

#83 “Work as Worship”

by Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

Sometimes we as believers separate the “sacred” from the “secular” in terms of jobs, careers, and callings. In other words, sometimes we tend to develop a thought process that sees only what pastors, counselors, and missionaries do as being ministry or service for the kingdom, whereas we might view the person who goes to work from 9 to 5 in the secular workplace as not also being a minister and servant of God. Sometimes it is easy to feel like we cannot worship God while we are delivering newspapers, changing diapers, selling real estate, answering phones, or on down the list. Whatever line of work we might be in, the fact of the matter is that God can be honored and the kingdom can be advanced as we do our secular jobs. Think about it for a moment. Many churches have one full time minister to shepherd hundreds of “lay persons” as we call them. Can only the pastor be serving God and the rest be mired in “lesser” service for the kingdom? This is a major thing to think about given that we will spend the vast majority of our lives working and not being at church, unless of course, we are called by God as a pastor or full-time Christian worker of some kind. For those who are in Christian ministry, work is obviously ministry, and this has its own challenges. For those who are not in full-time Christian work, we must not fall for the devil’s wile that we cannot serve and worship God in what we do as well. We might not be preparing a sermon or feeding the hungry during business hours, but how we live our lives and how we do our work is our chance to worship God. We each must find joy in the places to which God has called us, and we all have a chance to bring God glory wherever we might be each and every day.

In Ecclesiastes 3:9, Solomon asks, “What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?” Are we to work simply for money for money’s sake? If so, we will be disappointed. Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 5:10, “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.” Are we to work just so that we can eat and then eat again until eventually we die? Scripture is plain that this is a vain and unsatisfying way to live. Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 2:25, “For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?” Only when God is factored into the equation can work take on its right and full purpose. God has ordained work for man. Even before sin entered the world, God gave Adam a garden to tend. (Genesis 2:15). *Thus, work plays a certain role in how we interact with God, and the only way to understand the purpose of work and to enjoy our work and the fruit of our labor is by also enjoying God as we work* (Psalm 16:11).

God seeks worshippers (John 4:23-24), and Scripture is plain that one of the major ways in which we worship God is by our work. Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 9:10, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” Colossians 3:17 says, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” Certainly, work would fall under the category of “whatever you do,” regardless of whether it is church-oriented or not. God desires worshippers, and He has

ordained work as a major way that we can worship Him. So how do we make sure we worship God in our work and as we work?

Obviously, doing our work in love and holiness is essential (John 13:34-35, Hebrews 12:14). Where possible, we should seek to share the gospel (Acts 1:8). Our factory, shop, or vehicle is our mission field. We must also guard our hearts so that we have a good attitude, one that doesn't complain (Philippians 2:14), one that is thankful (Colossians 3:15), and one that is willing to show respect for superiors (1 Peter 2:13-14). God doesn't need brownnosers, nor does He need slackers. God wants those who work with diligence (Romans 12:11) and for His favor, not merely as men-pleasers. Colossians 3:23-24 says, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve." There is no ambiguity from the Scripture that whatever we do, all kinds of work included, can be and ought to be worship of God, for it is He Whom we serve. He is our ultimate Boss, for it is He Who will give our ultimate evaluation and review. The best thing we can do is to live as sacrifices that please Him even as we work (Romans 12:1-2).

There is nothing wrong with praying for a new job or seeking a career change, but the admonition to worship is for the present, even if the job is less than desirable. Let us thank God for the work which He has given us rather than taking it for granted. Let us not think that God cannot use us even in the secular workplace. We are all missionaries (2 Corinthians 5:18), we are all God's workers (1 Corinthians 3:9), and we are all called as worshippers. We must remember that God is our Joy, our Life, our Hope, our Sustenance, our Provider, our Master, and our Judge. He gives meaning and purpose to work, and He enables us to have joy as we work, as we eat, as we rest, and as we go through our lives. May God teach us and enable us to honor Him in and through our work, whatever our specific line of work might be. Next time we go to work, let us go to worship.