

Entrust Biblical Masculinity Lesson 8 Masculinity & Work<sup>1</sup> 1/26/23

INTRO

1. God's Work

- a. God existed eternally, as Father, Son, and Spirit
- b. He created the universe to serve as the stage for redemptive history and redeeming a Bride for the Son
- c. To do so, he worked. His work consisted of creating the work week and creating during the work week:

Day 1: God created light (Gen 1:3-5)

Day 2: God created the sky/expanse (Gen 1:6-8)

Day 3: God created the Earth, land, oceans, vegetation (Gen 1:9-13)

Day 4: God created the galaxies, stars, moon, & sun (Gen 1:14-19)

Day 5: God created flying & water-inhabiting creatures (Gen 1:20-23)

Day 6: God created the land creatures & humans (Gen 1:24-30)

Day 7: God rested from his work (Gen 1:31-2:3)

2. Work Before & After the Curse

a. Before the Curse

- i. Work is inherent to the cultural mandate:

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and **let them rule over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and **subdue it**; and **rule over** the

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<sup>1</sup> The following resources were helpful in preparing this lesson: *The Masculine Mandate*, by Richard D. Phillips; *A Theology of Work*, John MacArthur (<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-362/~/about>).

fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- To “rule over” (i.e. “control,” “have dominion”) and “subdue” (i.e. “conquer,” “control”) involves subjugating God’s creation in a way that promotes the fruitfulness and flourishing of the human race in righteousness.
- From drilling oil, to harvesting food from land, sky, and sea, to mining minerals, to building items, to harvesting ideas and data, and the management thereof, exercising dominion involves work.
- Fulfilling God’s cultural mandate requires work (cf. Gen 1:26, 28).

ii. Work was the first thing that the man was commanded to do:

Genesis 2:8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

iii. Implications:

1. Given the prominent place of work *prior* to the Curse, the biblical, and masculine, idea of work is good and pleasing to God.
2. A perfect, sinless, blissful world is one in which there is work.
3. Work, therefore, is dignifying to a man and God-glorifying (unless it involves sin). Scripture does not attribute masculine dignity to a *specific type* of work. Rather, he attributes dignity to *work* itself.
4. A man who refuses to work is forsaking masculinity.

b. After the Curse

- i. When describing the respective curses, God addresses the man, telling him that work is an area that will be cursed consequent of sin

Genesis 3:17-19 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; **cursed is the ground** because of you; **in toil you** will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> "Both **thorns and thistles it shall grow** for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup> **by the sweat of your face** you will eat bread, **till you return to the ground**, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

- Work is not a product of the Curse. The tediousness of work is.
- The Curse did not bring about work. The Curse did bring about the, at times, wearisome nature of work.
- In light of the Curse, a man should not think that he is missing God's call or failing in life if his work is often not the most enjoyable task.

c. A man must also rest from his work.

This is clear from God's own Sabbath rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after creating the universe in 6 days (Gen 1:31-2:3). It is clear from God's own commands.

The need for rest is also clear from experience. Even a godly, diligent man will experience fatigue and inability to perform well in his work if he does not take a rest at times.

3. The Reproach of Refusing to Work

a. Observation

Richard Phillips: "Nobody respects a man who doesn't work. It's just as simple as that. It's OK for a man to be dumb or ugly or even a little unpleasant, so long as he works hard. But nothing is worse than a guy who won't work."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate*, chapter 3.

- b. The refusal to work is shameful and unwise.

Proverbs 10:5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, *but* he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

- Work is a moral behavior.

- c. The refusal to work should be met with deprivation.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

- The text does not refer to those who are **unable** to work. Due to the curse, men can experience illnesses, injuries, and disabilities which prevent them from working. At some point, all men will be unable to work due to physical aging and illness.

Such situations must be handled with wisdom. There may be a possibility of a man learning a new trade or occupation following illness or disability.

The **inability** to work does not mean that a man is failing to realize God's call, nor that he is failing to embrace biblical masculinity.

A man, all men, will at some point in their lives no longer be able to work, whether due to death, debilitating illness, or disability.

- This does not mean that retirement is wrong.

The Levitical priests, for example, retired from their work at a certain age. Rather, it means that a man should have some legacy where he has worked righteously and faithfully in his life.

- A man who refuses to work should suffer the consequences.

The text does not say, for example, "If a man is not willing to work, still give him what he needs to survive." The implication is the opposite: let the man starve until he is willing to work.

Scripture teaches that starvation (and deprivation) is a biblical motivation for a man to work (who otherwise refuses to do so).

Proverbs 16:26 A worker's appetite works for him, for his hunger urges him on.

The text presupposes that a man who refuses to work, once he experiences a measure of starvation's discomfort, will seek out work, and God will provide for him.

- John MacArthur: "Neither the world nor the church owes a living to those too lazy to work."<sup>3</sup>
- T.L. Constable: "They [who refused to work] were not to be supported by other Christians out of a sense of charity. The loving thing to do for those drones was to let them go hungry so that they would be forced to do right and go to work. No Christian who is able but unwilling to work should be maintained by others who labor on his behalf."<sup>4</sup>
- D. Edmond Hiebert: "Misguided charity to such loafers only encourages their indolence and degrades them. If they refuse to work, let them go hungry! That will help overcome their indolence. Paul believed in the dignity of human labor and insisted that all those who professed faith in the gospel must engage in honest toil and not be drones."<sup>5</sup>
- R.H. Lenski: "This dictum abolishes all false asceticism, all unchristian disinclination to work, all fanatic exaltation above work, all self-inflicted pauperism."<sup>6</sup>

#### d. Stealing & theft

- i. Exodus 20:15 You shall not steal.
- ii. God permits us to acquire money and goods through work or gifting. However, God prohibits acquiring of goods through stealing.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/bibleqnas-library/QA0117/no-work-no-eat>

<sup>4</sup> T.L. Constable, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 2:723.

<sup>5</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 374.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Hiebert, 374.

- iii. Stealing and theft are forms of rebellion against God on many levels.

It is rebellion against God's command concerning the personal exertion and the acquiring of remuneration and goods.

It also involves things like injustice, covetousness, & ingratitude.

- iv. Stealing is rebellion against work. Repentance, for the thief, looks like working a job, with enough to give:

Ephesians 4:28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

#### 4. The Blessings of Work

- a. Work is a righteous endeavor to love your neighbor with a particular skill or service (Matt 22:39)
- b. Work is a righteous way for a man to care for his family and loved ones (1 Tim 5:8)
  - Chris Mueller: "The burden of caring financially for the family falls upon the man. A husband must be a provider so that: a mother of young children can keep house (1 Tim 5:14), a wife can be a worker at home (Titus 2:5), and a wife and mother can watch over the ways of her household (Prov 31:27)."
- c. Work is a righteous motivator for the attainment of wealth and goods
  - The idea that the desire for things and wealth is evil is false. Rather, it is the idolatry of wealth and things that is evil:

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
  - Scripture describes work as a motivation for material blessing and provision

Proverbs 10:4 Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Proverbs 12:11 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who pursues worthless *things* lacks sense.

Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, but the slack *hand* will be put to forced labor.

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth *obtained* by fraud dwindles, but the one who gathers by labor increases *it*.

Proverbs 14:23 In all labor there is profit, but mere talk *leads* only to poverty.

2 Timothy 2:6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

➤ Yet, it is God's grace that ultimately grants good things

Proverbs 10:22 It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, And He adds no sorrow to it.

d. Dignified and diligent work is a means through which God gives peace to the soul

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and *gets* nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

## 5. What Kind of Work Should I Do?

### a. Work & Calling

- i. At times in history, some have thought of work as one's calling.
- ii. But a man should not think that he has missed his calling, for example, if he changes jobs a few times, or begins a new career when he is 50 or 60. He should not think that he failed to realize his calling. God is sovereign.

- iii. Paul was a Pharisee, then a tent-maker, then a bi-vocational tent-maker & apostle/preacher/church-planter, then likely a full-time apostle.

b. Assessing One's Work

- i. The world assesses work in various ways (e.g. how much money one earns, if the job attains status and fame).
- ii. Scripture encourages us to assess work differently.
  - 1. Does this work glorify God?
    - a. Will this job require me to violate God's commands for behavior and godliness?
    - b. Am I having to violate my conscience in the various tasks at my job?
    - c. Do my work requirements bring me into situations where I may have to compromise biblical standards of conduct?
    - d. Would I be ok with Christian friends and family knowing what my job involves?
  - 2. Does this work benefit people?
    - a. Leviticus 19:18 You shall love your neighbor as yourself
    - b. Is there some way in which my work serves people?
    - c. A restaurant worker; a builder; janitor; garbagemen; landscaper; plower; teacher; sanitation; nurse; physician; surveyor; fisherman; oil driller; engineer; airport serviceman; military; judge; law; statistician; mechanic; farmer; plumber; paver; welder; taxi driver; pilot; chef; surgeon; economist; finance manager; investor; PT; paper mill; real estate; architect; car salesman; lumber industry; accounting; manufacturer; or the management of a team of any of these; professional athlete; web designer; carpet & flooring;



some sort of outdoor guide; firearms manufacturer; cobbler; policeman; fireman; pastor; administrator; musician; coach; etc.: these can provide tangible service to people, and therefore, are forms of loving one's neighbor

- d. An occupation which involves benefiting people (as the aforementioned), or loving one's neighbor, inherently has value, since it fulfills God's second greatest commandment.

3. Does it provide material needs?

- a. Can I provide for material needs and have some remaining to save and give?
- b. Am I looking for work in which I cannot realistically provide?
- c. Should I re-examine my current occupation in order to find one in which I can provide materially?

4. Can I live a godly and balanced life in this work?

- a. Some jobs require much time away from family and the Body of Christ. A man will have to prayerfully evaluate the wisdom of continuing in this kind of work, where possible.
- b. Certain types of work may be important and offer desirable financial incentives. But a man will need to think through what season of life he is in and if he can be faithful. A man does not have to sin against God in order to ensure that God will provide for him.
- c. A man will need to ask questions like:
  - i. Will I be able to give adequate time to shepherding and nurturing my family?
  - ii. Will this job require that I forsake faithfully gathering with, and serving in, my local church?

5. Do I have the skills or God-given abilities to develop skill in this work?
  - a. We can all develop certain skills. This is balanced with the fact that God has sovereignly dealt us all the hand with which we must play in life.
  - b. Do I have the physical ability to perform this work?
  - c. Do I have the mental and intellectual ability to perform this work?
  - d. Do I have the spiritual ability to perform this work?
  - e. That a job is difficult physically, mentally, or spiritually does not mean a man should quit. The Curse has rendered just about all work difficult (“by the sweat of your brow,” Gen 3:17).

6. A Brief Look at the Believer’s Approach to Work

- a. Respectful obedience towards one’s employer/boss

Ephesians 6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ

- b. Working as unto the Lord

Ephesians 6:6-8 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. <sup>7</sup> With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

Colossians 3:23--24 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

- c. Integrity in work

Colossians 3:22, 25 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but

with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord...<sup>25</sup> For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

d. Diligence in one's work

Ephesians 6:6-8 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. <sup>7</sup> With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

e. Graciousness in the face of unkindness

1 Peter 2:18-20 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. <sup>19</sup> For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

f. Employers

Ephesians 6:9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

g. Implications

- Believers should have a good reputation at their jobs, as it concerns their work ethic.
- A man's boss and co-workers may not like him due to his Christian faith. However, he should not have a compromised witness/reputation due to poor work ethic.

h. Concentration & "Deep Work" excursus

## 7. Hobbies & Work

- a. Richard Philipps: “Even in leisure we see that men are made for work.”<sup>7</sup>
- b. Our hobbies demonstrate that we are made for work

## 8. Work and Heaven

- Scenes portraying heaven and life after the return of Christ seem to include work.
- Considering that work was not a product of the Curse, but life prior to it, we can safely reason that heaven, the glorified state, will include work

### The Parable of the Minas and Heavenly Reward

Luke 19:11-27

<sup>15</sup> “When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. <sup>16</sup> “The first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’ <sup>17</sup> “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, **you are to be in authority over ten cities.**’

<sup>18</sup> “The second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’ <sup>19</sup> “And he said to him also, ‘And **you are to be over five cities.**’

- Jesus rewards the faithful servants, representing faithful believers and their diligent work for Him from salvation to death, which seems to be increased capacity to work in the future state.

Revelation 22:3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him

- This seems to indicate that glorified believers will serve Christ in His presence for eternity, thus indicating some sort of work.
- Since heaven is a place where the Curse is permanently eradicated (Rev 21:3-4), we can conclude that the work we perform there will

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate*, Chapter 3.

be unspeakably joyful, holy, righteous, fulfilling, and Christ-centered in every way, absent the physical and spiritual limitations and battles we currently face.

- Therefore, the work we get to perform in heaven is something to greatly anticipate.