

## Theological Equipping Class – Work

### Work in Creation

#### **The God who Works**

##### **God makes Man in His Image – A Worker**

- “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> 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.” – Genesis 1:27-28
- “God built a cosmic temple where he called creation into being. In that temple he placed his own image and likeness. He then blessed his image and likeness and charged them with a responsibility. Their job was to make the world that God made good (Genesis 1:31) is even better (!)...Being in God’s image and likeness, mankind was to cultivate the world of vegetation and living creatures in ways reflecting God’s own character and creativity.” – James Hamilton

##### **God’s Design for Work Shows:**

- Our Work is meant to reflect God’s character in Creation
- We Participate in God’s Work
  - “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” - Genesis 1:1-2
  - “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.” – Genesis 1:28
  - “Work is neither punishment nor cursed drudgery but an exalted, godlike activity” – James Hamilton

##### **Complementary Design of Work: Man and Woman**

- “Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” – Genesis 2:18
- “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” – Genesis 2:15
- In order to “subdue and rule” man and woman need to “be fruitful and multiply”

##### **Our Work is meant to cause creation to worship God**

- “By charging the man to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, having dominion over all other creatures, God was commanding his image bearers, the visible representations of the authority and character of the invisible God, to cover the drylands with the glory of God as the waters cover the seas.” – James Hamilton

### Work after the Fall

**Fall:** Man meant to Work to reflect God’s character rebels

## Results of the Fall:

- *“To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”<sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and 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;<sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread”* – Genesis 3:16-19
- Work has New Pain: *“When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son<sup>29</sup> and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.”* – Genesis 5:28-29
- Unity in Work is Broken
- Motive for Work is Upended
- Work is Frustrating and Futile
  - *“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.<sup>3</sup> What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?”* – Ecclesiastes 1:2-3
  - *“So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.”* - Ecclesiastes 2:17
- Greatest Curse: Kicked out of the Garden (broken fellowship with God)

## Downward Spiral of Sinful Work

- Cain and Able
- Noah: *“Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard.<sup>21</sup> He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent.”* – Genesis 9:20-21
- Babel: *“And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.<sup>4</sup> Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”* – Genesis 11:3-5

## A Merciful God: Sin doesn't alter God's purposes for Work

- God is merciful for not instantly killing man on the spot
- God gives grace for Work in the midst of a broken world
  - *“Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!<sup>2</sup> You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.<sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.<sup>4</sup> Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.”* - Psalm 128:1-4
  - *“The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.”* – Proverbs 12:24
  - *“Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.”* – Proverbs 16:3
  - *“In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.”* – Proverbs 14:23
  - *“An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.<sup>11</sup> The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain...She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands...She considers a field and buys it;*

*with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard...<sup>18</sup> She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. <sup>19</sup> She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle...She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant...She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. <sup>28</sup> Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: <sup>29</sup> “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.” Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. <sup>31</sup> Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.” – Proverbs 31:10-31*

- Joseph and Daniel
- “The life described in these blessings of the covenant holds out the possibility of pre-fall gladness in post-fall gloom.” – James Hamilton

### Work in Redemption (Work in God’s Kingdom)

#### **God who works sends His Son who works to redeem rebellious Workers**

- “Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.” – John 5:17

#### **Jesus’ perfect Work enables our Work BUT world is still broken by sin**

- Harmony of Work Restored
  - “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” - Ephesians 5:22-28
  - “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” - Hebrews 10:24-25
- “At the root level, man’s task is to work in such a way that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting, the name of the Lord is praise, the goodness of God is savored, and the character of God is known and enacted. Thus the work that Adam made impossible by his sin is the work that Jesus has made possible through his death and resurrection and will accomplish when he returns. The earth will indeed be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.” – James Hamilton

#### **Because of Jesus it is now possible for Christians to:**

- Work to Love God:
  - Work that pleases God (Matt 25:14-30)
  - Do all for Gods glory (1 Cor 10:31)
  - Do all in Christ’s Name (Col 3:17)
  - Work from your soul for the Lord (Col 3:23)
- Work to Love Neighbor:
  - Work hard for the benefit of others (1 Cor 9:6-27; 15:10)

- Support ministry (1 Cor 9:14; Gal 6:6)
- Share with needy (Eph 4:28)
- Not lazy (1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:12)
- Work as a good testimony for unbelievers (1 Cor 9:12; 1 Thess 4:12; 1 Tim 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5)
- Not to cheat others (2 Cor 11:9; 12:13, 14, 16; 1 Thess 2:9; 4:12; 2 Thess 3:8)
- Work in brotherly love that transcends race and status (1 Tim 6:2; Phil 16)
- Only Christian work can point beyond itself to something (Someone) greater

### Work in New Heavens and New Earth

- *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” - Revelation 21:1-5*
- “We can scarcely imagine it, but everything that makes work miserable here will be removed. All our sinful concerns about ourselves will be swallowed up in devotion to the One we serve. All our frustration that we have to be doing *this* task, not *that* other one we prefer, will be abolished because our experience of the One who gave us the assignment. All inclination to evil will have been removed from our hearts, so we will enjoy the freedom of wanting to obey, wanting to serve, wanting to do right. And the right that we have to do will no more be in conflict with needing time with kids or friends or spouse, because we will have forever. Never again will we fear that our work is futile, vain, monotonous, or meaningless, because we will see clearly that the significance of our work springs from the One we serve.” - James Hamilton
- “Jesus cast out Satan by going to the cross, and when he returns he will set in motion the events of the end that will culminate in the heavens and the earth becoming what God originally built them to be: a cosmic temple. In that cosmic temple, the people who belong to Jesus, who have been transformed into his image, will rule and subdue, work and keep, and no snake will ever enter that garden to speak lies to the bride of Christ. Jesus himself will ensure the safety of that redeemed place.” - James Hamilton

### How the Gospel Changes Our Work:

#### **Dangers of Work:**

- Sinful Jobs
  - “At its most basic level, a righteous job is one that does not exist to commit or promote sin but to accomplish the task God gave to humanity at the beginning: fill, subdue, rule.” – James Hamilton
- Overwork
- Underwork (Lazy)

## 1. Gospel Gives New Identity in Work

## 2. Gospel Gives New Value and Meaning to All Work

- “Even the most menial tasks, has great dignity. In our work we are God’s hands and fingers, sustaining and caring for his world.” – Tim Keller
- “Ministry of Competence”
- “We see that being a Christian leads us to see our work not as merely a way to earn money, nor as primarily a means of personal advancement, but a truly a calling—to serve God and love our neighbor.” – Tim Keller

## 3. Gospel Gives New Ethics in Work

## 4. Gospel Gives New Hope in Work

- “Everyone will be forgotten, nothing we do will make any difference, and all good endeavors, even the best, will come to naught. Unless there is God. If the God of the Bible exists, and there is a True Reality beneath and behind this one, and this life is not the only life, then every good endeavor, even the simplest ones, pursued in response to God's calling, can matter forever.” – Tim Keller
- “We have every reason to believe that God will satisfy every longing he built into the human heart. Longings for sinful things are but perversions of righteous desires. God will satisfy us.” – James Hamilton

## 5. Gospel Allows us to Work Restfully

- “*I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. <sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. <sup>13</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.*” – Leviticus 26:11-13
- “*...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*” – Matthew 28:20
- “*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*” – John 14:16-17
- “June 2 - Much peace and rest tonight. Much broken under a sense of my exceeding wickedness, which no eye can see but Thine. Much persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ, and of the constancy of His love. Oh, how sweet to work all day for God, and then to lie down at night under His smiles!” – Robert Murray M’Cheyne

## 6. Gospel allows us to Work Witnessfully

## 7. Gospel Allows us to Work Worshipfully

### Recommended Resources:

- *Work and Our Labor in the Lord*, James Hamilton
- *Every Good Endeavor*, Tim Keller