



BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF **LABOR**





FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

In the Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of the Christian Education League, we hold to the teachings of the Bible as the infallible Word of God. It is our desire to look at labor through the foundational lens of Scripture.

GOD CREATED WORK.

The Bible begins with God working, and through His work, He created people in His image. As image bearers of God, He has work for us to do. Work was created before the fall, and it is good.

WORK IS FALLEN.

In Genesis 3, we learn of the beginning of humanity's rebellion against God. People chose pride and selfishness, resulting in sin. For generations the whole of creation has suffered the consequences of sin, and that includes work. Work is not what it was originally created to be. That is why it is hard, wears down the mind and body, and can be monotonous. Work is still good, but it is fallen.

CHRIST'S WORK IS THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION.

As people, we have become quite good at fixing things. We can make broken cars last longer, fix up old houses, restore historic buildings, and have even made significant medical advances to extend life expectancy. We cannot, however, stop death and decay. Our work only takes us so far. Our only ultimate hope is in Christ's work on the Cross. Through the Cross, Jesus satisfied the penalty of our sins, removing judgment for those who put their faith in Him. His redeeming work was complete three days later when He rose from the dead, defeating death, and sat down at the right hand of the Father.

WE AWAIT THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS.

Though sin and death were conquered through Christ's death and resurrection, we still await the restoration of all things, including our bodies and creation. At His return, true justice will be served, sins will be addressed, and creation will be made new.

Until then, work displays the will of God, the fallenness of man, and the hope of Christ. He desires all to come to the knowledge of Christ and be ambassadors for Him, displaying His kingdom values, including a strong work ethic and faithfulness in our labors.



WORK IS A BLESSING. IT IS NOT A PUNISHMENT. IT IS TO BE CREATIVE. IT ALLOWS US TO DISPLAY OUR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS.

Often you will hear that people need a career, not just a job. Generally, people will endure for a career better than they do for a job. People are more than a cog in a machine. God designed work to bring out our strengths, talents, wisdom, and creativity. It shows our individual uniqueness as well as our collective bond. Too often, work is monotonous and fails to give workers opportunities to use their talents.

While hard, physical and mental labor is a typical part of life, it is important that all honest labor be appreciated and valued and that people have opportunities to display their God-given talents and giftings. Rather than viewing and treating employees merely as "human resources," in a free society, businesses and employers can foster this invaluable spirit of respect, gratitude, and creativity that truly values the labor of hard-working individuals.



"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Ephesians 2:10

WORK IS NOT OUR IDENTITY. WORK IS SOMETHING THAT WE DO. IT IS NOT WHO WE ARE.

Too often our work becomes our identity. We must value work but not overvalue it so that it becomes our very identity. This leads to a devalued life. What happens if someone becomes disabled or loses their job? Does that person have any less value?

We are more than what we do and where we work. We were created by God Most High. Work is good, but our identity must be found in Christ alone.



“FOR YOU FORMED MY INWARD PARTS; YOU KNITTED ME TOGETHER IN MY MOTHER'S WOMB. I PRAISE YOU, FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.”

PSALM 139:13

WE ARE TO BE FRUITFUL, AND WORKERS ARE TO BE COMPENSATED FAIRLY FOR THEIR FRUITFUL LABORS.

God created us to be fruitful and multiply. As we work, it must be our desire to bless others. We should not seek to be fruitful only to reap benefits ourselves. Rather, we must desire the mind of Christ and practice personal generosity with the fruits of our labors. And through our work and quality of labor, we can bless our employers, employees, families, and communities.

Owners and employees should desire profit for their companies that leads to the blessing of all, including those in the community. Part of the blessing of being a hard worker is getting paid a fair wage and rewarded for our work, without favoritism.



“HE PRESENTED ANOTHER PARABLE TO THEM: “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A MUSTARD SEED THAT A MAN TOOK AND SOWED IN HIS FIELD. IT'S THE SMALLEST OF ALL THE SEEDS, BUT WHEN GROWN, IT'S TALLER THAN THE GARDEN PLANTS AND BECOMES A TREE, SO THAT THE BIRDS OF THE SKY COME AND NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”

MATTHEW 13:31-32

IDLENESS AND SLOTHFULNESS ROB INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, HARM CREATION, AND DESTROY COMMUNITIES.

Slothfulness is not only wrong because it harms the sluggards themselves and those affected by their decisions, it also robs them of the image God created them to portray. Slothfulness robs families and communities of the labor those individuals needed to contribute, and creation itself suffers when it is not cared for. Slothfulness is not a victimless sin.



“I went by the field of a slacker and by the vineyard of one lacking sense. Thistles had come up everywhere, weeds covered the ground, and the stone wall was ruined. I saw, and took it to heart; I looked, and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest, and your poverty will come like a robber, and your need, like a bandit.”

Proverbs 24:30-34

EMPLOYERS MUST TREAT EMPLOYEES WELL, AND EMPLOYEES MUST WORK AS IF THEY ARE WORKING FOR THE LORD HIMSELF.

God wants employers to treat their employees as they themselves want to be treated. Employees are also called to serve their employers as if they are working for God Himself. We want to create an economic environment of service, where both employers and employees serve one another.



“You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns.”

Deuteronomy 24:4

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Colossians 3:23-25

WE ARE TO REST.

Though not given equal time, God created rest to complement work. There is a season for work, and there is a season for rest. We find satisfaction in life when these are properly balanced. If we work too little, we miss out on life. However, if we do not receive proper rest, we still miss out on life. It is important that a life full of work also includes a life of rest. Paying workers overtime for long hours only goes so far. It is very important that workers are given opportunities to rest adequately.



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PSALM 139:13

GOVERNMENT IS TO COMMEND THE GOOD AND PUNISH THE EVIL.

God instituted government as an institution of justice. Government policies should reward those who work, make it easier to provide working opportunities, and reward employers who take care of their employees. Government policies should protect workers and make it difficult to not work for those who can.



“SUBMIT TO EVERY HUMAN AUTHORITY BECAUSE OF THE LORD, WHETHER TO THE EMPEROR AS THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OR TO GOVERNORS AS THOSE SENT OUT BY HIM TO PUNISH THOSE WHO DO WHAT IS EVIL AND TO PRAISE THOSE WHO DO WHAT IS GOOD.”

1 PETER 2:13-14.



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