

Prov. 18:9: Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.

Intro: One of the reasons I appreciate sports is because of how God used it in my life to teach me to work hard & to have self-discipline, & the rewards of hard work & self-discipline. (school; choir)

- **1 Cor. 9:24-27:** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Indiana University is in the college football championship game tomorrow night. I'm more interested in this game than in whoever plays in the Superbowl this year. Why? Because of the dramatic turnaround of Indiana University's football program. In two years, they've gone from basically the worst in college football to the best. They are undefeated this season & one game away from winning it all. The main reason for the turnaround – their coach, Curt Cignetti. & as I've watched video about the dramatic change, one thing is clear, this man works hard at coaching!

Curt Cignetti: From the first play to last, play fast, physical, relentless. Smart, disciplined poised. One play at a time. Six seconds a play. Every play has a life of its own . . . Not affected by success. Not affected by failure. On to the next play. Never satisfied. Playing to a standard, not to the circumstances of the game. You're up in the 4th quarter 52-7 – OK, it's not OK to let up because of the circumstances of the game because you're playing to a standard. Standard. Habits. First you form your habits, then your habits form you . . . I feel compelled to improve & get better every single day. Cause I do firmly believe that you get better or you get worse, you never stay the same. & if you're not striving, somebody else is, & they are catching your [rear end] . . . you know the difference between good & great – you gotta have some unusual special characteristics to get from good to great—you gotta have a special discipline, a special commitment, work ethic, & focus

As Christians, we want to work hard, but we want to work hard in **the right way:** **(GOSPEL!**

Jn. 6:29: Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."); And for **the right reasons.** Laziness is destructive, so in Christ work hard for His glory!

1. Work Is A Good Gift Ordained By God

a. Work is not a result of the fall of man into sin: Define work: Jobs; school; chores; hobbies; spiritual disciplines; relationships – this has application to all of these areas.

- Work was ordained to be done by us before Adam & Eve sinned: **Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15:** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. & **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea & over the birds of the heavens & over the livestock & over all the earth & over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male & female he created them. & God blessed them. & God said to them, "**Be fruitful & multiply** & fill the earth & subdue it, & **have dominion over** the fish of the sea & over the birds of the heavens & over every living thing that moves on the earth." . . . ^{2:15} The LORD God took the man & put him in the garden of Eden **to work it & keep it.**

b. We work because God is a working God, & we are made in His image: Gen. 2:1-3: Thus the heavens & the earth were finished, & all the host of them. & on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, & he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day & made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

c. Jesus is the working God: Jn. 4:34: Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me & to accomplish his work."

- **Jn. 17:4:** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

2. Work Is Harder Now Because Of Sin

a. When Adam sinned, God cursed the world: Part of the curse was making work harder & frustrating & painful: **Gen. 3:17-19:** & to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife & have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns & thistles it shall bring forth for you; & you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, & to dust you shall return."

b. Because we are sinners, we're tempted to the sin of laziness: Prov. 18:9: Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.

John Kitchen: Proverbs speaks often of the dangers of laziness. This indolence shows itself "in his work". The expression describes that which you are commissioned by another to perform on his behalf. As a king may deploy a messenger or ambassador on royal business, so all of us are put under a charge at one time or another. The one who proves negligent in such a stewardship is "brother to" a man whose intent, from the beginning, is to destroy that royal work. Though the lazy man would distance himself from the destroyer, the fact is that he comes from the same moral gene pool . . . in terms of social outcome & life-effect, the lazy man & the social "demolition expert" are no different. The idle are consorting with the enemy of their King! The expression "him who destroys" is, more literally, "lord of destruction." The first word is one which does double duty as both the proper name of the false god Baal & a more common noun meaning "lord," "possessor," or "owner." The root of the second word is used to describe the destruction of cities, a dynasty (2 Chron. 21:7), nations who oppose God's own (Jer. 51:11), & God's own wayward people & that which they have acquired . . . Indolent neglect, as much as wicked intent, is culpable before God. Let us, therefore, be careful to keep the charge committed to us, not until we are satisfied, but until our King, who laid it upon us, releases us from it!

c. Why are people lazy? 1) Sin; 2) Work is hard; 3) You don't like your job, no joy in it; 4) All you've seen are bad examples; 5) You've been enabled: (*When Helping Hurts*, Corbett & Fikkert)

d. Because we are sinners, we can be tempted to idolize work: Workaholic; work too much, neglecting other duties; **Traeger/Gilbert:** 1) Primary satisfaction; 2) Make a name; 3) Save world!

e. There will be perfect work in heaven: In heaven, we will work! We will utterly enjoy it! We will look forward to it! The ground won't be cursed anymore! There will be no more sin, no more frustration, laziness, or idolatry in work! Work will only bring us joy! Only bring us satisfaction! Only bring us delight & happiness because we will work perfectly for God's glory!

- **Matt. 25:21:** [The master]: "Well done, good & faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." (Lk. 19:17: authority over cities)

- **2 Tim. 2:12:** if we endure, we will also reign with him

- **Rev. 7:15:** Therefore they are before the throne of God, & serve him day & night in his temple; & he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

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3. Christians Work For God

Col. 3:23-24: Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord & not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Sebastian Traeger/Greg Gilbert (*The Gospel At Work: How Working For King Jesus Gives Purpose And Meaning To Our Jobs*): Who you work for is more important than what you do . . . Every situation that might normally drive you to irritation & frustration – missed deadlines, tension in relationships with coworkers – now becomes an opportunity for you to pause, pray, & think, "OK, so God has brought this situation into my life. What does he want me to learn from it? How is this going to strengthen my faith & bring Him glory?" Asking these questions – & then acting in light of them – is precisely what it means to fight idleness in work & "serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord"

Six Benefits Of Working For Jesus: 1) Working for Jesus gives you freedom to **worship God** through your work.

- Biblical worship is more than just singing! . . . worshiping God in the workplace means you find yourself learning about Him, seeing His work, & enjoying His presence in your job. When you see creativity, revel in it as a reflection of the Great Creator of the universe! When your boss does a good job leading, rejoice in that as a good gift from God. When your boss doesn't do a good job leading, rejoice that the King of the universe is greater than him! When you see justice prevail, when you help a client get the best price on the best product for their needs, rejoice in those things as a beautiful reflection on God's goodness. When you have an eternal perspective, you are free to worship God in your work.

2) Working for Jesus gives you freedom to **serve others wholeheartedly.**

3) Working for Jesus gives you freedom to **trust God** in your work.

4) Working for Jesus gives you freedom to **rest from your work.**

5) Working for Jesus gives you **freedom to do your work well.**

6) Working for Jesus gives you freedom to have **joy in your work.** (My hard job in the Navy)

- **Six Motivations To Work:** 1) Work to love God; 2) Work to love others; 3) Work to reflect God's character; 4) Work for money; 5) Work for enjoyment; 6) Work to adorn the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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4. Christians Should Work Hard & Work Well

Prov. 18:9: Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.

- **Reverse:** Whoever is diligent in his work is a brother to him who rebuilds, heals, & builds up!

- **Prov. 6:6-11:** Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, & be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer & gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, & poverty will come upon you like a robber, & want like an armed man

- **Prov. 10:4:** A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

- **Prov. 12:11, 24, 27:** Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense . . . ²⁴ The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor . . . ²⁷ Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.

- **Prov. 13:4:** The soul of the sluggard craves & gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied. [**Traeger/Gilbert:** 1) Merely means to end; 2) Totally frustrating; 3) Cut off from discipleship]

- **Prov. 14:23:** In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.

- **Prov. 28:19:** Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty.

- Jesus warned the unfaithful manager & the lazy servant who hid his talents in the ground!

- **1 Thess. 4:11-12:** aspire to live quietly, & to mind your own affairs, & to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may live properly before outsiders & **be dependent on no one.**

- **2 Thess. 3:10-12:** For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: **If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.** For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command & encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly & **to earn their own living.**

- **1 Tim. 5:8:** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, & especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith & is worse than an unbeliever.

Jesus Christ is the perfect worker: Jn. 5:17-18: "My Father is working until now, & I am working." This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Christ Jesus Worked Like None Before
He Worked So Hard And Worked Galore
Did All His Father's Will Adore
Yet Rested Too – Did Not Ignore
The Need To Get Away To Soar
In All Perfection He Did More
He Died And All God's Wrath He Bore
Then Rose Alive – On Death Made War

So Now By Faith Alone Therefore
We're Counted Righteous And Abhor
All Laziness And Wasteful Snore
But Now We Work And Work Galore
All For His Name And Praise Adore
For With His Strength Our Lives Outpour
All Because Christ Worked The More!

Laziness is destructive, so in Christ work hard for His glory!