



CHURCH AMBASSADOR NETWORK

AN INITIATIVE OF THE FAMILY LEADER FOUNDATION

Biblical Principles on Labor

Introduction

In the Church Ambassador Network, a ministry of The FAMILY LEADER Foundation, we hold to the teachings of the Bible that it is the infallible Word of God. It is our desire to look at labor through the foundational lens of Scripture. This white paper begins with a foundational view of labor through the Scriptures then moves through 7 key biblical principles.

Foundational View

God created work: The Bible begins with God working and in His work He created people in His Image. As image bearers of God, He created 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 people's rebellion against God. People chose pride and selfishness that resulted in sin. Creation for generations has paid the consequences of sin that includes work. Work is not as it was originally created to be. That is why it is hard, wear 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 expand someone's life. We, however, cannot stop decay and death. Our work only takes us so far. Our only ultimate hope is Christ's work on the Cross. Through the Cross, Jesus satisfied the penalty of our sins, removing judgement for those who put their faith in Him. His work was complete 3 days later, when He rose from the dead, defeating death, now sitting at the right hand of the Father.

We await the restoration of all things: Though sin and death were conquered through the Cross and resurrection, we still await the restoration of all things including our bodies and creation. Jesus promised He would return to complete what He was sent to do. At His return, true justice will be served. Sins will be addressed, and creation will be made new. Until then, work will display the image of God, the fallenness of man, and the hope of Christ. For now, He desires all to come to the knowledge of Him and for His people to be ambassadors of His kingdom values, including work.

Biblical principles of labor

1. Work is a blessing. It is to be creative. It is not a punishment. It allows us to display our God-given talents.

Often you will here, people need a career not a job. People will endure for a career, but they will not for a job. People are more than a cog in a machine. God designed work to bring out people's strengths, talents, wisdom and creativity. It shows our individual uniqueness, as well as our collective bond. Too often work is monotonous and does not give workers opportunities to use their talents. It is important that employment provides opportunities for people to display their God-given talents and uniqueness.

"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.

2. 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 you become disabled or lose your job? Do you have any less value? You are more than what you do and where you work. You 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.

3. We are to be fruitful and a worker is to be compensated a fair value for that fruitful labor.

God created us to be fruitful and multiply. As we work, it must be our desire to bless others. Our fruit is not to bless ourselves it is to bless others. The fruit from work is to bless the employer, employees, family, and community. Owners and employees should desire profit for a company that leads to the blessing of all, including those in the community. Part of the blessing a worker is to be paid a fair wage and rewarded for their 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. 32 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.

4. Idleness and slothfulness robs you and others, harms creation, and destroys communities.

Slothfulness is not only wrong because it harms you, and it harms others as well. Slothfulness robs the person of the image God created them to be. Slothfulness robs the family and community of the labor that person was needed to contribute, and creation itself is harmed 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.

5. Employers must treat employees well, and employees must work as if they are working for the Lord.

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

6. We are to rest.

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

“So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.” Genesis 2:1-3.

7. Government is to commend the good and punish evil.

God instituted government as the 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 also protect workers, and make it difficult to not work for those who are capable.

“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.

Conclusion

It is important that work in any society is seen as a way to strengthen individuals, families and communities, as well as lead to their flourishing, and bring glory to God. A culture that views work this way is a culture that truly values life and fears God.