

Beginnings 3 - In the Beginning Was Work

So far we have considered God's order in creation and the man created in the image of God in Genesis. God's order is going to be restored and God's perfect image in man will be restored. It will be in the end of the world that God's order in creation will be restored, but God has already begun the work of the restoration of His image in man. When a person turns to God, acknowledges their sinful nature, admits to his inability to change himself, and then pleads¹ the blood of Christ as the payment for the judgment he deserves, it is in that moment that the restoration of the image of God in man begins to be restored. The image of God will be completely restored in man in the resurrection when we are made like Christ in His resurrection.

Before we move on to the fall of man, there is one more thing about the creation to consider. Being in the image of God we are not only created for fellowship. We were also created for work. If you get this aspect in the purpose of man's creation, you will also get a major solution to a lot of the misery that people go through. This is not just a curious side note in the creation of man, it is a key element.

1. Created to work.

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

To have dominion over the animals and all the earth means to have a responsibility for God's creation on earth. To have dominion means that we have a stewardship of God's creation. His creation was put in our charge to maintain. We next see this in chapter 2.

Gen 2:5,8,15 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground.

...

8And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

¹When a person *pleads* guilty or innocent means that they are going to make an argument for their innocence or guilt. One can also *plead* the Fifth, or argue that they cannot answer questions due to their Fifth Amendments possibly being violated. To *plead* the blood of Christ means to argue that their judgment of Hell is satisfied, or taken care of, by the blood of the sacrifice that Christ made for their sin.

...

15And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

In chapter 1 we see that man is to have dominion and in chapter 2 we get a description of what that looks like. There was no man to till the ground so God created Adam and gave him a garden to dress and keep it.

Work was not only part of God's *good* creation, it is also a part of God's Millennial Kingdom.

Luke 19:11-19 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

15And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

1Cor 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Rev 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

All of these passages speak of our

work in a righteous dominion over the earth. Man was given work in the *creation* to have dominion over all the earth and in the *resurrection* man *will* have dominion over all the earth.

2. Work is a blessing.

- Work is not part of the curse, work is a gift of God.

Some people who don't know the Bible well enough might think that work is part of the curse. It is not that we are cursed *with* work since the fall, but that only our work is cursed: our labors will be stressful, tedious, and painful.

Gen 3:17-19 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

18Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

It's not just that there is a blessing that comes from the *fruit* of our labors, the work *itself* is a blessing. It is God's gift.

- Work does not bring salvation.

We need to make sure that we quickly point out that although work is good...it has its proper place. One thing that work does *not* do is bring salvation.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Rom 4:4-5 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

John 6:28-29 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Man was not placed in the garden because it was the reward or payment *for* his work. Neither do we get *salvation* as a reward or payment for our work. We get work as a gift *because* we are saved.

- Work is a blessed responsibility.

Work was not just before the Fall and *in* the Millennium. We are called to work now:

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

Mike Rowe, famous for his shows about work, is also famous for his Work Ethic Scholarship program. One of the requirements is to affirm the "The S.W.E.A.T. Pledge." S.W.E.A.T. is an acronym for Skill & Work Ethic Aren't Taboo. As you read the pledge, you get a strong sense that he thinks work should be considered a *blessed* responsibility.

1. I believe that I have won the greatest lottery of all time. I am alive. I walk the Earth. I live in America. Above all things, I am grateful.

2. I believe that I am entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Nothing more. I also understand that "happiness" and the "pursuit of happiness" are not the same thing.

3. I believe there is no such thing as a "bad job." I believe that all jobs are opportunities, and it's up to me to make the best of them.

4. I do not "follow my passion." I bring it with me. I believe that any job can be done with passion and enthusiasm.

...

7. I believe the best way to distinguish myself at work is to show up early, stay late, and cheerfully volunteer for every [lousy] task there is.

8. I believe the most annoying sounds in the world are whining and complaining. I will never make them. If I am unhappy in my work, I will either find a new job, or find a way to be happy.

9. I believe that my education is my responsibility, and absolutely critical to my success. I am resolved to learn as much as I can from whatever source is available to me...

10. I believe that I am a product of my choices – not my circumstances. I will never blame anyone for my shortcomings or

the challenges I face...

11. I understand the world is not fair, and I'm OK with that. I do not resent the success of others.

12. I believe that all people are created equal. I also believe that all people make choices. Some choose to be lazy. Some choose to sleep in. I choose to work...

On my honor, I hereby affirm the above statements to be an accurate summation of my personal worldview. I promise to live by them.²

This pledge is generally consistent with Scripture, but the Bible goes beyond with the added dimension of doing all things ultimately for the Lord.

Col 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Col 3:22-23 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Mark 12:30-31 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.

31And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

2Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We should get the understanding that it is sin if we do not work. Also, everyone *can* work.

3. Work is blessed.

- Even though you might think you are not reaping, you are.

Gal 6:9-10 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

1Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast,

²<https://www.mikeroweworks.org/sweat/>

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

- Patience in work is blessed.

Jas 1:9-12 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

The crown of life is the reward we get for our work as we *patiently* endure. We grow by it ourselves.

Jas 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

This is one of the problems with a steady diet of video games. They are designed for a quick and immediate reward. The game is not going well? Reboot, restart, reload. The chemicals released into the brain are addicting. "The brain includes several distinct dopamine pathways, one of which plays a major role in the motivational component of reward-motivated behavior. The anticipation of most types of rewards increases the level of dopamine in the brain."³ Teens put themselves into the pathway of temptation and addiction; if not in gaming itself, the brain is trained in such a way to make it susceptible to drugs. Work has a way of regulating our sense of rewards and delaying gratification, giving us time to learn and reinforce our lessons. Think about your own professions. If you are older and have been at a certain profession for a great length of time, think of the satisfaction you have in what you know. Think, also, of how precious the newcomers are. It doesn't have to be just a profession...just being older has exposed you to so much. God's blessings come in time with maturity to be able to appreciate them.

Prov 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but *when*

³<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dopamine>

the desire cometh, *it is* a tree of life. **[Gratification deferred is stressful, people want the immediate reward]**

Prov 13:19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but *it is* abomination to fools to depart from evil.

It is not desire *fulfilled* that is sweet; it is desire *accomplished* – desire that is achieved through work. Fools view things differently. They can't be satisfied through accomplishment. They are so focused on the evil fulfilling of their lusts.

- There is satisfaction in work.

Eccl 5:12,18 The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

18Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for *it is* his portion.

- There is satisfaction in what we produce.

Proverbs 31 is a wonderful passage about a virtuous woman. I am only going to mention the fruit of the woman's labors, but there is so much more including her spirituality, work ethic, and industry.

Prov 31:10-31 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies.

11The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13She seeketh wool, and flax, and **worketh willingly** with her hands.

14She is like the merchants' ships; **she bringeth her food from afar.**

15She riseth also while it is yet night, and **giveth meat to her household**, and a portion to her maidens.

16She considereth a field, and buyeth it [**she is into real estate**]: with the fruit of her hands **she planteth a vineyard.**

17She girdeth her loins with strength, and **strengtheneth her arms.**

18She perceiveth that her **merchandise is good**: her candle goeth not out by night.

19She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

21She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for **all her household are clothed with scarlet.**

22She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; **her clothing is silk and purple.**

23Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

24She maketh fine linen, and selleth *it*; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

25Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.

27She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

29Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

30Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

31Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

- Much trouble would be avoided if we work.

A lot of problems will be solved if our focus is on the work that God has given us to do. If we are busy at work there will be a lot less room for sin and temptation. For example, we know that we have to be careful when it comes to being self-centered and envious. If we are paying attention to what we are supposed to do and walking with God then there won't be room for jealousy.

John 21:20-22 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?

22Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

I don't think Peter was at all envious of what John was going to get to do. I *do* think that Jesus was helping Peter *avoid* the problem of envy. He was telling Peter to focus on *his* work. If we appreciate and are satisfied in our labors then there won't be room for envy. This is especially important when it comes to the person in front of you who offends you.

People get caught in the trap of seeking to punish or, worse, get even with someone. We need to realize that that person is the one in that moment who is your assignment from God to help him come a little further into the kingdom.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Every human problem is a challenge to creativity to turn people to God and righteousness. If you are spiritual enough to see someone's fault, then you are spiritual enough to encourage him to do right. Don't fall into, at the least, the temptation of focusing on self and what you deserve. Remember what we actually *deserve*? Death in Hell. Anything beyond getting out of Hell is gravy.

Luke 17:7-10 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Now, this only speaks of what we should *expect* for our service. God *is* going to commend us, but we should not think it a matter of what God *owes* us. The opportunity to get to work should be blessing enough.

2Thess 3:10-12 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Phil 2:2-3 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

3*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

But there are a host of other problems that will be avoided as well. We can glean this from the book of Proverbs. Proverbs has a number of verses about the *profit* from our labors, but there are specific verses that speak of avoiding problems.

Prov 10:5 He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son: *but* he that sleepeth in harvest *is* a son that causeth shame. **[You can avoid shame]**

Prov 10:16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin. **[You will find true life]**

Prov 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain *persons is* void of understanding. **[You will avoid vanity]**

Prov 13:2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of *his* mouth: but the soul of the transgressors *shall eat* violence. **[You will avoid violence]**

[Other verses to be read on your own]

Prov 13:23 Much food *is in* the tillage of the poor: but there is *that is* destroyed for want of judgment.

Prov 15:19 The way of the slothful *man is* as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous *is* made plain.

Prov 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

Prov 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

Prov 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean *men*.

Prov 24:27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

Prov 24:30-34 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the

stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, *and* considered *it* well: I looked upon *it*, *and* received instruction.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come *as* one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

There is significant disruption to one's sense of identity, purpose, and mental health in retiring to a rocker and a porch...and *also* for those who *retreat* from work.

Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

Only One Life, By Missionary to China, C.T. Studd

Two little lines I Christ will last.
heard one day,
Traveling along life's
busy way;
Bringing conviction
to my heart,
And from my mind
would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

Only one life, yes
only one,
Soon will its fleeting
hours be done;
Then, in 'that day'
my Lord to meet,
And stand before His
Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

Only one life, the
still small voice,
Gently pleads for a
better choice
Bidding me selfish
aims to leave,
And to God's holy
will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

Only one life, a few
brief years,
Each with its
burdens, hopes, and
fears;
Each with its clays I
must fulfill,
living for self or in
His will;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for

When this bright
world would tempt
me sore,
When Satan would a
victory score;
When self would
seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord
with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

Give me Father, a
purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy
word to keep;
Faithful and true
what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my
daily life;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

Oh let my love with
fervor burn,
And from the world
now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and
Thee alone,
Bringing Thee
pleasure on Thy
throne;
Only one life, 'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

Only one life, yes
only one,
Now let me say,"Thy
will be done";
And when at last I'll
hear the call,
I know I'll say "twas
worth it all";
Only one life,'twill
soon be past,
Only what's done for
Christ will last.

1. Created to work. Gen 1:26, 2:5,8,15, Luke 19:11-19, 1Cor 6:3, Rev 2:26, 20:6
2. Work is a blessing. Gen 3:17-19, Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Rom 4:4-5, John 6:28-29, Eph 2:10, Col 3:17, 3:22-23, Mark 12:30-31, 2Tim 2:15
3. Work is blessed. Gal 6:9-10, 1Cor 15:58, Jas 1:9-12, 1:2-4, Prov 13:12, 13:19, Eccl 5:12,18, Prov 31:10-31, John 21:20-22, Gal 6:1, Luke 17:7-10, 2Thess 3:10-12, Phil 2:2-3, Prov 10:5,16, 12:11, 13:2, 13:23, 15:19, 18:9, 21:25, 22:29, 24:27, 24:30-34, Eccl 12:13