

The Work You Should Really Celebrate This Labor Day

The Labor Day holiday is here. Ironically, it's a holiday we celebrate by avoiding what we're celebrating. We celebrate labor by not working.

This holiday reminds us there's a time to work ... and a time not to work.

And that applies to our Christian life, too. There's a time to work and a time not to.

Our restored relationship with God is not dependent on any labor on our part. Consider Ephesians 2:8-9:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast.”

We can't take credit for our salvation. That's what makes it so amazing. Every other religion is based on humanity's efforts to work their way up to heaven. But Christianity is all about God reaching *down* to us. He did it all.

And it's a good thing He did. Because we don't have the ability to reach up to a holy God. Our sin separates us from Him—a chasm we couldn't breach even if we wanted to. If restoration is to occur, it must be initiated by Him.

Still, there's a place for our work. Because the next verse (Eph. 2:10) tells us:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them.”

Yes, there's a time to work—not *for* our salvation, but *because* of it. We serve the Lord from a heart overflowing with gratitude because He restored us to Him.

But what about Philippians 2:12-13?

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (NIV).

“Work out your salvation” or “It is God who works in you”? Which is it?

Both.

As Oswald Chambers explained:

“With focused attention and great care, you have to ‘work out’ what God ‘works in’ you—not work to accomplish or earn ‘your own salvation,’ but work it out so you will exhibit the evidence of a life based with determined, unshakable faith on the complete and perfect redemption of the Lord.”

But what about Labor Day? What about the work we do vocationally? The Bible has something to say about that, too, especially for Christians:

“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. For you serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:23-24).

So today, let's celebrate labor. And as we celebrate, let's remember that our salvation is the one area where God did it all, because there's a time to work ... and a time not to. {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. She also authored *Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional*, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

This article originally appeared at .