



Lesson One: Work in the Creation

Genesis 1:1-2:15

Bill Peel | May 7, 2025

Is work a blessing or a curse? A distraction from what's important? Something critically important to God's Kingdom and our spiritual growth? *It all depends on the story we've fallen into.*

"I wonder what kind of tale we've fallen into?"

—Samwise Gamgee

AN INCOMPLETE STORY

Act I: The Fall

Ephesians 2:1–3. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Act II: Redemption

Ephesians 2:4–9. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ ...⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

If this is all there is to the story ...

- ▶ there's a distinct line dividing the secular and the sacred.
- ▶ 99 percent of us are relegated to second-class citizenship in God's Kingdom.
- ▶ our daily work will seem like a distraction from Kingdom priorities.

"In nothing has the church so lost her hold on reality as in her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world's intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion. But is it so astonishing? How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life?"

—Dorothy Sayers, *Why Work?*



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There is more to the story.

Ephesians 2:10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

GOD'S STORY IN FOUR ACTS

ACT I: CREATION (WHY ARE WE HERE?)

ACT II: FALL (WHAT HAPPENED?)

ACT III: REDEMPTION (HOW DO WE LIVE?)

ACT IV: RESTORATION (WHERE ARE WE GOING?)

“There is not one square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ,
who is Sovereign over all, does not cry
“Mine.”

—Abraham Kuyper

REFRAMING WORK TO GOD'S STORY

1. Work is a gift of God, essential for human flourishing

God introduces Himself as a worker.

Genesis 1:1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 2:8. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Genesis 2:1-2. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ²And on the seventh day God finished his **work** that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his **work** that he had done.

God created us in His image as workers to finish creation.

Genesis 1:26–27. Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:28. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Our Job Description as Image Bearers

- ▶ **Be fruitful** = productive
- ▶ **Multiply** = reproduce; become great
- ▶ **Fill the earth** = bring to full flower
- ▶ **Subdue and rule** = bring under submission

Genesis 2:15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

Genesis 2:25. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 1:31. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

2. Work is an expression of our love for God and our neighbor.

The Great Commandment at Work

Matthew 22:37–39. And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

An Expression of Our Love for God

Colossians 3:22–25. Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

An Expression of Our Love for Neighbors

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12. Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more,¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you,¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

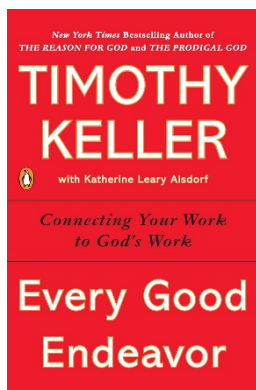
IMPLICATIONS

- ▶ You are an important part of God’s story right where you are.
- ▶ We live in a fallen world, but the Cultural Mandate is still in effect.
- ▶ Your work matters to God, unless ...
- ▶ You can go to work for the same reason as your pastor ...

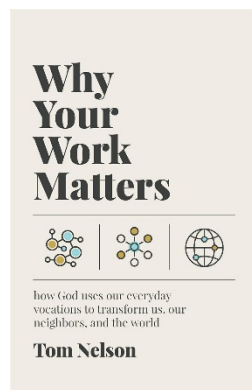
Discussion Questions:

1. How does your work contribute to human flourishing?
2. What difference does it make in your work to know that God delights in what you do between Sundays?
3. If the Fall had never occurred, and we were still living in Act I of God's Story, how would your work be different?
4. Would you pray differently, knowing that you are working for God?
5. How might living your faith at work pique the curiosity of coworkers and lead to redemptive conversations?

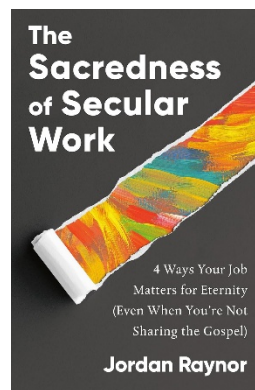
Suggested Resources:



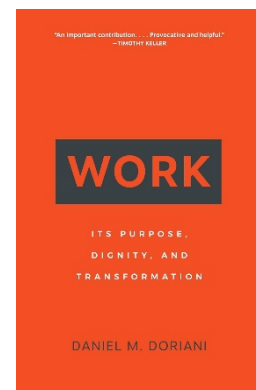
Every Good Endeavor:
Connecting Your Work to
God's Work
by Tim Keller and
Katherine Alsdorf



Why Your Work Matters:
How God Uses Our
Everyday Vocations to
Transform Us, Our
Neighbors, and the World
by Tom Nelson



The Sacredness of
Secular Work; 4 Ways
Your Job Matters for
Eternity (Even When
You're Not Sharing the
Gospel)
by Jordan Raynor



Work: Its Purpose,
Dignity, and
Transformation
by Dan Doriani