

# Work+

Gen2.1-3,15,18;3.17-19; etc

The Story that Makes Sense of Our Stories

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CBC

February 27, 2022

## Introduction

### [TITLE SLIDE 01]

What do you think about when I ask: What do you do for a living?

How do you answer that question? How should we think about this question? What are the issues related to the answer to this question? From where do we take our cues for our answer?

I'm fairly certain that most of us would automatically think about our jobs [...]

One of the effects of the pandemic relates to our attitude about our jobs.

- Sectors are suffering from mass resignations (Canadian companies recruiting for 875,000 positions) and turnover among their employees
  - (SLIDE 02) "A recent Bank of Canada survey came to a very different conclusion than Statscan, finding the likelihood that workers will switch jobs in the coming year the highest in many years" (Matt Lundy, Globe and Mail)
  - Robbie Abed in INC. magazine claims that "More workers than ever before are leaving their jobs and feeling incredibly that they will find another one, shortly after; More people will go in business for themselves; and More people are going to quit"
- People are discovering the possibility of "work-life balance"
- More people are talking about "side hustles" (adding income sources to a regular job); websites promoting "70 Legit Ways to Make Extra Money" and "11 Best Side Hustle Ideas to Make an Extra \$1000 a Month" and on and on it goes.

(SLIDE 03) What is the purpose of work? Of having a job?

### Other Stories

The predominant "Western" message: you are your work; you need a job, a side hustle and passive income because that is how you get rich (work as a revenue generator) and the more the better; the sooner you can retire/the younger you can retire, the better because then you can enjoy life

(SLIDE 04) Secularism: a collection of interconnected ideologies that derive a life-view without any recourse to God.

- Scientific Materialism: reality is only able to be explained and thus understood through scientific theories and models because reality is composed of only physical material
- Humanism: the human being is the measure of all things; that the human being has the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives

- Objectivism: the moral purpose to life is an individual's own happiness derived from a rational respect for the facts of reality; an individual's happiness is always possible
- Libertarianism: strongly values individual freedom

This group looks at work as both an end and a means. As an end the idea is that the better job you have, the better and more respectable person you are. As a means the idea is that a better job is one that pays you more money so that you can have better things, bigger houses, faster cars and go on more expensive holidays ultimately so that if you do well enough, you can retire early to live a life of luxury. All you have to do is look through the most popular social media streams and topics. Beautiful people with beautiful things in beautiful places.

There is a dark side to all this right. Some of you know this all too well. What happens if you can't find a job that pays you a lot of money? What happens if you have the nerve to grow old? What kind of person are you then? What sort of conclusion can you draw about your value and purpose? About your usefulness?

Do we really think that the best way to view those who are retired or those that have lower paying jobs as less valuable people? Why does that bother some of us? **(SLIDE 05)** Where does the desire to see value, purpose and meaning in the life of individuals beyond what kind of job they have come from?

It doesn't come from the secular story.

## Body

### **(SLIDE 06) The Judeo-Christian Story**

Genesis Introduction

*Review*

### **(SLIDE 07) The Foundation: We are image-bearers of God.**

This is where it all begins for the humanity's view of itself on the Judeo-Christian story. This is where it all begins. This is the first thing that needs to be addressed [...]

It is so very important that each of us deals with this. This is our only hope. It is not it better time-management. Not in better government policy. It is when each of us as individuals bow our knee before God as our Creator, as the Sovereign over all of creation and submit to Him alone. The Bible explains that we do this not out of our effort or because we deserve it but because Jesus Christ, the Son of God – the one who, himself is truly God - demonstrated the deep and profound love of God by being born as a human, living and teaching, dying on a cross as a perfect sacrifice to pay the penalty for our rebellion from God, rising again from the dead breaking the power of death over us and by ascending in body to the right hand of God presenting perfected humanity and mediating a perfect relationship between God and his beloved creation. But there is an invitation to heed. It is not automatically applied. There is a response that we must make

### **(SLIDE 08) The Original Commission: Work**

**(SLIDE 09) God worked (and declared the results of his work "very good").**

*Genesis 2.1-3*

**(SLIDE 10)** “In this on-the-ground and local story of creation, we find God getting his hands dirty. He plants and tends the garden, forms the dirtling from the dirt, and puts him to work” (Dru Johnson)<sup>1</sup>

[Back to the Judeo-Christian Story slide]

**(SLIDE 11) God directed work.**

*Genesis 2.15, 18*

God not only directed humanity to take care of his creation, but He did so in community. He provided a special and unique partnership between a man and woman as a social precedent for the fulfilling of that work. Both were to have a part to play, and that template would spread to the family and to the larger culture. God directs us to work together to fulfill his purposes.

Then humanity rebelled [...]

**(SLIDE 12) Work became labourious.**

**(SLIDE 13) The Rest of the Story: Re-created for Good Works**

*Ephesians 2.10*

<sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. <sup>2</sup>

**(SLIDE 14)** What is that “work?”

**(SLIDE 15)** Working Out Your Salvation

*Philippians 2.12-13*

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. <sup>3</sup>

**(SLIDE 16)** Labouring for the Lord

*1 Corinthians 15:58*

<sup>58</sup>Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.<sup>4</sup>

**(SLIDE 17) Work+: Rest**

**(SLIDE 18) God rested (something to notice for his Image-bearers).**

<sup>1</sup> Dru Johnson, *The Universal Story: Genesis 1–11*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al., Transformative Word (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; St. George's Centre, 2018), 43.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Eph 2:10.

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Php 2:12–13.

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 1 Co 15:58.

### Genesis 2.1-3

It is stated twice, in case you missed it the first time. Rest matters to God!

#### **(SLIDE 19) God “blessed” and “hallowed” the seventh day.**

### Genesis 2.1-3

“In the Bible blessing is usually restricted to animate beings, and it is paradoxical that here a day of rest is blessed: inactivity is not usually seen as promoting fruitfulness and success.”<sup>5</sup>

“Finally, the seventh day is hallowed, the first thing in Scripture to be called holy, that is, set apart for God and therefore sharing in his perfect life.”<sup>6</sup>

That is the biblical cycle. Work lots but then rest. Work for six days and then rest for one day. Then repeat.

But there are three more pieces to add here:

#### **(SLIDE 20) The Purpose of Rest: For our present benefit.**

### Mark 2.27-28

<sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; <sup>28</sup> so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”<sup>7</sup>

#### **(SLIDE 21) The Purpose of Rest: For our eternal benefit.**

### Hebrews 4:9-10

<sup>9</sup> So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; <sup>10</sup> for those who enter God’s rest also cease from their labors as God did from his.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

So what does the Judeo-Christian story say about work? **(SLIDE 22)**

1. Our primary work is as God’s image-bearers to bring glory to Him.
2. Work is our life.
3. Our work is not our job but it does include our job.
4. Rest is an essential component.

So let me conclude with a challenge for everyone:

#### **(SLIDE 23) [Main Title Slide]**

Our value comes from God’s creative purpose not in the kind of job you do or do not have. God’s purpose is that we lovingly care for God’s creation our home and the people we find sharing that home. As Christ emphasized it also must include the nurturing of our relationship with the Creator.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 39.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 39.

<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Mk 2:27–28.

<sup>8</sup> *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Heb 4:8–10.