

Beyond the Daily Grind

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Week 2: Work in a Perfect World

Genesis 1:28-31

Big Idea:

After looking through the prayer cards over the last year it became clear. We need to build a theology of work.

I went back to Google to grab a few more work memes this week.



- We have Jim from The Office dividing his boss's day into two primary categories. Procrastination and distracting others, with a tiny sliver for critical thinking.
- We have Uncle Phil from The Fresh Prince trying to look like he cares.
- We have Frodo facing death after starvation, dehydration, having his finger bit off by a monster and being ripped from something he loved.

Clearly most people see work as bad.

Last week we worked to prove the contrary.

Work is not the curse, work was cursed. (Gen. 3:17-19)

This week let's look at Work in paradise.

Let's continue building a theology of work by looking at work in paradise.

Genesis 1:28-30

Before we read this text let me take you to the moment it represents in our Jewish/Christian history. God spoke and, as we learned from the original language last week, He created matter, gave energy, created systems and even the laws that all must exist within.

Gravity:

Imagine things at a macro level beginning to interact with each other. Huge masses of material colliding together and forming into planets.

Electromagnetism:

Image things at a micro level, smaller than what the eye can see, beginning to interact with each other. Atoms and electrons beginning to take form and engage with each other.

Life:

Imagine God drawing his hand through the depths of the ocean and all kinds of creatures spinning off behind in the wake of his movement. Imagine him calling out life from the air as birds begin to take flight. Imagine him drawing up the form of man from the dust and breathing life into him.

God created because that's who He is. He loves to make beauty. He loved making you.

It's in this state of glorious creation that he gives man the job of continuing to sub-create and make things more beautiful. He allows us to participate in His creative work.

Let that sink in – creation was called to create. There was glorious work in our primordial paradise and there will be glorious work in our heavenly paradise again.

Let's now listen in to what he tells humans to do:

Genesis 1:28-31

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

- God pronounces it as "very good" but it wasn't finished. We get to participate in the creative ordering.
- Remember, work is not the curse, it was cursed. This is work described while things were still "very good." The word very in Hebrew connotes completion. The word used for good carries the idea of joy. This is literally a statement from God indicating that all is full of joy.
- What did God ask man to do? Subdue and have dominion over the earth.
 - God isn't against leadership.
 - Authority is not the curse. Cursed humans have taken authority.

Illustration: Our natural fear of authority is understandable. We have seen first-hand what evil people do when they take leadership. However, we must remember that submission and authority are not evil things.

You have heard people say, "Power corrupts and ultimate power ultimately corrupts." I want to propose a thought:

Ultimate power doesn't actually corrupt, ultimate power ultimately reveals. Let's apply this to God. The God of the universe takes ultimate authority and his clearest voice to humanity is the loving work of Jesus. His ultimate power reveals ultimate love. When

you submit to God you submit to the love of Jesus. Authority and leadership aren't evil, evil people have taken authority.

- What does this mean for us? We need to take responsibility over the things God has entrusted to us under the authority of God. This includes not only the good things God has given us to enjoy, but also the hard things we face as a result of living in a fallen world.
- Think of the Story of Cain killing Able. It's the first murder in recorded history. What does God tell Cain? That sin is "crouching at your door" and "you must master it." Gen. 4:7.
- We must take spiritual responsibility and bring God's love and ways into the areas He has allowed us to have influence over.
 - Where do you need to take spiritual authority?
 - In your finances?
 - In your marriage?
 - In your workplace?
 - In a relationship?
 - With your time management?

Final Thoughts:

This leads us to one really important question. How do we begin to do this?

I want to introduce you to a few literary terms that are used in theology.

Prolepsis and Analepsis: Flash forward and flashback.

In other words, right now in the middle of your joy or hardship remember your origin and destination.

Illustration:

Some of you may have heard the story of "The Girl with no Name." It's a remarkable story of a young girl who was abducted at a young age, assaulted and left to die in the Colombian jungle. After a few days of fear and hiding, the young abused and half naked girl was approached by a group of monkeys. After a few encounters they left her some food. Months turned into years. One day while surviving in the jungle, long after she had forgotten much of the first few years of her life before her abduction and rape, she heard some hunters come through. After they left she found a small mirror on the ground. When she looked into it, she realized she wasn't a monkey. This realization sparked memories and a hope for something so much more than her current life. Prolepsis and Analepsis. She remembered, she had hope. Eventually she was able to find people and build an amazing life, but not without hope and remembering.

This is where real spiritual leadership begins. It begins with remembering your origin and hoping for a right destination. You take courage and take hold through these tools.

Every worship song, sermon and sacrament works to help you remember and take hold of hope so you can take right action today!

Next Steps Cards:

In light of your origin and destination what do you need to take responsibility over today?

Reference:

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Ge 1:28–31). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

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Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible (Ge 1:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Crossway Bibles. (2008). The ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Genesis 1:31: Very Good

- God's summary evaluation of creation concludes the six days: "it was very [mē'ōd] good."
Mathews, K. A. (1996). Genesis 1-11:26 (Vol. 1A, p. 175). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- The Hebrew word is *ṭôb* ('pleasant', 'joyful', 'agreeable'), signifying primarily that which gratifies the senses and derivatively that which gives aesthetic or moral satisfaction.
Packer, J. I. (1996). Good. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., pp. 423–424). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.