

Christians in the Workplace

Theology of Work

Lesson 1

Introduction – The story of work

Everything finds its meaning in the context of a narrative. What story are you telling? Who's at the center?

Act I: Creation

The story of work begins with God, who is a worker.

Genesis 2:2: "By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing..."

We are the work product of God, made in his image.

God put Adam and Even in the garden to tend and guard it.

Lesson #1: The original purpose of human work was the advancement of human flourishing to the glory of God.

Act II: Fall

Adam and Even failed to do their job.

They were kicked out of the garden, but were not relieved of responsibility.

Three things change about the **work**:

It becomes ***toilsome***.

It becomes ***futile***.

It becomes ***compulsory*** for survival.

There is also a change in the **workers**:

Some no longer use work to worship God, but to worship idols. They are defined by their work.

Others call on the name of the Lord, and are defined by the name of the Lord whom they worship.

We, too, can be tempted to be defined **by** work—or by freedom **from** work. We should define ourselves not by our relationship to work, but to God. Of course, this does not mean an end to toil.

Lesson #2: The problem with work is a lost connection between God, worship, and work.

Act III: Redemption

The work of Christ was redemption—to take away the sin of the world. “It is finished!” (John 19:30).

People are redeemed. Work is not.

How does redemption change workers?

We repent of idolatrous attitudes toward work, because our identity is no longer in work but in Christ. Col. 3:1-3.

We once again work as worship to God. Co. 3:17, 22-23.

Lesson #3: As redeemed sinners, our work can now show off God’s work, to the glory of God. It can be worship again.

Act IV: Restoration

Romans 8: “the creation itself will be liberated”

Deuteronomy 6: “a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build ... wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant”

Isaiah 65: “I will create new heavens and a new earth. ... They will build houses and dwell in them, they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ... They will not toil in vain.”

Revelation 21: “They will bring into [the city] the glory and honor of the nations.”

Course outline

The Story of Work

Lesson 1: Theology of Work

Lesson 2: Problem with Work

Our Work as the Redeemed

Lesson 3: Freedom in Christ at Work

How We Work

Lesson 4: Relationships at Work

Lesson 5: Balance at Work

Lesson 6: Ethics at Work

Lesson 7: Work in Different Stages of Life

Lesson 8: Finding the Right Work

Lesson 9: Faithfulness at Work

Further Questions?

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Suggested reading

- *Every Good Endeavour* (Keller)
- *God at Work* (Veith)
- *The Call* (Guinness)