

American Gods: Work

Colossians 3:1-5

Bulletin Notes

Work is...

Good

Frustrating

Rewarding

Valuable to God

When we make a good thing into an ultimate thing, it keeps us from the best thing.

Looking Back

Noel Coward once said, "Work is more fun than fun." By and large, we love to work in America. Or said differently, we *value* work in America, almost more than anything else. This is evident not just in data and statistics such as the fact that America is the only country in the world with no government required time off for workers. It's also evident in the high levels of anxiety and stress that so many people experience related to work. What does the Bible have to say about this American God? How can we view and relate to work in a healthy, God-honoring way?

Thinking It Through

agree|disagree, consider|contemplate

"Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot." Gordon Dahl

"As a society, we might celebrate drinking, but we don't honor alcoholism. Workaholics, on the other hand, are national heroes, the examples of our Protestant work ethic and proof that the American Dream is alive, bootstraps and all." Tom Foster

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well." Martin Luther King Jr

Working It Out

1. Read the first and second quotes above. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
 2. Why do you think work tends to be one of the most common places Americans look for their identity and significance?
 3. Read Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:15. What observations do you make about work?
 4. How have you, either in the past or present, experienced "thorns and thistles" (difficulty, frustration) in your work life?
 5. Why is it important to view our work as valuable to God? What happens when we don't see our work this way?
 6. Are you aware of a time in your life when you sought for work to be your identity and primary source of significance?
 7. Read Colossians 3:1-5. Why is it so important to remember our identity in Christ as we seek to "put to death" idolatry in our lives?
 8. What is one takeaway for you related to this week's message?
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