

GRACE, WORK & HAPPINESS

Five Talents Team

“Come and share your master’s happiness!”
(Matthew 25:23)

Have you ever been frustrated, bored, or overwhelmed with work? Whether in the office, at school or at home, work can feel like a chore. Yes, we live in a world where work involves toil and sweat (Genesis 3:19).

Yet the Parable of the Talents invites us to consider the relationship between work and happiness. In this passage, the faithful servants are invited to share in their master’s happiness as they complete a task and take on additional management responsibilities. Stewarding resources for the master is meant to be a joy.

In God’s original design, work was a blessing and not a curse, not tedious or mundane. God entrusted Adam and Eve to work and take care of the garden. They were to enjoy its fruit and labour together in joyful relationship. The Hebrew word for “work” (avodah) can mean common labour or service (Genesis 2:5), but it also means “to worship” (Exodus 8:1). So work and worship are meant to go side by side and our work can be an act of worship!

Human work is based on God’s creative work. Guided by God’s will, we are called to use our intellect, energy, talents, and creativity to be “God’s fellow workers” (1 Corinthians 3:9). In fact, work represents a sacred opportunity to participate with God in his work of creation and redemption: planting and harvesting nourishing food, defending the poor and oppressed, fighting for justice, fashioning works of beauty, and building systems and structures to serve the needs of others.

In the Bible, our work is not to achieve God’s favour; rather it is a response to God’s grace. There is satisfaction and celebration after a job well done. Work is to be balanced with times of rest and recreation.

ILLUSTRATION:

I remember when I was younger watching the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. Of the dwarves, Grumpy was particularly sour in his attitude towards work. Snow White began to whistle while she worked, and Grumpy and his friends learned the power of song. It’s amazing how a little music brightened their attitude and motivated their work - and it can change ours as well. So, go ahead and whistle while you work!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Do you generally think of work as a blessing or a curse? Why?

How does sin affect our work and our view of work?

How do you see the relationship between work and worship in your life?

Responding to God’s grace, what type of work would you like to be involved in?

PRAYER

Master, help me to put my energy, talents and creativity to work for You. I commit myself to You. Accomplish Your good purposes and plans through me and may I find happiness and satisfaction in the work you give me.

