



I. Is Work Holy?

TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO

In this video let's reflect on a concept that helped me realize that what I did at my workplace mattered to God and it brings glory to Him. The concept is simple - "work is holy." To be more specific that work outside the walls of a church is also holy.

Maybe this concept is understood well by many Christians, but when I began working in the bank in my twenties, I was actually certain that my work was not holy. It was only in my forties, with proper teaching that I realised my work at office was as holy as the volunteer work I did in church, and I daresay as holy as the work of pastors ministering in churches.

I don't know what your experience has been, but I can't recall this concept being taught when I attended Sunday School as a kid in India. Neither have I heard it preached more than a couple of times over the past four decades in churches I worshipped in – be it India, the US, the Gulf or Canada.

So, I will not be surprised if some of you place what you or others do in church on a holier pedestal than the work you do at office. Let us reflect on whether this kind of elevation is valid and justified.

There are a few verses in the Bible that have contributed to the misunderstanding that office or business work is not holy.

The most important reason for this opinion is the incorrect assumption that mankind started working ONLY after the Fall and due to the curse found in Gen 3:19 where God tells Adam that by the sweat of his brow he will eat food.

But, that assumption is Biblically incorrect. After God created everything and felt it was very good we read in Gen 2:15, "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*" God takes Adam and puts him to work to take care of the garden. This happened even before Eve is created in Gen 2:18. This clearly shows that work existed before the Fall and like everything else that God introduced it is "good."

If this does not convince you, maybe another verse will as it shows that work was always an essential part of God's good plan. And yes, its holy.

Do you remember the fourth Commandment? I hope you do. It is the only one that God commands us to remember! Got it now? Yes, it is "*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor & do all your work.*" (Gen 20:8-9)

We are all familiar with the first part of the 4th commandment that makes the 7th day a rest day. But, wait a minute, what does the second part of the commandment say? It says '*six days you shall labour*' or for six days you should work.

The question we need to ask ourselves is this. "Will a holy God command us to do something unholy for six days?" Think about that and I hope your response is like mine - No way! Indeed, work is holy. Paul elevates the value of work

done with the right attitude by saying in Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” As we diligently do our work, we honor God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes two declarations about His follower. He first declares, “*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, it is no longer good for anything.*” (Matt 5:13 abridged). We must be out in the world with our salty characteristics. Like salt, we should be able to bring out the best flavours at our workplace by nurturing and equipping others to work and grow to their full potential. Like salt we can help reduce the rot in our sphere of influence by preventing selfish-ambition and the use of unethical methods to win the “rat race.” Like salt we need to be a preservative showcasing and promoting values like honesty, fairness, reliability and excellence.

Jesus also declares, “*You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*” (Matt 5:14 a & 16)

Like light we must shine and expose dark areas of discrimination, harassment, bribe-giving and other unethical practices at our workplaces. On the positive side, we display the light of goodness by “acting justly, loving and showing mercy and walking humbly at our workplaces. And thereby revealing there is a better way to work in the world and be agents of positive transformation.

If we live out these declarations of being salt and light in our work places, church and homes we will undoubtedly bring glory to God. Let’s end the false dichotomy of holy and unholy work as we realize God cares about everything we do. May God bless us all as we look at our work the way God looked at it when He said “six days you will labour.”

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