

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

**Introduction:** Many Christians—from the CEO to the teacher to the stay-at-home mom—spend a great deal of time working and yet do not realize how their work intersects with their faith. They compartmentalize their faith to Sunday morning and see the rest of their week as having little to do with their walk with God. Scripture, however, makes no division between the sacred and secular parts of our lives. God gives us our work, talent and skills so that through them we might worship Him.

Work is mostly seen as an evil necessity to achieve a higher good. I will argue that work is the higher good that we are created to experience in this age and the next. From the smallest act done where no one sees to the greatest accomplishment that gets recognition by many God is glorified and made known in the environments that you add your portion too.

**Definitions need to be correct.** I think work for the average person is usually confined to the hours of 9-5 or an 8-10 hour period in the day by which we subject ourselves so that we can get a wage to do the things we really were created for. Which is, rest, relaxation, delight, enjoyment, and freedom. I would say most Christians view work as a curse that we've inherited because of the fall and that Jesus has come so we can experience a perpetual vacation in the afterlife. That is not the biblical definition of work. **Work was not an effect of the fall. Work is a manifested expression of the nature of God.**

## **1. Image Bearer of a Working God**

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

A. What does it mean to be in the image/likeness of God? To be an image of something is to be an accurate representation. What does it mean to be an accurate representation of God? We can't see God so how do we represent him? By expressing his nature and qualities to our domain.

1 John 4:12 No one has seen God at anytime. If we love one another God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

What was God doing before he created his image bearers? What is the picture we have of God before Adam? In pages 1 and 2 of the bible we get two creation narratives. One story but two narratives. One narrative focuses on God and who he is and what he does. The other narrative focuses on humans and their purpose. And in both of these narratives we will see that work is not a curse but an honor that God has given us to glorify Him and bless others.

### **B. The creation narrative that focuses on who God is and what he does**

The setting and it's description (narrative 1)

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.

How does it start? Good or bad? Neither?

The rest of Genesis 1 is describing who and what this God does. Seven times it says it was good after God worked. What does his work look like? Taking that which was in chaos, disorder and lifeless and brings beauty to it. (sunset). He brings order by which things can function and grow.(day and evening). He blesses (makes happy) his creation by giving it the freedom to be fruitful and multiply.

The first chapter focuses on giving us insight about God. The entire text is focused on what God does which reflects who he is. The second chapter of Genesis gives us another perspective.

### **C. The creation narrative that focuses on mankind and their purpose:**

The second chapter (starting at verse 4) gives us another creation narrative that focuses on humans and their purpose.

#### **The setting and the description (narrative 2)**

**Genesis 2:4-6** This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

In narrative 1 the stage is set in a state of emptiness and formless. In narrative 2 the stage is set in barrenness. (Good or bad? Neither?)

Verse 5 tells us why it's barren. There is no man to work the earth and bring out its potential and amazing qualities.

The solution:

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

God makes mankind then he plants a garden verse 9-14 gives us details of the quality and abundant resources of this garden that God plants. Then God places mankind in the garden and instructs him to work it and keep it. **Genesis 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.**

In other words, God instructs the first man to reflect and represent him towards his creation. Work, tend, keep, cultivate, make good that which he has placed before him. He is to fill the rest of the barren land with the goodness of Eden. Genesis 1:28 **Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over every living thing on the earth.**

Dominion is one of the qualities that he gave mankind that is in his likeness. What does this dominion look like? The same type that God reveals in the verses before. A rulership that brings life, blessing, growth, beauty, joy, rest, and fulfillment. A rulership that reflects generosity, goodness, kindness, gentleness, love, joy, peace.

He was to take **the raw materials** of the earth and develop them for the glory of God and the benefit of humans.

**Contractors** take the raw materials of sand and cement and use them to create buildings. **Artists** take the raw materials of color or music and

arrange them into art. **Lawyers** take principles of justice and codify them into laws that benefit society.

When we take those things that are before us and have dominion over it in the way God would, we reflect his image.

### **C. Both Male and Female Express God's Image in Work**

But he's not to do it alone. Genesis 2:18 It is not good that he alone reflects this. The woman completes the image and reflection of God on the earth. She is to be a helper in the sense of manifesting the reflection of God on the earth by subduing, multiplying and having dominion together with man. She is not a glorified assistant to the man. A crutch by which the man gets along better. She is comparable to him. The focus of the word helper is not on the man but on the image of God. She is not created to help the man do his job but on helping the man express the image of God to the creation. Genesis 2:19-20

Adams first expression of God is to name the animals giving them identity just as God gave Adam identity through stating man's purpose (image bearer to the creation) He works in perfect partnership with God as God creates the animals and brings them to Adam. This first job reveals the need for a counterpart that can reflect the image of God with Adam. She is given the name Eve, which means Life. Adam is shown as giving identity to his domain and Eve is seen as giving life. They join together and life and purpose is given to the rest of creation. Humans, both male and female, exist to bring life and purpose to the rest of creation as two unique expressions of one image. Genesis 2:24

## **2. Work as Worship**

Isaiah 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”

Mankind was created to glorify God and the primary way we glorify him is through how we view and do life outside of the four walls of the church.

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

The root word in Hebrew that is translated to work is 'abad' (aw-bad') which is the same root word meaning WORSHIP.

We often have a one-dimensional view of worship. hands raised and singing a song.

Work is worship when you fulfill God's purpose for creation: you prepare and develop the earth for the benefit of humans and the glory of God.

Colossians 3:23-24 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.

**A. No limitations in expressing work as worship:**

v. 23a Whatever you do, work heartily... This goes beyond the 9-5 work time. Everything we do, clean the house, paint, sew quilts, maintain our homes and properties, write a letter, etc. falls into this category of work.

**B. Working for an eternal reward:**

v.23b as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

**C. The focus of our work is to be on reflecting the glory and worthiness of God:**

v.24 You are serving the Lord Christ. Christians should be the most excellent in their work and attitude whether

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anyone sees them or not. C. S. Lewis once noted how valleys undiscovered by human eyes are still filled with beautiful flowers. For whom did God create that beauty, if no human eyes would ever see it? Lewis' answer was that God does some things only for his own pleasure. He sees even when no one else does. Christians make beautiful things for God—often even when no one else notices.

When others see us work or they see our work are they seeing a reflection of God's heart and character? Are they being touched by our presence because we are manifesting the glory of God. Worship is more than a song or a service. The primary way God has ordained us to worship and honor him is in our capabilities to bring life, order, peace, benefit, and growth to those things around us.