

The Stewardship of Generations: *Our Work*

(Colossians 3:17-24)

Vision: *Thirsty Souls Restored, Lives Changed, and Joyful Disciples worshipping Christ*

Mission: 'Leading ALL GENERATIONS to love God, follow Jesus, and model His mission to transform *all* peoples and nations with the gospel'

-Summary: All Generations Worshipping God

Series: "The Stewardship of Generations"

The goal of this series is to help us learn to **TRUST** God the Giver, to see trust as act of worship!

*Our truest worship begins in the *yielding* of our self, our desires, our possessions to God in order to have the Lord **replace** things we hold in this life with the insatiable desire for Him most.

=**He becomes the prize!**

All we are (life; breath; body; future) **and all we have** (what we touch) **belongs to HIM:** believe?

-Our **Families** belong to Jesus (we give them back *as soon as* we get them) -**Child dedication?**

-Our **Jobs** belong to Jesus (He alone gives us power to make wealth)

-Our **Church** belongs to Jesus (His Bride is worth our best effort to serve & bless)

-Our **Money** belongs to Jesus (Generosity is a test of faithfulness of God's provision)

-Our **Future** belongs to Jesus. (Our fears: uncertainties; the unknown - our suffering, our loss, our disappointment, our failures each belong to Jesus).

-Every **GENERATION** belongs to Jesus. (They are ours to steward as precious gifts to cherish!)

Today: The Stewardship of our WORK.

***Main Point: Our **JOBS** belongs to Jesus first; He blesses us with work in order that we steward His glory in our *giftings*, our *attitudes*, and our *faithful effort* to bless others.

A Theology of work (860 Bible verses about work):

1. -Work is God's **gift** to each of us to pursue and steward as an act of worship in our life.

-Deut. 8:18 "But you are to remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to **make** wealth, in order to confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is this day.*

2. -Work is God's **idea**. Work glorifies Him! Productivity glorifies Him. Reaping the rewards of investment, labor, and faithful industry with our lives glorifies Him. We are to steward it!

-Eccl. 5:19 "Furthermore, It is God who gives riches and wealth to every man, and He has enabled him to enjoy them, to accept his lot, and to rejoice in his **labor**. This is a gift from God."

3. The Bible teaches that every Christian can live in **JOY** as they work to show themselves faithful to steward what God has entrusted them. Whether a 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, and display God's purpose and glory!

-Psalm 90:17 "May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, Lord, establish the work of our hands."

4. -We are each called to **submit** unto the Lord and His purpose for our life! = Work is part of His holy **purpose** for our lives. Work is God's **grace** toward us as we are joyfully productive in our days to bring glory to Him and bless, invest, improve, and cultivate this earth -*as it was in Eden.*

5. God calls each of us to steward these gifts of labor, creativity, and productivity. Remembering, He alone is **sovereign** over our work & the **results** of our labor -the increase or loss from them.

All of us will have seasons of increase and gain as well as loss, defeat, reduction, and decline.
-How we respond to both blessings and demotion, gains and defeats matter to God =*stewardship*
-1 Sam. 2:7 “**The LORD makes poor and rich; He humbles, He also exalts.**”
-Ps. 75:7 “**God is the judge; He puts down one and exalts the another**”
-1 Chr. 29:12 “**Both riches and honor come from You, and You are the ruler over all. In Your hands are power and might to exalt and give strength to all.**”
-We serve the Lord & work faithfully with all our might *to* His glory; We leave the *results* to Him.

READ Colossians 3:17-24

“17: **Whatever** you do in word or deed, *do* everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. -We are to work as unto the Lord, thankfully: in *Parenting & Jobs*
18 **Wives**, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 **Husbands**, love your wives and do not become bitter against them. 20 **Children**, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing ^{to} the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not ^{to} antagonize your children, so that they will not become discouraged. 22 **Slaves**/Servants/employees, obey those who are your human masters in everything, not with eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, **as for the Lord and not for people**, 24 knowing that *it is* from the Lord *that* you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve 25 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 life matters to God. How we work & for whom we work, & How we impact those in our work matter. **We steward work relationships**

-Work (meaningful work) was always God’s plan for humans to be **productive** on this earth.
-Regardless of who we work for, we *ultimately* **work** for God & answer to God for our ‘work’ whether good or bad; How we steward what we have been given to invest in our work. *Attitude?*
-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 sees & will reward faithful stewardship in our lives because all work is ultimately for His glory: i.e. ***Matt. 25 (Parable of the talents)**
*No matter where you work (no job is insignificant in God’s eyes; *no task too small to be faithful*)
-Mt. 25:21: “**Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful (in a little) faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of much.**”

In *this* passage in Col. 3, Paul does something remarkable: he takes ordinary work (family responsibilities, employment, authority, obedience, and daily labor) and places it directly under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The controlling phrase is: **Vs. 17: “Whatever you do...”** and then in **Vs. 23: “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord and not for people.”**
Paul’s point: *Be a faithful parent; Be a hard-worker; Be a faithful employee; Be an excellent Boss; work hard **bc** for the Christian there is **no** such thing as secular work since Christ is LORD of all!

Paul’s message in Colossians is clear: As a Believer, since there is no small job, and since Christ is Lord over all -we are to steward our gifts and work for the Lord, knowing whatever we do is done *for* Christ (as unto Christ), to be worked-out in gratitude, and our work will be evaluated by Christ.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy visited NASA. During the visit, he encountered a janitor carrying a broom. Kennedy reportedly asked him: “**What are you doing?**” The janitor answered: “**Mr. President, I’m helping put a man on the moon.**” Two people can have the same job but understand their purpose very differently.

In our mission to steward our work *as unto the Lord*, there are no small jobs, only wrong perspectives. Misperceptions. Bad attitudes. Entitlement and Laziness. ****WORK IS GIFT OF GOD to each of us!**

-AND because all work is ultimately for God's glory, *all* work done for Him is **meaningful** work.

Our Work is Worship; Our working and labor is stewardship of God's gracious gift of work. We are to do it with excellence to our best ability. Our work is a means of grace in that God uses our labor to bless others in our lives & community. And, as we work and worship, we remember that work is eternal, a part of our eternal stewardship of our lives & His glory!

1. Our Work is Worship.

Vs. 17: **Whatever** you do in word or deed, **do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Jesus to God the Father.** Our work is to be a part of the worship of our lives to the Lord. – HOW?? Through gratitude. Thanksgiving. =To be thankful that you CAN work, that you can labor for earthly and eternal purposes. That God has given you the ability to earn a wage and use your unique skills, abilities, education, experience, and capacity to glorify Him in your work.

The Christian's worship isn't confined to Sunday morning. It's Monday morning. **It's Everyday!**

Your worship includes: going to work, showing up on time, with a good attitude, answering emails, changing diapers, writing code, selling houses, teaching students, repairing plumbing, preparing meals, managing employees, cleaning offices, building houses, caring for patients, balancing budgets, mowing lawns, preaching sermons and pastoring hearts. Its all worship!!!

The question isn't merely: **"What do you do?"** The deeper question is: **"For whom do you do it?"**

R.C. Sproul's teaching on vocation is extremely helpful here: He points out that our culture tends to make occupation part of our identity, but Scripture gives work a much broader theological framework. **Work is part of what it means to live as creatures made by God.**

The biblical doctrine of vocation therefore says: **Your job isn't the entirety of your calling.**

God calls you first to Himself, and then **He gives you various spheres in which you serve Him.**

That includes paid employment—but also marriage, parenting, citizenship, church service, loving our neighbor, and every ordinary responsibility

Application: Tomorrow morning, before you begin work, **pray:**

"Lord Jesus, this is Your day. This is Your work. These are Your people. Help me represent You faithfully." That changes everything.

Brother Lawrence, a seventeenth-century Christian, became famous for practicing what he called the **presence of God in ordinary activities**. He didn't believe washing dishes was spiritually inferior to praying. He learned to worship God while doing mundane tasks.

That's precisely the revolution Paul is describing. **The kitchen can become a sanctuary.**

The office can become a place of shepherding grace. The construction site can become an mission field. The classroom can become an altar of worship. Our work is worship. Steward

2. Our work is not our Identity, but a stewardship of God's momentary assignment

Vs. 23: **Whatever** you do, **do your work heartily, as for the Lord and not for people,**²⁴ knowing that **it is from the Lord that you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.** Your abilities, opportunities, time, and resources belong ultimately to God.

-We do not own our work, God does. Assignments come and go – BUT faithfulness to Him/His purpose/His tasks are to remain. **God decides** what/when/how/the results & **how much we earn**

*The world believes **I am what I accomplish. My worth is based on my success=What I have/kingd**
But God turns this errant belief **upside down!**-**God owns it all! He exalts/demotes. I am who He say**
This is the biblical doctrine of stewardship. -Psalm 24:1 "**The earth is the LORD'S, & all it contains.**"
-1 Cor. 4:1-2 "**This is the way any person is to regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.**
-Our work is important, but it is never our identity. Our Identity is who God says we are: **HIS! first**
-Our work is a stewardship of the gifts of time and ability God has entrusted to us.

***Calvin's doctrine of vocation** was revolutionary because it gave dignity to ordinary occupations. He argued that God distributes different callings and stations among His people and that faithfully fulfilling one's vocation is a legitimate means of honoring God, serving one's neighbor, and displaying God's glory.

That means: **A faithful mechanic can glorify God just as genuinely as a faithful pastor.**

Application: We should stop comparing ourselves to others' success and asking only: **Have I been faithful with all that God has entrusted me? Am I trustworthy? Am I honest? Am I diligent? Do I keep my word? Do I treat people with dignity? Do I steward my time well? Am I using my abilities for the good of others? Does my work reflect the character of Christ? Do I labor for God's glory?**

-This is the right test of my identity. Not my work, but HOW I go about my work? **His glory vs. mine**

3. As a faithful steward of my job, my work should be done with excellence because Christ is my boss. My boss is less my boss than Christ is! **WORK is NOT my Master. Christ is!**

-I will have to answer to Him for *all* He entrusts to me. **Work & People/relationships**

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

-Your boss may sign your paycheck, BUT you actually work for Jesus. He's the boss' boss! Your work is ultimately for Him and to Him. Your work is part of God's **purpose** to train you in submission to His **authority** as the King of this world/universe (His *Kingdom* & we are His **subjects**)

-We work as unto the Lord. The Lord deserves our best effort. The Lord deserves our excellence!

Imagine a master craftsman commissioned to build a table for a king. Nobody will ever see the underside. No one will inspect the joints. No one will know whether he used inferior materials. But the craftsman carefully finishes every hidden detail. Why? Because **his work represents him—and ultimately the one for whom he is building.** That's Christian work. That is work as worship. Everybody gets our best effort!

=Our effort and attitude are to reflect Christ **Bc Christ reflects the Father. Is this true of you?**

Vs. 24: **knowing that *it is from the Lord that you will receive the reward* of the inheritance. *It is the Lord Christ whom you serve*. Paul is helping us to connect our salvation and our stewardship of work. **BC Our salvation is ultimately the grace of God. Jesus did the work we could never do to on the cross to pay for our sins. God gifts us grace, faith, salvation, forgiveness, et. life.** **Our new life in Christ is a grace gift. We are New creations; New creatures; those who have been awarded heaven, eternal life with Christ. We get all of CHRIST. We get the fullness of Christ's Inheritance. The Father calls Christ to share all of eternity with us. We are so blessed....**

In response, in this life, RIGHT NOW our identity is that we are HIS; our calling is that we worship HIM ALL we do. And our work becomes a means of worship & stewardship.

For the Christian that means ultimately we work for an audience of One and we await the reward of One. That should liberate us from both pride and despair. If you receive recognition: **Don't become proud.** If you receive no recognition/demotion: **Don't become discouraged.** **Because Jesus sees. Your ultimate reward isn't your paycheck, the promotion, the bonus, the corner office, the recognition, the award, the retirement account.**

Our reward today and in eternity is "the reward of CHRIST's inheritance." -to get all of HIM for all time for all of His glory. My life. My work. My all is for His glory.

Imagine someone who spends thirty years climbing the corporate ladder. Promotion after Promotion. Bigger salary. Better title. Bigger house. More influence. Eventually they reach the top. And then they realize: My ladder has been on the wrong wall all along.

"I sacrificed my marriage for this." "I missed my children's childhood."

"I haven't seen my friends in years." "I don't know how to rest."

I achieved my career BUT I squandered their life.

Because Christ is my everythingMonday morning is worship...

-OUR WORK, even ordinary work, can have ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE since as unto the LORD!

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. Not faithfulness in the small things. **God sees it all.**

Community Group Questions

- 1. Read Colossians 3:17 and 3:23. What difference does it make to see your work as something you do "for the Lord" rather than merely for an employer, paycheck, or personal success?**
- 2. What is the difference between finding your identity in your work and using your work as an expression of your identity in Christ? Where do you struggle with this distinction?**
- 3. Paul says to work "heartily." What does wholehearted Christian work look like practically? How is it different from perfectionism or workaholism?**
- 4. Think about your particular job, household responsibilities, or current season of life. Who does your work serve? How might viewing your work as loving/serving your neighbor change your attitude toward it?**
- 5. Where are you most tempted to become a "people pleaser" at work—working hard only when someone is watching or seeking recognition? How does Colossians 3:22–24 challenge that?**
- 6. What is one way your work has become an idol—or could become an idol—in your life? What would it look like to put Christ back in His rightful place?**
- 7. If Jesus Himself were your only audience at work this coming week, what is one specific thing you would do differently?**

SCRIPTURE READING:

Deut. 28:1-14 “Now it shall be, if you diligently ^[a]obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, that the Lord your God will put you high above all the nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings will come to you and reach you if you ^[b]obey the Lord your God:

³ “Blessed *will you be* in the city, and blessed *will you be* in the ^[c]country.

⁴ “Blessed *will be* the ^[d]children of your womb, the ^[e]produce of your ground, and the ^[f]offspring of your animals: the newborn of your herd and the young of your flock.

⁵ “Blessed *will be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

⁶ “Blessed *will you be* when you come in, and blessed *will you be* when you go out.

⁷ “The Lord will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be ^[g]defeated by you; they will go out against you one way and will flee at your presence seven ways. ⁸ The Lord will command the blessing for you in your ^[h]barns and in everything that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. ⁹ The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways. ¹⁰ So all the peoples of the earth will see that ^[i]you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will be afraid of you. ¹¹ And the Lord will give you more than enough prosperity, in the ^[j]children of your womb, in the ^[k]offspring of your livestock, and in the ^[l]produce of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. ¹² The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless every work of your hand; and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow. ¹³ And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you will only be above, and not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God which I am commanding you today, to ^[m]follow *them* carefully, ¹⁴ and do not turn aside from any of the words which I am commanding you today, to the right or the left, to pursue other gods to serve them.