

# The Worthiness of Work

Joe Slater

Someone said, “If hard work is the key to success, most people would rather pick the lock!” You’ve seen the TV specials – get rich quickly, with almost no work, using somebody else’s money. And if those aren’t enough, even government is promoting the something-for-nothing philosophy through legalized gambling (lottery, etc.). Yessirree, just imagine what you could do with all those millions! Fact is, those who dream of hitching their wagon to a star would be better off hitching up their trousers and going to work!

God’s word upholds a strong work ethic. God Himself worked as He created the universe (Genesis 2:2-3). He still works in sustaining and upholding His creation (John 15:17). Since God works, who among us dares to turn up his nose or say, “I’m too good to work”?

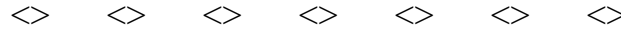
From the beginning, God has assigned work for people to do. In the beautiful paradise of Eden, Adam worked. He was responsible for tending and keeping the pristine garden God had planted there (Genesis 2:15). Later, after Adam and Eve had spoiled the situation by sinning, work became the more strenuous toil (3:17). Nevertheless, down through the ages, people have always worked. Abraham was a herdsman; David was a soldier and a shepherd; Amos looked after sycamore fruit; Peter was a fisherman; Paul made tents. You can extend the list indefinitely. Jesus Himself worked as a carpenter (Mark 6:3).

In addition to commending work, God’s word rebukes laziness. Time and time again, the Proverbs rail against the idle sluggard: “*He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer*” (18:19). “*Slothfulness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger*” (19:15). Solomon scorned the

lazy man for making pathetic excuses for staying in from work: “*The slothful man says, ‘There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!’*” (Proverbs 22:13).

Though God’s people are always to be generous toward the unfortunate, they are not to subsidize shiftlessness. Paul plainly wrote: “*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat*” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Rather than expecting others to support us, or, worse yet, resorting to theft, we ought to “*labor with [our] hands what is good, that [we] may have something to give to him who has need*” (Ephesians 4:28)

There is dignity in work. Without work, life would be boring. Never be ashamed to work! Happy Labor Day!



## CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT CHRIST

- ❖ He who was the bread of life began His ministry hungry.
- ❖ He who was the water of life began His ministry thirsty.
- ❖ He who was often weary is our rest.
- ❖ He who paid taxes is the King of the universe.
- ❖ He who was called a devil cast out demons.
- ❖ He who wept dries our tears.
- ❖ He who was sold for 30 pieces of silver redeemed the world.
- ❖ He who was led as a lamb to the slaughter is our Good Shepherd.

via Broadway Church of Christ (Campbellsville, KY)

## Who Are You Imitating?

*"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children"* (Ephesians 5:1).

How can we imitate God? He is holy, He is perfect, He never makes mistakes, and He never has sinned. Some people are really good at imitating others, but how can we imitate God whom no one has seen? What is our model? Jesus said in John 14:9, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." So if we behave like Jesus and we love like Jesus, then we imitate God. Paul said, "*Be imitators of me*" (I Corinthians 4:16).

An imitator is someone who makes the effort to behave in every aspect as another behaves. Paul was teaching the brethren in Corinth to be like him. Paul goes on to say that, "*Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ*" (I Corinthians 11:1). Paul said that he left an example as to what an imitator of Christ looks like. In writing to the church in Thessalonica, Paul said, "*You also became imitators of us and the Lord*" (I Thessalonians 1:6).

The writer of Hebrews gave this admonition: "*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises*" (Hebrews 6:11-12).

How can we imitate God? We look at Jesus the Man while he was here on earth. We look at Paul, Abraham, and the others in Hebrews 11. We look at the book of Acts. We look at faithful men and women that we know and have known. Thus we can learn to behave like our Father. We need to view sin like God does, to forgive others like God forgave us, to love unconditionally, and to seek the kingdom first.

Ed Wittif (Denver, CO)