

Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

Labor Day

The Labor Day holiday is a day that is set aside to recognize and give thanks for the blessings that work gives people. We receive a day of rest from our labors. Most of this newsletter will focus on the gifts and abilities that God gives us for work as well as the desire and ability that God gives us to work.

God Blesses Us with Talents and Abilities

God has created us in his image (Genesis 1:26). He has given us tremendous talents. We are given intelligence, organization skills, creativity, decision-making powers, problem-solving capabilities, leadership abilities, and mechanical abilities, etc. God has given us labor so that we can use our God-given talents and provide for our needs. *"The Lord God took [Adam] and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" Genesis 2:15*. Work is part of God's master plan for all people. Through our work, we not only take care of our needs, we receive fulfillment and growth as well as the joy of accomplishment.

Have you ever stopped to consider the differences in people? There are thousands of occupations in today's world, each requiring special talents. There are needs for carpenters, cooks, mechanics, tailors, pastors, teachers, farmers, servers, students, police officers, etc. The important thing to note here, however, is that, for every need, God has given to someone the ability to fulfill that need. Some people are able to take apart engines of cars, while others hardly know where to add the oil. Some can build houses, while others can barely nail boards together.

Some women sew fashionable clothes for their family and buy their bread at the store, while others cook and bake beyond compare but don't even own a sewing machine. God has made us

all unique. Along with all of our talents and abilities, God adds to them our desire and ability to work.

As Christians, we need to remember that our talents and abilities have come from God.



"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today" (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

Financial Equation

Earning income at our work is an essential part of the following financial equation:

Earned income = giving, saving, and spending.

From the income that we earn, we give, save, and spend. For the financial equation to balance, we need to earn an income.

The Blessing of Work

Working is a blessing that God gives his people. God is not pleased with laziness or an indifferent attitude toward work. Solomon wrote, *“Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.”* (Proverbs 10:4). We are encouraged to be as ambitious, wise, and industrious as the ant. *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest”* (Proverbs 6:6).

God is concerned with our quality of work. The Apostle Paul wrote, *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”* (Colossians 3:23). Because we are serving the Lord in all that we do, including our work, we are to give our very best effort. When we add value to our employers, we not only put ourselves in a position for promotions and raises, God is glorified.



The Apostle Paul reminds us, *“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously”* (2 Corinthians 9:6).

This sowing and reaping principle that Paul shares applies to our work. What is your attitude toward your work? Are you there to receive as much as you can while putting out the least amount of effort? Do you begrudge the hours your employer asks you to work, or are you willing to come in early and stay late at times? Are you learning more than you have to and doing more than you have to?

Another question to ask yourself about your work is how you plan to use this “wealth” that your “diligent hands” bring you. Is it your purpose to hoard it like the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21), so that you can *“take life easy; eat, drink and be merry”*? If you’ve read the parable, you know that plan is not pleasing to the Lord.

Our work is a gift from the Lord. As good stewards of that gift, we will work to the best of our ability so that we can care for our needs and give to the Lord by helping others in need. Paul talks about the service we can provide through our work: *“At the present time your plenty will supply what [others] need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality”* (2 Corinthians 8:14).

Besides providing for ourselves, God gives us two additional reasons for work:

- ✠ **Provide for our families:** *“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”* (1 Timothy 5:8).
- ✠ **Provide for the needy:** *“[He] must work . . . doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need”* (Ephesians 4:28).

Give thanks to God for your work. Work to the best of your ability. Share with others the rewards of your work.

Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!