

Work

But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”
(John 5:17)

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Work

Working is part of God's eternal purpose

There are many opinions about working. Some dislike it. They even say that work is a curse that came with sin. On the other hand, there are those who believe that work is everything in life. Devote his life to work and make money. For a disciple the job is not one nor the other thing.

A person who seeks first the wealth and material prosperity cannot please God. But when we observe certain customs and practices in the lives of the brothers, we realize that the problem is the opposite. There is a certain slowness and accommodation in the professional area. Sometimes, there are even negligence and laziness.

Working is part
of God's
purpose for
man on earth.

Some are not lazy but have a wrong view, believing that this area is not important. They think that efforts in search of professional and financial improvement are illicit and a sign of materialism. We find the case of a disciple who has advised a young brother to study more, because the priority of his life was to make disciples. We know that the motivation of this discipler was good, but it is a misapplication of Matthew 6:33. The correct professional development does not disturb the service of God, on the contrary, it is part of this service. If one have his professional and financial area properly established, he might dedicate himself even better to the Lord during his life.

For a disciple to work is a gift from God. It's a blessing. To be a good disciple is necessary to be a good worker. The scriptures give us clear and encouraging teaching on the dignity of working.

Work is an order from the period of the creation

Then the Lord God took ^{to}the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. (Gen 2:15)

The work did not emerge as a curse due to sin. Before Adam's fall, he had a task: to cultivate and keep the Garden of Eden. The man should work the soil. (Gen 2:5). God has not left man jobless in the Garden of Eden. What happened after sinned, is that the earth was cursed, making man's work laborious, and demanding his effort and sweat to get his daily bread.

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." (Gen 3:17-19)

Even if man did not sin, he would always work during his lifetime. This is part of God's purpose for man.

Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. (Psa 104:23)

God teaches us to work with His own example, for He is the first worker in history. (Gen 2:1-3)

But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." (Joh 5:17)

The ruin of complacency and laziness

Indolence and laziness are sins. God reproves them. Indolence defiles and destroys man. Indolence is often manifested in a form of complacency before life.

There are complacent and lazy brothers, who do not even realize that they are so. Often this behavior is a habit in life. It is a mindset received from the ancestors. Their grandparents and parents were so and so they are. Complacency is a form of laziness. You know that someone is complacent by his own home: clogged sink, broken door, light that does not turn on, objects scattered around the house and lack of hygiene. These things would be worked out without money. But they are in disarray because of complacency. These things are a portrait of the inner attitude of the person. Sometimes we get distracted and forget to take care of this matter in the lives of the disciples.

Paul severely rebukes the lazy ones. Refers to indolence as "disorderly life," and determines how they should be treated non-workers:

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread ^{at}free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you

should follow us. For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. (2Th 3:7-10)

Some are lazy because they want to. Others are lazy for lack of guidance.

One day, a needy, but strong and healthy person, passed in front of the house of a disciple and asked for "one dollar". The disciple had bought a big bucket of gravel. And it was in front of the house. The disciple said to him, "Look, I will not give you one dollar, I'll give you twenty dollars, if you bring this gravel inside". The needy thanked, and left. He wanted the money without having to work for it. Certainly thought: "I'll ask someone else and get the money without have to work." This is a false needy. He is in need because he is lazy.

A lazy person impoverishes and become a needy. The Bible severely rebuke:

How long will you [a]slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep— so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man. (Pro 6:9-11)

He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. (Pro 10:4)

The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich. (Pro 13:4)

Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger. (Pro 19:15)

There is an idea in the world that if someone can earn money without having to work, its better. Not realizing that gain without work damages man's character. Working, even for "free", it is beneficial. The work is good for man, teaches and makes him diligent, capable and responsible. The work prepares man to serve God. The one who is lazy, is useless to God.

Wealth *gained by dishonesty* will be diminished, but he who gathers by labor will increase. (Pro 13:11)

A certain farmer was unsatisfied with his reapers. They gathered only 50 sisal bundles per day. He needed a faster harvesting. So he decided to make the following proposal to them: "I will pay you the full daily payment when you have finished harvesting 50 bundles per day. But I will pay you twice as much if you harvest 75 bundles per day". In the next day, the reapers have

reaped the 50 bundles until three o'clock in the afternoon, they took their payments and left at once. Rather than seek to prosper, raking their earnings daily to get the most of it. They were defeated by laziness. This is a poor mindset.



These are cases of people who do not work because they do not want. But there are also those who are complacent for lack of guidance. They do not know what to do to get out of such situation. For example: there are unemployed people who stay at home waiting for a friend to call them or give them a job. They rely on promises of jobs that never happen. This is complacency. If someone is unemployed, yet is not without work. His job is to look for work every day, until he finds.

One brother was unemployed and penniless. When his need got worse, he was asking for help to one of the pastors. This pastor, discerning the brother's problem, said: "Dear brother, we will give you the help that you asked, but first, you will go through this entire street, visiting all businesses and offices, offering them your work. At the end of this task, return here that we will help you". That brother was faithful and obedient, and God blessed him. Not even had walked 200 meters on the street and had got himself a job.

If someone is unemployed should go out every day looking for work. While not finding it, should look for a temporary "gig" or small jobs for the brothers. If you do not know how to do it, you should ask for guidance in the church. He just cannot stay idle at home throughout the day.

God wants to bless his children. But He cannot bless a slack hand.

For that reason, we should observe a principle when assisting the ones in need: We should not help someone without compel him to work. We saw above Paul saying "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (2Th 3:10). No brother should be eating without working. To Timothy, he directs that widows helped by the church should be truthfully widows, aged over sixty years and diligently lived in the practice of every good work (1Ti 5:3-10). They are women who have always been working, but now, because of their age, they are no longer able to work well for their own maintenance. The one in need to be helped can not be idle. Should get to work.

A boy in need, from another town, was seeking for help from a brother to buy a bus ticket to go back home. The brother, had compassion towards him and took him to his house and told him: "I'll help you and give you the bus ticket. I will give you food and by the time of the departure, I will take

God cannot bless the complacent and lazy.

you to the bus station. But first, I need you to do me a favor. These shingles that I have here, I need you to put them in another place". The boy swiftly accepted. He worked the whole day and earned his food. At night he was taken to the bus station to catch his bus. However, once they have reached the bus station, they discovered that he had missed the bus that night. The brother then said to the boy: "No problem. I will take you back to my house, I will give you food and accommodation and bring you back to the bus station tomorrow. Promptly the boy, was grateful. The next day his brother told him "Could you please take these shingles, that you have moved yesterday and bring them back to where they were in the first place?". The guy gladly did it. The brother knew that helping him without any effort would be a bad lesson for that guy.

Any work is good

No work should be considered humiliating. The Eternal Word took the form of a servant, and once incarnated, served men in a simple and honorable profession: carpenter. (Mar 6:3). In God's kingdom there is no room for pride of any kind. (Luk 22:24-27; Joh 13:1-17).

We must learn to be faithful in small things. Many fail because they refuse to perform small tasks. Feeling themselves diminished. We must remember that readiness and dedication with which we perform a small task, recommend us to greater ones.

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' (Mat 25:21)

When someone is unemployed, should not refuse any work, unless they are dishonest. It is not right to refuse to work when we are living at the expense of others. If we already have a job, we could look for a better one. But if we are idle, we should be ready to do any work, as hard as it can be, rather than stay at home unemployed. He who does not accept a job because it seems humiliating, reveals a very prideful heart.

In all labor there is profit, but idle chatter *leads* only to poverty.
(Pro 14:23)

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your mights... (Ecc 9:10)

Similarly, we should not leave a job until find another one. To leave a job, because it's hard or because we do not like it, without having another job at hand, its inconsequential and will make us suffer in need.

Work gives us resources to serve

It is licit to work to meet our own needs, but God also wants us to work to be able to help others.

That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing. (1Th 4:11-12)

... but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. (Eph 4:28)

I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Act 20:35)

The Lord commands to the workers

- a) To work as doing it to the Lord. Not serving to the eye

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. (Eph 6:5-8)

- b) Obey to all the bosses, even the bad ones

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. (1Pe 2:18)

Quando nos tornamos empregados de alguém, assumimos um contrato de prestar um serviço a ele. Enquanto estamos trabalhando, devemos nos comportar corretamente como servos.

c) Honoring the bosses so that the name of God is not blasphemed

Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. (1Ti 6:1)

d) Do not exploit bosses who are brothers, on the contrary serve them

And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. (1Ti 6:2)

e) Excel in performing their work. They should be:

- Quick and efficient;
- Assiduous and punctual (not missing work);
- Responsible;
- Respectful and submissive;
- Endeavors to please.

The Lord commands to the bosses

- a) Do not use threats (Eph 6:9);
- b) To be fair knowing that he also has a Lord who judges him (Col 4:1);
- c) Pay decent wages and not delay payments (Deu 24:14-15; Lev 19:13) Withhold the salary of employees and use it to yourself is stealing;
- d) Not to exploit, for God judges it (Jam 5:4 , Job 31:13-15);
- e) Not evade taxes (Rom 13:7; Mat 22:21);
- f) Not set their hearts upon riches (1Ti 6:17-19).

Professional qualification

Do you see a man who [a]excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men. (Pro 22:29)

God honors those who look to be expert in their. Many brothers have difficulties in maintaining their homes for lacking professional qualification. The better qualified, the better is the salary. In professional life each one worth what he knows.

The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor. (Pro 12:24)

Therefore, we advise all brothers that diligently seek professional qualification. All youngsters should study. Those who can, should do graduation. Take opportunities to learn some trade. Everyone should plan well their professional development. Learn everything they can about their profession. Should seek to be good at what they do.

Youngsters typically do not like to study. Some say: "I am not cut out for it, I am to work." This is a mistake. It is an excuse for not studying. Studying is a job. It is a work of the most demanding. Requires perseverance. Parents and disciple should not allow young people to stop studying. If they need to work to help support the house, should continue their studies at night, even with great effort, and even tears. Should know that a few years of suffering will produce many years of abundance.

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Psa 126:5-6)

In our professional life, we must seek to learn everything we can. Our bosses will put at our disposal many opportunities that we must seize. A young man in his early career, should not be worried about the salary figure. Should take every opportunity to learn his profession. Our wages reflect how valuable we are. Therefore, our attention and effort must be directed to exploit every opportunity to learn and eventually, we will have better wages.