

**THE MAIN THING:** Work matters. It is not a curse of the 'Fall' nor a necessary evil we need to do in order to pay bills, afford what we really want to do or have, or retire and follow our dream. Work was established by God for us to join in His creative purposes to bless one another and care for the world around us – a work that has value, purpose, and whose effects stretches into eternity.

**PURSUE RELATIONSHIP:** *Connect and pray as a group*

1. What is the best 'job' you have ever had? Explain.
2. If you could have the job of your dreams, what would that be? Why?
3. How much joy do you find in your work? Expand on your response.
4. If someone asked you, "Why do you work?" what would you answer?

**PURSUE GOD:** *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

**Observation and Reflection**

1. Genesis uses specific action words to describe God's work of creation. In your Bible read Genesis 1:1-19. Make a list of those words. Then read Genesis 1:31-2:3. What is the pattern for God's work schedule? How did God react to His creation?
2. In Genesis 1:26; 2:7-9, 15, what kind of work did God give Adam? Imagine what his workload was like. Reflect on the action words gleaned from question #1. Describe your own work using the same concepts.
3. Pastor Henry described how our 'vocation' (being God's representatives in the world) is expressed in our many 'occupations'. In 1 Cor 10:31 and 15:58, how does Paul show that our individual work matters to God? How does God expand the nature and 'call' of 'work' as compared to the general 'opinion' of work today?

**Application.**

1. How do you see your work as fulfilling God's purposes? What challenges do you have?
2. A. This week, personalize Paul's verses (above) towards your own work in the form of a prayer.  
B. What steps do you need to take to improve the biblical approach to your work life?  
C. Memorize either 1 Cor 10:31 or 1 Cor 15:58.

**THE WORD (NIV)**

Genesis 1:31-2:2

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. <sup>1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup>By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

Genesis 1:26; 2:7-9, 15

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." . . . <sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. <sup>8</sup>Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. <sup>9</sup>The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . <sup>15</sup>The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

1 Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. . . .

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

## GOD'S INTENTION FOR WORK

Dr. Henry Schorr

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What is the secret to long life? Experts say one of the major keys is work satisfaction. Only one in three can claim that, while two in three say if they could have a different job, they would. Most see work, which can take upwards of 40% of our lives, as little more than a way to pay the bills and enjoy a certain lifestyle. So, why do you work? Note: 'work' can be employment, homemaking, study (being a student) or volunteering, etc. What is God's perspective on work?

1. Work originates with God. In Genesis 1 we see that the Bible not only assumes the existence of God, but describes Him as creating (or working). God spoke. God made. God put things in their proper place. He saw work as important and a very good thing, something that most of our week is to be devoted to (Gen 1:31-2:2). In the ancient world, 'work' was seen as demeaning and fit for poor people and slaves while the 'superior' people enjoyed lives of leisure, contemplation and beauty. Yet in the Bible we see God working! And He still does today (John 5:17, Col 1:16).
2. God calls us to join Him in His work. Some see work as God's curse or punishment for sin (Gen 3:17). However, God called us to work before our first parents ever sinned (Gen 2:15). Work was part of God's original design, intended to be a gift and a blessing. God enjoyed creating the world and wanted Adam and Eve to join Him in taking care of it. Work brings dignity and value to us as human beings because it reflects the image of God the creator in us (Gen 1:26). Our ability to work separates us from the rest of God's creation. He gave us abilities, skills and physical strength to work, and intelligent minds to reason, imagine and create using the raw materials He provided. We are created in God's image, and we do something very God-like when we work.
3. Work matters to God. There is no 'job' hierarchy with God with one thing being better than another. We can serve the Kingdom of God where we work; Kingdom work is not limited to volunteering somewhere or being on a missions trip. We are called to represent Him in the workplace and to glorify God in whatever we do (1 Cor 10:31). This is our highest calling: to glorify God in all we do. This includes the way we work, the quality of our work and our attitude at work. All work reflects the work of God in creation and by working we are fulfilling the creative purposes of God. For example, a farmer produces food for the community, a contractor builds homes to live in, an artist uses raw materials to create beauty to enjoy, and a judge enacts laws that bring order and benefit society. When we work and use the knowledge, abilities and skills God has given us to make life better for the people God loves and for the world He created, we are not only doing good work but we are doing God's work that He called us to do.

What are the implications of this?

1. Our work matters to God. Every good endeavor, no matter how small, done in response to God's calling will matter forever (1 Cor 15:58). Take God out of the equation and nothing matters nor will it be remembered.
2. Our work is of equal value to God. Our culture says some types of work are more dignified and prestigious. As Christians we are called by God to be His representatives in the world. That is our 'vocation' expressed in various occupations. What we do for Him is equally valuable because we all have the same calling – to serve and represent Christ through our lives and work whether we are a janitor or CEO. Every job is vital to accomplishing God's purposes and promises in our world. There are few better ways to love and honour our Lord and to love our neighbour than to simply do our work to the best of our ability, with a spirit of gratitude to God for the privilege of serving Him through our work.
3. If we truly believe God created us to work, we will have a new attitude toward work and leisure. It is not 'hurry up and work so we can play', but our play is a change of pace to revitalize us for the delightful purpose of getting back to the work God has called us to. There is no retirement in the Christian life. He calls you to make some kind of contribution with your life. You matter to God and so does the work you do in His name, and your labour is not in vain (1 Cor 15:58).