

# The Biblical Perspective of Work

## By Max Barnett

### I. INTRODUCTION

You will spend many thousands of hours during your lifetime working! During much of your life, at least half of your waking hours will be spent working. There is the work of maintaining a home as well as the work of your job.

We have a great privilege in this land to have some choices as to the type of work we pursue. Some of the work we really have no choice about: lawns to be mowed, garbage carried from the house, houses painted, dishes washed, beds made, etc.

Because work is to take up such a large number of hours per week—and some of your most productive hours—it is wise for you to learn God's perspective on work.

### II. WORD IS ORDAINED OF GOD

Work is not just part of our society. Work is in God's plan for us. This can be clearly seen from the beginning pages of God's Word even before the Fall:

*Genesis 2:15 (NAS): "Then the Lord took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.*

*Genesis 2:19—Adam had the job of naming the animals.*

*Genesis 3:17-19a (NAS): "then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of our face you shall eat bread.'"*

Work is necessary to meet man's basic need for food.

### III. WHY WORK?

#### A. Work is ordained of God. It is God's will.

- *Ephesians 6:5-6 (NAS): "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."*

**B. To meet your needs and those of your immediate family or larger family if need be.**

- *1 Timothy 5:8: "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."*

**C. To keep from being a burden to others.**

- *1 Thessalonians 2:9: "For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God."*
- *2 Thessalonians 3:8 "nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you"*

**D. To help the needs of others by giving.**

- Give to those who are serving in ministry.
  - *Acts 20:34 (NAS): "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me."*
- Give to those who are weak.
  - *Acts 20:35 (NAS): "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*
- Give to those who have needs.
  - *Ephesians 4:28 (NAS): "He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need."*

**E. To have a good testimony with non-Christians.**

- *1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (NAS): "and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need."*

**F. To set a good example for Christians.**

- *2 Thessalonians 3:9 (NAS): "not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example."*

**G. Laziness is strictly forbidden in Scripture. Do not give to those who are able to work but who do not.**

- *2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (NAS): "For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread."*

- *Proverbs 13:4 (NAS): “The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.”*
- *Proverbs 20:4 (NAS): “The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.”*

#### **H. Diligence is highly commanded by God.**

- *Proverbs 22:29 (NAS): “Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men.”*
- *Proverbs 6:6-11 (NAS): “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest”—Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man.”*
- *1 Thessalonians 4:11 (NAS): “and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,”*

### **IV. ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK AND ACTIONS IN WORK**

#### **A. Your attitude toward your work is not to be dependant on your job or on your boss.**

- *Colossians 3:2 (NAS): “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”*
- *Ephesians 6:5 (NAS): “Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ”*

#### **B. Realize you are serving God, not man, in any job you have.**

- *Ephesians 6:5-7 (NAS): “Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men”*
- *Colossians 3:22-23 (NAS): “Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men”*

#### **C. Supervision has nothing whatsoever to do with how hard you work.**

- *Ephesians 6:6 (NAS): “not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”*
- *Proverbs 6:6-11 (NAS): “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the*

*harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest"—Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man."*

**D. Do your work heartily.**

- *Colossians 3:23 (NAS): "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men"*
- *Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NAS): "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going."*
- *2 Corinthians 8:11 (NAS): "But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it by your ability."*

**E. Be obedient to those in authority over you.**

- *Colossians 3:23 (NAS): "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men"*

**F. Realize a job well done brings satisfaction.**

- *Proverbs 13:19 (NAS): "Desire realized is sweet to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to turn away from evil."*

**G. Little mundane tasks are not insignificant.**

- *Luke 16:10-11 (NAS): "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?"*

**H. Serving is WORK!**

- *Mark 10:45 (NAS): "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

**I. Realize your reward comes from God.**

- *Ephesians 6:8 (NAS): "knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free."*
- *Colossians 3:24-25 (NAS): "knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality."*
- *Hebrews 6:10 (NAS): "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints."*