:12 (ESV)** *"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."*

The holy day became a holy person (Lord of the Sabbath), available to us 24/7. He calls us to come to Him to find the rest and the proper way to work. It's all about Jesus...

**Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)** "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."