

# A Missional Life

“Work (school) as MISSION” (Colossians 3:22-25)

**The MISSION of the WELL:** Leading ALL GENERATIONS to love God, follow Jesus, and model His mission to transform all peoples and nations (w/ the gospel) =the work God invites each of us into

\*This mission is not just a church thing...if God has called you *HERE*, we see it as a mission for this life (*Missional life*)! -Am I on Mission with Christ in all areas of my life? (work-sch/live/play/rest?)

**A Theology of work** (860 Bible verses about work) Work is God’s gift to each of us to pursue God’s presence and His purpose in all we do in this life. -Work is God’s **IDEA**. *Work* glorifies Him!

A traveler once came upon three stonecutters. He asked the first man, "What are you doing?"

The man replied, "I'm cutting rocks." He asked the second man, "What are you doing?"

The second replied, "I'm earning a living." Then he asked the third. The man looked up with a smile and said, "**I'm building a cathedral.**" All three were doing the same task. One saw rocks. One saw a paycheck. One saw purpose. **The difference was vision** =how they understood their purpose

The Bible teaches that every Christian can live like the third stonecutter. Whether mother, teacher, pilot, mechanic, plumber, engineer, businessman, nurse, farmer, retiree, **student**, or pastor—**our work is part of God's eternal purpose.** *God uses work to grow us & bless others*

-We are each called to **submit** unto the Lord and His purpose for our life! = A Missional Life!!

\*In the three Institutions God created (**Marriage/Home; Church; Community/Government**), **submission to authority is part of God’s order & purpose for our lives. = All of us submit**

**Colossians 3:22-25** (Children unto parents; Wives submit to Husbands; Husbands unto Christ;) *Just as Christ submitted to the Father (1 Cor. 11) – There is an **order** to God’s plan (Authority and **Headship** is part of God’s plan – for you and for me! Work (bosses/supervisors) part of that:*

*"<sup>22</sup>Slaves, obey those who are your human masters in everything, not with eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, **as for the Lord and not for people,**<sup>24</sup> knowing that *it is* from the Lord *that* you will receive the reward of the inheritance. *It is* the Lord Christ whom you serve <sup>25</sup> For the one who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality." Work as part of our Missional Life matters to God. *How we work & for whom; How we impact those in work**

-Work (meaningful work) was always God’s plan for humans to be **productive** on this earth.

-Headship implies **authority**; we are to submit to authority in our life and work.

-Regardless who we work for, we *ultimately* **work** for God & answer to God for our ‘work’ good/ba

-Work is a means of **worship**; in ALL we do we are to glorify God \*(1 Cor. 10:31)

-God who is the Gift-giver & rewarder of **faithfulness**. He gives spiritual bonuses to His children

\*No matter where you work (no job is insignificant in God’s eyes; **no task too small to be faithful**)

*<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, **as for the Lord and not for people,**<sup>24</sup> knowing that *it is* from the Lord *that* you will receive the reward of the inheritance. *It is the Lord Christ whom you serve*<sup>25</sup> For the one who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality*

### 1. Work was God's Idea before sin entered onto the scene:

-Genesis 1:28 "God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth'"

-Gen. 2:15 "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it & *keep it* [subdue it; govern it; rule it; subjugate it; have dominion over]"

**Notice:** Adam had a job before he had a wife. Before sin entered the world. Before the Fall.

Before the curse was put on the land. = **Work is not a consequence of sin.** ☺

Work existed in paradise. The curse did not create work, it just made it more difficult.

### 2. God Himself models work for us; He is a Worker & creator & employs creativity in His work

Genesis 1 repeatedly says: "And God made..." "God created..." "God saw..." "God declared it good"

God is portrayed as working. Then He rests Not because He was tired, But because His work was complete! Created in God's image, we are designed to create, build, organize, cultivate, manage, invent, serve, steward, and enjoy.

### 3. Work is a reflection of God's character.

When a carpenter builds, a teacher instructs, a nurse heals, an engineer designs, or a mother nurtures, they reflect something of God's creative and sustaining work. It is important bc it affects people (& ultimately we are in the People Business); it is important bc all work is to be done for God's glory and should be worship in itself. **Our work is to be worship. Even on assembly line???** YES. Even working at CFA? Yes, & it's My Pleasure; Even raising kids...esp. so!!

-John 14:12 "Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I am going to the Father." Greater in power? NO! Greater in scope and extent. =Right HERE in DFW!! **Our work is missional work in the workplace!!!**

-Eph. 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**" Spiritual work & vocational work!!

When children imitate their father, they reveal whose image they bear. Likewise, every legitimate vocation reflects the image of our Creator. **The farmer echoes God's provision. The artist echoes God's creativity. The judge echoes God's justice. The builder echoes God's craftsmanship. Work is worship when done unto God!** We were created for WORSHIP!

-Our work becomes worship when it is purposed for God & done in His power, for His glory!!

### 4. Sin cursed work, but it did not destroy it's purpose. Genesis 3:17-19 After Adam's rebellion: "Cursed is the ground because of you..." Now work produces: frustration, sweat, difficulty, disappointment, exhaustion and at times suffering. **Work became harder, but not meaningless.**

**Every Worker Knows Genesis 3** The computer crashes. The tractor breaks. The project fails. The customer complains. The deal collapses. The employee quits. The budget falls short. The sermon stinks. This is Genesis 3 just showing up on your Monday morning.

Have you ever spent hours fixing something only to discover another problem? You pull one weed and five more appear. That is life east of Eden. Work remains good. But now it is difficult.

### 5. Work is a means of providing for our family and loving our neighbor. Both are commands of God. **This is living missionally at its finest!** \*\*Providing (giving) is Loving =obedience!

-1 Tim. 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

-Eph. 4:28 "he one who steals must no longer steal; but rather he must labor, producing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with the one who has need."

**Our own work is Not just to provide for ourselves, our family -but those in NEED.** (Prov. 19:17; 1 Tim. 6:18-19) -As you give faithfully to the local church, **WE support min. for NEED!!!**

**-God gives our work purpose;** He gives meaning to your productivity for His glory! Our work is a means of **ministry** to ourselves, our family, and to others! (...to the least of these) Your work matters. It matters to God. To your family. To your local church. **We need you to tithe!=support**

**Martin Luther's Insight** 'God feeds people through farmers. God heals people through doctors. God protects people through police officers. God teaches people through educators. God cares for children through parents.' God blesses people through pastors. The baker feeds families. The mechanic keeps people safe, machines working, & planes flying. The truck driver keeps shelves stocked. The nurse comforts suffering patients. The accountant protects integrity. The teacher shapes future generations. The mother raises image bearers of God.

-Every legitimate vocation becomes a means of loving others.

-God often works extraordinary ministry through ordinary work and workers like you and me!

A missionary may preach Christ overseas. A janitor may clean a school hallway. If both are serving Christ faithfully, neither is spiritually superior. Both are necessary! Both are good! The issue is *not* position. The issue is **obedience**. God values faithfulness more than visibility.

**\*\*Your Job Is Bigger Than You Think!** People are watching your life & your witness!!!

Imagine if all Christians disappeared from the workforce tomorrow. Hospitals would lose spiritual prayer warriors as caregivers. Schools would lose praying teachers. Businesses would lose integrity. Communities would lose servants. The Church could not function w/o means

**-The world desperately needs Christians living out their faith through ordinary work.**

**=A Missional Life in the workplace matters!!!**

**6. Work becomes worship when done for Christ.** Jesus redeems our work for Him!

**Colossians 3:23** "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men."

Notice: Paul does **not** say: "Only pastors do God's work." He says: "Whatever you do."

**The office. The classroom. The construction site. The home. The farm. The factory. The kitchen.**

**The boardroom.** All become places of worship bc it's ALL for **The Audience of One!!!**

**\*\*Besides a paycheck, most people work for approval, promotions, recognition, applause...**

**BUT .... Christians work for Christ. Human bosses change. BUT Christ never does.**

**A famous orchestra conductor was once asked why he practiced so diligently even after decades of success. He replied: "Because I know there is still someone listening."** Christians live every day knowing Someone is always watching. To receive worship; to reward faithfulness!

**7. Our Work is never our identity. Christ is. Therefore, work cannot become an idol!**

Many people derive their identity from their career. The question becomes: "What do you do?"

**\*Work is good. Work is not God. -Mark 8:36 "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"**

**\*\*Many climb the corporate ladder only to discover it was leaning against the wrong wall.**

**Warning Signs of Work Idolatry:** (Family consistently sacrificed; Prayer life and spiritual life ignored; Church attendance suffers; Identity tied to success; Anxiety controlled by performance

Worth measured by productivity; Exhausted, overwhelmed, or singularly focused on non-eternal...

**\*\*The gospel reminds us: You are not justified by your work. You are justified by Christ's work.**

**\*\*\*\*Jesus spent approximately thirty years as a carpenter.**

Think about that. The Son of God spent most of His earthly life doing ordinary labor. **Ordinary!!!** He was Cutting stones. Building houses. Serving customers. Living faithfully. In the family business! No one ever noticed Him. But God was preparing Jesus to change the world through the daily grind of ordinary work. His earthly work would produce eternal results bc He was with people, and saw people, and met their needs - & the Father used Him to bless them!!

**....Then, on a wooden, cruel cross, The Greatest Work Ever Accomplished was finished!!!**

John 19:30 Jesus declared ..."It is finished."

\*The ultimate work was not done in a carpenter's shop. It was done on a cross.

Jesus *completed* the work of redemption. Because His work is finished, our work gains eternal meaning. We do not work for salvation. He did that already!! **Our worship & work is in response!**

**-OUR WORK, even ordinary work, can have ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**1 Corinthians 15:58** "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain."

\*\*Nothing done for Christ is wasted. Not one prayer. Not one diaper changed. Not one lesson taught. Not one act of honesty. Not one hidden sacrifice. God sees it all.

**Revelation 14:13** "Their deeds follow them." The world forgets. God remembers.

### **FIVE KEY APPLICATIONS**

- 1. View Monday as a Mission Field** Your workplace is one of God's primary places for ministry.
- 2. Pursue Excellence** Christians should be known for diligence, integrity, and reliability.
- 3. Refuse Work Idolatry** Your identity is found in Christ, not your career.
- 4. Use Your Income for Kingdom Purposes** Work enables generosity and gospel advancement.
- 5. Remember the Eternal Reward** Faithfulness matters more than earthly recognition.

**\*Workplace pitfalls:** Instead of seeing Work as Missional, we can become lazy (do the minimal to get by); live out an unfaithful witness; we can make work an idol in our life (workaholism); or we can miss the point altogether WHY God put YOU there for such a time as this!!

**\*Well, pastor you have NO idea how bad I have it; how awful my worklife is; unfair; godless; hard...**

REMINDER:

**-God opens and closes doors with Jobs. Seek God's will; pray; ask for peace; then decide.**

**-Not all work is dignified work or moral work; You want God to bless you in an honest trade**

**-If you have a tough Job, you are not alone. God sees you (Joseph in Gen. 37-50)**

**-If you have a tough boss, unfair boss, a godless supervisor, you are not alone. God sees.**

**He will use your faithfulness, your good attitude, your hard work ethic, your humility, and your helpfulness to others to bring good out of a challenging situation (Gen. 50:20)**

**-Heb. 6:10 "God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him."**

**-If you lose your job; if you are demoted; OR if you are promoted, God sees! How will you respond? What is the Lord teaching you in that test of your faith & dependence on Him?**

-Ps. 75: 6-7 "For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert *comes* exaltation;  
7 But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another."

-1 Cor. 4:12 =God's verse for you on Mon-Fridays... "We work hard with our own hands. When we are vilified, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;"

**Conclusion: God created work; sin corrupted work; Christ redeems work; and believers now labor for the glory of God until the day when all work finds its perfect fulfillment in His eternal kingdom. \*\*\*A Missional Life for God in the workplace matters to God!**

**The goal of work is not merely making a living. It is making much of Christ at work!!!**

Every hammer swung. Every email written. Every child raised. Every field planted.

Every customer flown. Every patient cared for. Every business conducted honestly. Every sermon preached. Every act of labor done for Jesus becomes an act of worship.

**\*What will be your decision this week? How will you see your work as a mission field differently? Why has the Lord put you there?**

**\*\*Will you pray that God would send someone to you this week that you could share hope in Christ to?**

**In 1972 NASA launched Pioneer 10. Its mission was to explore the outer planets. Decades later it has traveled billions of miles from Earth. Scientists were amazed that such a small craft could travel so far. Why? Because it was launched with tremendous force from the beginning.**

**\*\*Many Christians underestimate the significance of ordinary faithfulness.**

A conversation. A lesson. An invitation. A meal. A prayer. A business decision. A child's upbringing. A faithful day's labor. These may seem small today. But in God's hands they can travel farther than we ever imagine. You may never see all the fruit. But God does.

And one day every believer will stand before Christ and hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Not: "Well done, successful servant."

Not: "Well done, famous servant."

Not: "Well done, wealthy servant."

But: **"Well done, faithful servant."**

## **7 COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How does Genesis 2:15 challenge the common belief that work is merely a curse?**
- 2. What frustrations in your current work environment remind you of the effects of Genesis 3?**
- 3. How can your specific vocation become a means of loving and serving your neighbor?**
- 4. What does it practically mean to work "as unto the Lord" in your daily responsibilities?**
- 5. What warning signs of work becoming an idol have you seen in your own life?**
- 6. How does Christ's finished work on the cross change the way we view our own work and achievements?**
- 7. What specific step can you take this week to transform ordinary work into intentional worship?**