

The Wisdom of Hard Work | 5/1/16

- God created us to work
 - I'm sure if that people would rather think that God created us to take it easy, to do as little as possible.
 - To simply be lazy and enjoy the pleasures of life.
 - However, Scriptures paints us a picture that is quite different.
 - In the beginning of creation before man had sinned. God makes it clear that He created Adam to work.
 - Genesis 2:15
 - “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to work it and keep it.**”
 - God did not say that He took man and put him directly in a lounge chair, not God put Adam to work.
 - And to be clear this was BEFORE the fall, BEFORE sin entered into the world. So work in itself is certainly not a curse.
 - The curse for Adam's sin came in the form of painful labor and the thorns and thistles.
 - Genesis 3:17-19
 - Work is for mankind is part of God's perfect design for us.
 - Throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament there are numerous types of professions that God has called His people to.
 - Craftsmen, leaders, priests, nobles, kings, military, traders, fishermen, carpenters, farmers, businesspeople and servants.
 - Most all professions can be used for the glory of God (MOST not all ;)
 - Really most any modern day profession can be used to glorify God, although there are several that cannot and it is those that by man's design cause one to sin and disobey Him.
 - Hitman, “dancer”, drug dealer etc.,
 - God is a worker
 - Perhaps we if want some additional proof to the importance of work in the eyes of God we can consult Scripture.
 - God worked as a creator.
 - God obviously worked to create everything that we see in the world.
 - Genesis 1:1
 - “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”
 - Genesis 2:2
 - “By the seventh day God completed His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.”
 - God has assigned Himself several different occupations in Scripture
 - Gardner (Gen 2:8), shepherd (Psa 23), potter (Jer 18:6), teacher (psa 143:10), vine-dresser (Isa 5:1-7) and a metalworker (Mal 3:3-4, Ezek 22:20)
 - Jesus was a carpenter
 - Mark 6:3a
 - “Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon?...”
 - We were created in the image of God, so that also includes the necessity of “work”

- **How does knowing that God desires for us to work, affect your outlook on your profession or occupation?**
- We must not be lazy or slackers in our work
 - The Bible provides a considerable amount of wisdom for work, regarding what it is and its purpose.
 - The Bible makes it very clear that we are NOT to be lazy or slackers in our work regardless of what our profession may be.
 - Proverbs 24:30-34
 - Proverbs 26:19
 - “The one who works his land will have plenty of food, but whoever chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty.”
 - Proverbs 20:4
 - “The slacker does not plow during planting season, at harvest time he looks, and there is nothing.”
 - The common theme among these verses is that the one who is not wise and does not work will have poverty.
 - In all of these verses the end result is poverty.
 - It’s not you need to work so you can be filthy rich and have wealth beyond measure, it’s you need to work so you are not poor.
 - The one who does not work will not have income, food, shelter or clothes.
 - The one who does not work will not be able to provide for their family or help others in need.
 - God does NOT want us to live in poverty.
 - This truth screams from these verses, that God does not enjoy us living in poverty. This is not something He desires for us so He give us several teachings in Scripture telling us how important it is.
 - The one who CHOOSES to not work and to be a slacker should not even eat according to Scripture.
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11
 - “In fact, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: “if anyone isn’t willing to work, he should not eat.” For we hear that there are some among you who walk irresponsibly, not working at all, but interfering with the work of others.”
 - **This of course is for one who CAN work and CHOOSES not to, not one who is incapable of doing so.**
 - Scripture tells us that God desires for all of His children to work, to contribute. Not to be freeloaders who have no cares in the world.
 - The slacker will crave for food, clothing and shelter but he will not have it, however the one who is diligent and is a hard worker will be fully satisfied.
 - Scripture also gives us a simple comparison between one who is a slacker and one who is a hard worker.
 - Proverbs 13:4
 - “The slacker craves yet has nothing, but the diligent is fully satisfied.”
 - Ironically the slacker actually thinks they are wise!?
 - Proverbs 26:16
 - “In his own eyes, a slacker is wiser than seven men who can answer sensibly”
 - The hardworking trait of a Christian

- Being a hard worker is actually a trait that that is and should be present in all Christians.
 - Regardless if the world believes in what we believe about God, we should be known as good and hard workers.
 - A secular employer should see Christians as people they would want to hire regardless of their beliefs.
- **When you “work hard” either in your profession or in service to someone else, how do you feel afterwards?**
- **What other benefits are there for the Christian and to others in the world, when we apply God’s principle of “hard work” to all aspects of our lives?**
- We must be honest workers
 - Not only are we to be hard workers but we must be honest.
 - If we apply God’s wisdom of being hard workers, but yet we are dishonest then we are still disobeying God.
 - Christians must apply the teachings and the truths of Scripture in all that we do, we MUST be honest.
 - Proverbs 16:11
 - “A just balance and scales are the LORD’s; all the weights in the bag are his work.”
 - Dishonesty, lying and cheating are traits of Satan and our sinful nature. Christians MUST resist the temptations to sin in our work.
- We must keep our priorities straight.
 - As hard working Christians we must also have our priorities in order in our work and how we apply the fruits of our labor.
 - Proverbs 24:27
 - “Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.”
 - Now weather this verse refers to “house” has a physical structure or the building of a family is unclear.
 - But what is clear is that we must prioritize our work and the fruits of our labor, specifically here for food.
 - Proverbs 27:23-27
 - This passage puts emphasis on food and clothing over physical items of value.
 - Your money and possessions once gone are gone, however in this example of flocks we see that they have the ability to keep producing.
 - They provide food, milk and clothing.
 - Christians must prioritize our work and how we use the fruits of our labor.
 - We must be sure that we are focusing on what is important like food, shelter and clothing and taking care of our families before we do other things.
 - 1 Timothy 5:8
 - “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
 - God care deeply about how we take care of our family.
 - **In what ways can we improperly prioritize our work and the fruit of our labor?**
- We are called to use the fruit of our labor to help others.
 - Not only does God want us to be hard workers so that we will not be in poverty, to have food to eat and to take care of our families. God desires that we use the fruit of our labor to help others.
 - “Luke 12:48b

“Much will be required of everyone who has been given much. And even more will be expected of the one who has been entrusted with more.”

- God expects us to use the fruit of our labor that He has blessed us with to be a blessing for others.
- This is not possible if we ourselves are lazy and have no fruit.
 - We may have the desire to help others, but if we ourselves are on the street and have no resources due to our own choices, then we cannot help.
- There is a great blessing for those who truly give and help others from their hearts out of love and compassion.
 - To freely give to others the fruit of our labor is a blessing to the receiver.
 - God uses us to distribute His blessings to others which can come as a result of our hard work.
 - God also makes it clear that the one who gives of their fruit to others will be blessed.
 - Acts 20:35
 - “In every way I’ve shown you that by laboring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, ‘it is more blessed to give than to receive.’”
 - Proverbs 22:9
 - “A generous person will be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.”
 - Proverbs 19:17
 - “Kindness to the poor is a loan to the LORD, and He will give a reward to the lender”
 - There are great blessings from God to those who are obediently giving of their resources to help others.
 - God will bless us when we give to others the fruit of our hard work, because this is the example of what Christ has done for us.
 - Christ had done a great work for all Christians and He freely gave to us the fruit of His labor.
 - God expects Christians to do the same.
- The one who freely gives will gain more than the one who holds on to his fruits.
 - Scriptures also tells us that the one who freely gives to help others will gain more than the one who disobeys God and keeps all of their fruit for themselves.
 - Proverbs 11:24-25
 - “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessings will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”
 - The one who disobeys God and trusts in their possessions will fall.
 - Proverbs 11:28
 - “Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.”
 - God will continue to bless the one who gives freely to help others because it shows that our heart desires to show love and compassion to others.
- **Can you describe how you felt when you have truly given or helped others out of love and compassion?**
- **How does that feeling compare with hording or being stingy with your possessions?**