

Title: A Search for Meaning | The gifts of work and rest
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Finding meaning at work and rest

Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind. “Fools fold their idle hands, leading them to ruin.” And yet, “Better to have one handful with quietness than two handfuls with hard work and chasing the wind.” (Ecclesiastes 4:4-6)

We share in God’s management of the world

God is a worker

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...and he saw that it was very good!... (Genesis 1:1, 31)

Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man... (Genesis 2:7)

But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.” (John 5:17)

Work is a gift...a partnership

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will **reign over** the fish...the birds...the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth...” Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and **govern it. Reign over...**” (Genesis 1:26, 28)

We work for God

Work with enthusiasm, as though you were **working for the Lord** rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don’t threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. (Ephesians 6:7-9)

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were **working for the Lord** rather than for people...the Master you are **serving is Christ**. (Colossians 3:23-24)

The challenge of work in a broken world

And to the man he said, “...the ground is cursed because of you. All your life **you will struggle** to scratch a living from it.” (Genesis 3:17)

We share God’s love with the world

...God’s very own possession. As a result, you can **show others** the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Through work we experience and share God's generosity

And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and **plenty left over to share** with others. As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then **produce a great harvest of generosity in you.**

(2 Corinthians 9:8-10)

We offer God's rest to the world

So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest...

(Hebrews 4:9-11)

Work and rest are better in community

When we are alone we miss too much

I observed yet another example of something meaningless under the sun. This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can. But then he asks himself, "Who am I working for? Why am I giving up so much pleasure now?" It is all so meaningless and depressing.

(Ecclesiastes 4:7-8)

The advantage of community

Two people are better off than one, for they **can help** each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. It is better to be a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who refuses all advice...So it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-13, 16)

Work and rest in Christ

As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. It is evil to make mindless offerings to God. Don't make rash promises, and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few. Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool...Talk is cheap, like daydreams and other useless activities. **Fear God instead.** (Ecclesiastes 5:1-3, 7)

Fear God...the foundation for life

Jesus is our Sabbath rest...mindfulness

Reflection Question: How do you view work? What would it look like if you acted as if Jesus was your boss?