

Thank God It's Monday

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Have you ever experienced the Monday blues? It's that anxious, sinking feeling you wake up with at the start of the week, knowing the pressures of work or class are ready to pounce on you, especially after a restful weekend. We sometimes believe that our lot in life is to put up with the futility of the 9 to 5 grind. But as we examine Scripture, we see that the biblical concept of work is far removed from this kind of talk.

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In the Beginning

Right from the beginning, God created the first man and put him "in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Yes, you read that correctly. God created Adam to work. As we will see, work was not a punishment from the Lord, but rather part of what it fundamentally means to be human, made in God's image. In fact, Adam and Eve's job description was to raise families and to subdue the earth (Genesis 1:27-28). This kind of work included managing and creatively developing the earth's resources given to them. They had to invent tools, create technologies, build homes and a civilisation. They were not left to sleep, relax, watch the animals and feel bored all day!

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So, from the outset, work was to be a good and holy activity in and of itself. The Lord Himself

modelled work (and rest) by working for six days on creating the world and resting on the seventh. I love that God even modelled job satisfaction for us by looking back on what He had made, evaluating its quality and seeing “that it was good” (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 25, 31). However, the curse of the fall in Genesis 3 taints all this. Sin means that often we find more frustration than fulfilment in work.

Our sinful condition means we have to deal with either our own laziness or our tendency to overwork. We have sinful bosses, difficult kids (for full time mothers), sinful clients and corrupt or inept systems. Some people graft in soul-destroying work cultures that do not value creativity or them as individuals. But even with all these realities, when we are made new in Christ, God is able to restore His original intention: that work can be meaningful and used to glorify God and make a difference in this world.

Pleasing God in Our Work

I believe that God wants His children to find a measure of fulfilment in their jobs. It is interesting to see how the Apostle Paul instructs, not only dealing with issues related to prayer, spiritual gifts, marriage, and church leadership, but also to the workplace. Since Jesus is Lord of all, then all our lives (not just the ‘spiritual parts’ or church meetings) are under Jesus’ authority. We are able to please God in all things now (with the obvious exception of when we sin). If we are able to glorify God in such mundane things as eating and drinking (1 Corinthians 10:31), how much more in working?

We see Paul writing about the workplace in Colossians 3:23, instructing masters and slaves—in our context: bosses and employees. He says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men”. Just as slaves had to do all kinds of work they didn’t want to, he encouraged them to have the attitude of working unto the Lord. This is profound. For those of us working in hostile or difficult environments, whatever job you find yourself in, you can work wholeheartedly as to the Lord. Why? Because God sees what you do, and ultimately Jesus is your Boss, whose very presence is with you. Verse 24 explains that you will receive a reward from the Lord, since you “are serving the Lord Christ”. The implication, then, is that work itself is a good and holy activity in Christ, which can glorify God.

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In my personal experience (when I was a High School teacher), often the best witness is when your unbelieving colleagues see how you conduct yourself with integrity and joy. Our Gospel message is then made attractive by our attitude towards our work. Interestingly, this is what the Reformers were able to restore: the dignity of work that glorifies God. The term ‘Protestant work ethic’ comes from the Reformation. To press this thought further, consider how in Jesus’ short life on earth, He spent the large majority of it doing mundane work—manual labour (Mark 6:3). He demonstrated to us the dignity of work while glorifying the Father and pleasing Him in all He did. (1)

When Work Replaces Church

Unfortunately, there has been a swing to the other extreme when it comes to the workplace. Some Christians have elevated the workplace so highly that it has replaced the church. If work can glorify

God, then some have taught that you can find your calling in the marketplace. This results in believers putting all their energy into work and neglecting the body of Christ. While the Bible elevates work, it also teaches us that we should all be devoted to God's church. Work is holy, but it shouldn't be a substitute for serving in the body of Christ. The only organisation Jesus is ultimately building on the earth is the Church (Matthew 16:18), which reflects His wisdom and glory like no other (Ephesians 3:10). This means the posture of every believer is to be available to play their part in the local church. While work might take you out of church life from time to time, it should never replace or overshadow the privilege of ordering our lives around God's people.

Empowering Grace

May God give us His empowering grace to help us to overcome the work blues. In Christ, He is able to restore to us the joy of work. As Solomon wrote, *"So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot."* (Ecclesiastes 3:22). Perhaps you have realised that you have a low view of work and haven't believed that it has spiritual value to you or the Lord. In that case, repent and ask God to renew your mind. Wouldn't it be something if we woke up at the beginning of the week saying, "Thank God it's Monday!" What a witness for Christ it would be if our unbelieving colleagues and friends got to see us living from this place.

(1) This does not mean that every kind of job is acceptable to the Lord. We should not do work that is immoral or illegal. Luke Hulley's article [Jobs Which Christians Should Not Do](#) explains this idea in more detail.