

The Bible and Work

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It is interesting to observe differences between older and younger generations of people. One of the most striking differences has to do with moral values of the respective generations. Another difference has to do with attitudes toward work and the associated concepts of duty and handling of responsibility. This latter attitudinal difference has been demonstrated numerous times in matters pertaining to our work as a congregation. When we have a workday on our property, time after time the large percentage of those who come and work (sometimes much harder than they should) are those who are 60 years of age or older. Also, we find that our Sunday evening and Wednesday evening attendance drop-off (compared to Sunday morning) is to a great degree among those under 60 years old. It would appear that a generation of parents who themselves learned the values of hard work and a sense of duty and responsibility may have failed to pass these things on to their children.

We will do well to review what God's Word says about work. Perhaps some of us need to make an "attitude adjustment" concerning it. God's first charge to man was to work in dressing and keeping the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). Solomon extolled the virtue of labor in numerous statements, such as: "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty" (Pro. 20:13) and "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecc. 9:10). One cannot read the life of our Lord or of the apostle Paul without seeing in them lives of hard work, labor and great industry. Paul worked "night and day" in more than one place (Acts 20:31-34; 2 The. 3:8). He urged us to do our work with diligence (Rom. 12:11) and thus earn the right to eat, "For if any will not work, neither let him eat" (2 The. 3:10). The Scriptures are solidly behind the diligent worker, even in secular work. This is certainly no less true concerning our work and service in the Body of Christ.

One who does not learn to work and to enjoy working is to be pitied. Yet, it is amazing that some seem to be either blind to work that needs to be done or seeing it, seem never to feel any personal responsibility to do it, or both. Truly, work doesn't bother some people — they can look at it and observe others doing it who could use some help and never lift a hand to do it themselves at all. The one who has not learned to work is cheated out of the sense of accomplishment and fulfillment that comes only to those who tackle a job and see it through to its completion.

The Christian life is a life of work, both in our secular jobs (Col. 3:22-23) and in our church-related activities (Tit. 2:14). If we did not learn to work as youngsters, we had better learn now.

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