

Why Work?

By Bill Scheidler

I. **There are many misconceptions about work perpetuated by both the Church and the world.**

Misconception #1 – Our work life is secular and our church life is religious. One is natural the other is spiritual.

The truth is that our whole lives are spiritual and to be presented to God as a spiritual sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).

Misconception #2 – The clergy are the priests or ministers who are supported by the laity.

The truth is that all believers are priests and ministers and church leaders are given to equip them to fulfill their unique ministries.

Misconception #3 – All true and spiritual ministry happens through the programs of the church.

The truth is that the programs of the church are to equip us to do true ministry which takes place primarily outside of the context of the church.

Misconception #4 – The ministry of business people is their money that is given to the church to finance the programs of the church.

The truth is that God is interested in using the money of business people, but He is even more interested in them changing their world through their business.

Misconception #5 – Our practice of our religion is separate from our practice of business. We have our church life and we have our business life. They are separate circles. People can have one set of principles in their religious life and another for their business life.

The truth is that our lives are an integrated whole and we are Christians at all times no matter the context within which we find ourselves.

Misconception #6 – The call to “the ministry” or to preach the gospel is the greatest call in the world.

The truth is that this may be the highest calling for some, but only for those to whom God has issued that call. For everyone the greatest calling is the one to which the Lord has called them. To do anything less would be to accept the inferior.

II. There are many reasons why people work. Why work?

A. Wrong Reasons

There are many **wrong reasons** for working that will never bring us true fulfillment and purpose achievement. Some of these wrong reasons include:

1. Working to “make a living.”

This person’s motto is “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go.” This is a survival mentality that never sees life beyond meeting personal needs and desires. I work because I have to live, eat and pay the bills.

2. Working to rest.

This person’s bumper sticker reads, “The worst day fishing is better than the best day working.” For this person leisure is the goal. People are looking for the four day work week. For them the goal is to not work. That is why the first question lottery winners are asked is, “When will you quit your job?”

3. Working to accumulate wealth for luxurious living.

This is the person who is constantly building bigger barns. Their motto is, “The person who dies with the most toys wins.” The problem is that possessions do not satisfy when they are not goal related and what one has is never quite enough.

4. Working to secure the future.

For these people, retirement is the goal. It is amazing that we spend the bulk of our lives doing something just so that we do not have to do it anymore. Retirement is not all that it is promoted to be. Many people who have lived very productive and healthy lives get frustrated with retirement; they lose vision and, in some cases, die prematurely. People are living to much older ages now and they are capable of working much longer. But if your work has no significance or meaning then “Why work?”

5. Working to enhance social status.

This can be motivated by a desire to be important and powerful. These individuals seek to achieve “the top of the ladder” as if that in itself is the goal. If the reasons are wrong, they will not care who gets in their way on the other rungs of the ladder.

All of these reasons are basically selfish. These reasons minister to needs within us and to our egos.

B. Right Reasons

There are many **right reasons** for working that will bring personal fulfillment to the individual and, at the same time, glory to God.

1. There are GODWARD reasons for working.

These include the following:

- a. Working to serve God and cooperate with His purpose for my life** (Mt. 25:21).

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."

We want to receive God's commendation at the end of our life that we have done what He indeed wanted us to do.

- b. Working to bring glory to God and honor to His name** (I Pet. 4:11; I Cor. 10:31).

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. I Corinthians 10:31

- c. Working to fulfill the dominion mandate and extend the kingdom of God in the earth** (Gen. 1:26-28).

That which God created He gave to man to enhance. Our garden is that place or situation of life over which He has given us control. We all have a garden. What does that garden look like? We extend God's kingdom through diligence and a spirit of excellence in all that we do so that we can be a testimony for the God that we serve. Our business life when done to the glory of God will be a light and a witness to the world.

2. There are MANWARD reasons for working:

These include the following:

- a. Working to benefit mankind.**

In our work life we should see ourselves contributing something positive to the world in which we live. It should be a better place because we inhabited the planet. Not all work actually benefits mankind. You can be diligent and excellent in the making of cigarettes, but it will not be a benefit to mankind.

There is such a thing as “worthless work.” It is work that has no value to mankind. Some of these things might include: bartending, producing pornography, making useless products, etc.

To spend your life involved in such ventures is a waste of a life.

b. Working to bless others.

Not all work blesses others. When people receive the impact of that which you do, they should have been bettered as a result.

c. Working to meet human needs (Eph. 4:28; Acts 20:33-35).

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.
Ephesians 4:28

The reason that we work is to create a financial abundance so that we can extend God’s work and help meet the needs of others.

I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 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.’” Acts 20:33-35

3. There are SELFWARD reasons for working:

These include the following:

a. Working to accomplish the will of God for my life (Acts 20:24).

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus.

b. Working to become all that God has made it possible for me to become in Christ (Phil. 3:11-14). We want to apprehend that for which we have been apprehended.

c. Working to receive the reward from the Lord (I Pet. 5:4; II Tim. 4:6-8; I Cor. 9:24-27).

⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that

Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

II Timothy 4:6-8

When you have the right attitudes about work, it doesn't matter whether you actually have a job or are gainfully employed or not. You will still work with a sense of purpose to meet the needs of others, benefit mankind and glorify God with the use of your time.

When you do not have a job, you are either looking for work or volunteering your time to a righteous cause.

III. There are many examples of people who followed God's model for work.

A. Jesus and work (Heb. 10:7; Luke 2:49; John 1:18; 4:34; 5:17; 9:4; 17:4; 19:30; I John 3:5, 8)

Then I said, "Behold, I have come...to do Your will, O God." Hebrews 10:7

And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34

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

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. John 9:4

I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. John 17:4

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" John 19:30

Jesus had a specific work that the Father had designed for Him to do. He was the only one who could do it. He had to stay focused on His mission. His mission required discipline and sacrifice. His mission was:

- To do the will of God.
- To be a living demonstration of the Father to the world.
- To manifest the power of God.
- To destroy the works of the devil.
- To deal with sin in the workplace.

This mission is not unlike our mission. Jesus became a pattern for us to follow.

B. Paul and Work (I Th. 2:9-12; I Cor. 15:10)

For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

I Thessalonians 2:9-12

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. I Corinthians 15:10

Paul labored to give us an example.

C. Others

Joseph, Nehemiah, Job, Daniel. One thing these individuals had in common is that no sin was recorded against them. You mean you can work in “secular” areas and do it without sinning? ABSOLUTELY!

IV. In order to work for the right reasons we must get a vision for our work.

Confessions of a person with vision for his or her work:

“I am working for God in my business life.”

“God is going to use me in my business life to extend His kingdom.”

“I am going to have the opportunity to touch the lives of others in a significant way through the work that I do.”

“The world is going to be a better place because I have touched it by the grace of God.”

“God is going to open doors for me that no one else (including the pastor) could walk through.”