



Work is good

Work is part of God's created order, part of his design for our lives. Therefore, work itself is good. There is dignity in all honest occupations, manual or mental.

Work is hard

Work is not a result of the Fall but it has been affected by the Fall so that we associate it more with toil than joy.

Work is what we do not who we are

When we engage in creative activity, we are living out our identity as people created in the image of God but it is our relationship with the Lord that gives us our identity, not our work. If we derive our identity from our work, it will shape and control us. Work has great value but it mustn't become an end in itself. Eccl 2:4-11,18-23; Luke 12:16-21.

"It is not the fruit of our labours but the focus of our hearts that matters most to God."

Why work?

We work as unto the Lord, not to impress or please people, but so that it benefits others and honours God.

Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ. Col. 3:23-24

It is not about position, prestige or wealth. We shouldn't be comparing ourselves with others. What matters is the way in which we work and the audience for whom we work.

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man gloat in his wisdom, or the mighty man in his might, or the rich man in his riches. Let them boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the Lord who is just and righteous, whose love is unfailing, and that I delight in these things. I, the Lord, have spoken!" Jeremiah 9:23-24

Many go to work simply to provide for their families but the Bible's perspective is that God is the one who provides for all our needs. Our work is a means he uses to supply some of them.

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:19

Kingdom values

Work provides a context in which we can exhibit kingdom values and hope. We seek to glorify God by working hard and pursuing excellence in everything we do, whether others notice or not.

Whatever you do, you must do all for the glory of God. 1 Cor 10:31

Equally, employers are accountable to Christ for the way they treat employees. It shouldn't become a means of exploitation.

For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The wages you held back cry out against you. The cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. James 5:4

You slave owners must be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. Col 4:1

We can represent Jesus by building relationships, demonstrating character and working with care and integrity.

Integrity

Integrity is when our actions are aligned with our principles. The values we say we believe in must be the values we live by. We cannot compartmentalise our lives into personal and work spheres, with separate rules for each.

When we understand God's kingdom we realise there is no secular/spiritual divide. Secular work becomes spiritual when it is done to please God. Spiritual work becomes secular when it is done to impress and please people.

Balance

We are to work hard. Old and New Testaments reproach the lazy.

Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and be wise!

Proverbs 6:6

Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and wasting time meddling in other people's business. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we appeal to such people—no, we command them: Settle down and get to work. Earn your own living. 2 Thess 3:11-12

But if work becomes the source of our significance and security, we will be consumed by it and overwork. Therefore, there should be a rhythm between work and leisure so that we can enjoy periods of refreshment, renewal, and relationships. Work and rest are equally legitimate in God's economy. In fact, leisure can be a form of worship and an expression of contentment in the will of God for our lives. The biblical perspective of rest is not so much the absence of activity as the presence of God.

Then Jesus said, "Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest." There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. Mark 6:31 Ex 33:14; Matt 11:28-30;

After a time of worship engage with the teaching and the testimonies from Sunday. Invite each person to share how one of the above scriptures presents a particular challenge or encouragement. Ask people to talk about their own experiences, describing their work situation so that you can then pray for each person affirming them in their ministry in the world.