

Respect for Work

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One of the most constant complaints of employers is the difficulty of finding employees who want to – and will – work. A great paradox of our times is that millions remain unemployed while employers are begging people to work for them. Another problem of employers is to find those who know how to work or who want to learn how to do so. The problem among many who apply for work is that they have seldom been around anybody who knows what work is or how to do it.

The Bible has much to say about the value and importance of work. Work is depicted as respectable and honorable, and the refusal to work as shameful: “He also that is slack in his work is a brother to him that is a destroyer” (Pro. 18:9). Our Lord was not afraid of work: “We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). Paul not only worked with his own hands, “but toiled” (i.e., worked hard) to support himself in Corinth (1 Cor. 4:12). Paul commanded the saints in Ephesus who had been thieves in their former lives to replace the practice with “... labor, working with his hands the thing that is good...” (Eph. 4:28). It is in the context of physical work done (i.e., by a slave under a slave-owner) that Paul wrote, “Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men” (Col. 3:23). Some of the Thessalonians had quit work and were depending on others to feed them. Paul did not hesitate to call this “disorderly conduct” and issued the principle: “If any will not work, neither let him eat” (2 The. 3:10–11).

Christian parents have serious obligations to their children in this matter. A child is severely handicapped, perhaps for life, regardless of his mental or physical abilities, if he does not learn from an early age what work is and how to do it. Parents hurt their children by waiting on them and doing everything for them. Children need to learn (at appropriate ages, of course) how to cook, wash dishes, make beds, sweep and mop, wash, fold, and put away laundry, mow the grass, wash the car, and such like. Of course, they will not always **want** to do these things, but they **need** to learn to do them anyway. There is an innate unfairness to the children themselves and to the parents who provide for them, if every member of a household does not learn at an early age that he must carry part of the load he helps create. This is part of the necessary training our children need to prepare them to be Christians – a bedrock principle!

In our nation we are living in an age of golden opportunity for those who want to work and/or will learn how. Many employers are desperately searching for someone who is not afraid of work.

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