



SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

**Discussion Starter:** Since today's lesson is about biblical teaching on work, briefly tell about your work experience—What jobs have you worked? How did you get those jobs? What did you like/dislike about the jobs? What did you learn from those jobs?

**Key Text:** "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men." (Colossians 3:23)

Today we're taking a brief break from our "When in Rome" series. We'll pick back up in our verse-by-verse study through Paul's letter to the Romans next week. Since it is Labor Day weekend, let's look at what the Bible says about work.

In his book *How to Be Happier in the Job You Sometimes Can't Stand*, Ross West lists several elements at work that create stress:

- Too much work to do
- Work we are not skilled or equipped to do
- Confusion about our role
- Too many rules and regulations
- The impact of work on personal life
- The pressure of making decisions

In a day of growing dissatisfaction, we need to see what the Bible says about how Christians are to relate to work.

## 1. Work is part of God's loving plan for us.

Although work often has a negative connotation—it is often viewed as a difficult and unpleasant part of life we must do—work was actually part of God's perfect creation, given by God to humans before sin entered the world. In fact, the first command God gave to Adam was to work, to tend the Garden of Eden, which was to be a fulfilling and purposeful occupation: "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it*" (Genesis 2:15).

Just as a parent enjoys watching his/her children create an art project or achieve a new skill, God could enjoy watching Adam work in the beautiful Garden of Eden. It wasn't until after Adam and Eve sinned that work became toil (Genesis 3:17-19). In the Old Testament, God instituted the tithe as a reminder to the people that it was He who was blessing the work of their hands (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:28-29).

**Discuss:** How is a Christian's attitude toward his/her job a reflection of his/her faith in God?

**Discuss:** What advice would you give a young adult on how to choose a job/career?

## 2. Work is God's way for us to provide for our basic needs and to help others who may not be able to work.

Ephesians 4:28 says, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." Laziness—the habitual avoidance of work—is strongly condemned in the Bible. In fact, people who neglected to provide for their families were condemned by the early church: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). 2 Thessalonians 3:10 even says that those who refused to work should not be allowed to eat.

**Discuss:** What do Proverbs 13:4 and 21:25 teach about laziness?

**Discuss:** How would you train a child to have a Christian view of work?

## 3. Jesus worked as a carpenter for years before He started ministering full-time.

While Jesus, the Son of God, could have spent all of His time in the temple discussing Scripture, for the first thirty years of His life, He worked as a carpenter. Mark 6:3 says, "Is not this [Jesus] the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon?" Interestingly, the Greek word *tehton* for "carpenter" in Mark 6:3 could also be translated as "artisan," "contractor," or "handyman." Jesus and his foster father Joseph were the kind of men you'd call when something needed to be fixed. They may have also acted as civil engineers, designing bridges or other structures that were needed by the people of the town.

**Discuss:** In what ways could Jesus' physical labor as a carpenter, artisan, or handyman be symbolic of His spiritual work?

## 4. We are to give our best efforts in whatever work we do so that God can be glorified.

Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men." God entrusts us as stewards of the gifts, opportunities, and responsibilities He gives us, and we are accountable to Him.

**Discuss:** What do you think Colossians 3:23 means when it says to work "as for the Lord rather than for men"?

**Discuss:** How can God be glorified through our attitude about work and our work ethic?

### For Further Study:

*On Being a Servant of God* by Warren Wiersbe

"9 Ways to Find Work You Love" article at [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com)

*Why America Doesn't Work* by Charles Colson