

Labor Day: Biblical Reflections

Labor Day is a holiday when we can take time to consider the dignity and importance of work.

Work is one of what we call “the five commandments of prosperity” described in the Bible. The other “commandments”—giving, learning, saving and management—are all fruits of working, which means work is the most important of God’s financial commandments.

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The requirement that we work to meet our needs goes back to our first parents, Adam and Eve. God gave Adam a job tending the Garden of Eden before mankind’s fall. The work would have been pleasant in the productive garden, and Adam had lots of time to walk with God (Gen. 2:15). It is also worth noting that God gave man a job before he gave him a wife. But after the fall, Adam was required to work “by the sweat of [his] brow” (Gen. 3:19a, NIV) to provide for his family. He lost the place of prosperity God gave him, and his sin made his work harder.

Sin can also make our work harder if we have left the place of prosperity God has established for us. For example, we’ve seen people whom God called to be tentmakers, providing for their personal ministry through work, like the apostle Paul (Acts 18:3); people who lost their prosperity by trying to have the church support their ministry and vice versa. The Bible says that refusal to work is also a pathway to poverty (Prov. 6:10-11). God commands us to help the poor (Deut. 10:11), but He also says that a person who refuses to work should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10-12).

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Work is an act of worship, to be done with sincerity and reverence for the Lord. We should work as if we work for the Lord, knowing the Lord will reward us (Col. 4:22-24). God wants us to realize the prosperity that comes from work. Work brings respect and frees us from dependence on others (1 Thess. 4:11-12). Through hard work, our desires are satisfied (). Hard work also yields promotion and rulership (Prov. 12:24).

Work is the secret to accumulating wealth (Prov. 10:4).

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