THE WORKING OF THINGS

- Kingdom economics integrates faith and economic activity, viewing work as a calling from God and an opportunity to serve others.
- It emphasizes ethical business practices, fair treatment of workers, and using resources to advance God’s kingdom. Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given to you by God.
- If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already.
- “What does stewardship look like in our lives today?” The idea of biblical stewardship is about something much more expansive. It is where the concepts of faith, work and economics intersect.
- What about your responsibilities? Owners have rights; stewards have responsibilities.

GENESIS 2:15-17
15Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and tend it. 16The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.”

- Avodah is a Hebrew word that can be translated as work, worship, and service. When used in the Old Testament, it implies a duality of purpose. In all work, there is an element of worship and service.

WORKING PLACEMENT

- Men and women were placed in a garden and the first instruction given to them by God was what? “Be fruitful and multiply.” Every successive imperative in Genesis 1:28 is going to flow out of this. They’re to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth,” “subdue” the earth, and then “have dominion” over all the animals.

God placed Adam and Eve in the garden to be His image bearers, to represent who He was and the immediate instruction He provides is that they are to work. God did not place Adam and Eve on a beach, He placed them in a garden.

- The phrase “let them rule over” is used 5x and points to the significance of the assignment that was given by the Creator. God assigns work before the fall and original sin. This mandate has never been withdrawn nor need to be repeated, it is still a part of God’s will for our life.
- From the opening pages of Scripture, we see that work is a good thing given by a good God.
WORK AND WORSHIP

- Unifying work and worship has profound implications for how we live; it has the potential to bring meaning, purpose, and greater depth to our work and our faith.

- Having several meanings, including “work” and “worship,” avodah is used in Scripture in a variety of ways:
  - “Six days you shall work (avodah), but on the seventh day you shall rest.” Exodus 34:21
  - “People go out to their work (avodah) and to their labor until the evening.” Psalm 104:23
  - “But as for me and my household, we will serve (avodah) the Lord.” Joshua 24:15
  - “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: Let my people go, so that they may worship (avodah) me.’” Exodus 8:1

- Unifying work and worship has profound implications for how we live; it has the potential to bring meaning, purpose, and greater depth to our work and our faith.

GOD WORKS

- Jesus will say exactly this in John 5:17, “My Father is working still and I am working.”
  - When we talk about work, we must understand fundamentally that the God who made us is a worker. Jesus was a teacher for three years, but he was a carpenter for 20. His hands were not soft, they were calloused, splintered, and hardened by labor. Jesus, in whom all the fullness of deity dwells, represents to us that God is not relaxed, He is working.

- God The Father worked when He created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). He works right now as He sustains the universe by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3). He works as He providentially channels the hearts of kings and kingdoms to accomplish His perfect plan for His glory and our good (Prov. 21:1, Romans 8:28). He works as He answers prayer and accomplishes redemption (Mark 11:24, Ephesians 1:3-7).

- God The Son is a worker because John 1 says: “all things were made by him and apart from him nothing has been made that is made.” Jesus was working as the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament. In His incarnation, Jesus worked as a carpenter. In His ministry, He worked as a teacher and a healer. After His ascension, He continues to work as He prepares a place for you in glory.

- God The Spirit is a worker. The Spirit hovered over the waters in creation (Gen 1:2). He is transforming hardened hearts (Ezek. 36:26). He is illuminating our minds to scripture (Psalm 119:18). He is interceding for us with groanings too deep for words (Romans 8:26-27).
You will not understand the nature of God until you understand that He is a worker, not in the sense where He is expending energy (because He has no body), but in the sense where God is constantly upholding, sustaining, and orchestrating nations, kingdoms, and individuals to accomplish His perfect plan.

**MATTHEW 25:14-30**

14“**For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.** 15To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. 16The one who had received the five talents immediately went and did business with them, and earned five more talents. 17In the same way the one who had received the two talents earned two more. 18But he who received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.

19“**Now after a long time the master of those slaves *came and *settled accounts with them.** 20The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have earned five more talents.’ 21His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.’

22“**Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have earned two more talents.’** 23His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.’ 24“**Now the one who had received the one talent also came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed. 25And I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you still have what is yours.’**

26“**But his master answered and said to him, ‘You worthless, lazy slave! Did you know that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where you did not scatter seed? 27Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28Therefore: take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’**

29“**For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30And throw the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**
WATCHFULNESS
- The inward spiritual life of the faithful was described; here as external activity. It is the sole condition of a profitable outward activity for the kingdom of God, that the life of God be diligently maintained within the heart.
- The lesson is still partly of watchfulness, it is still in the first instance for the apostles.
  - (1) There is work to be done in the time of waiting; the watching must not be idle or unemployed;
  - (2) Even the least talented is responsible.
- God provides us with unique skills, gifts and talents, and calls us to particular roles and activities. Although the roles might have apparent differences in importance, our callings are equal. They are a spiritual calling. There are no second-class callings from God. We will be worthy of this calling if we are devoted in our relationship with Him and look to Him only for leadership and strength. Every Christian shares in this calling.

RESPONSIBILITY
- Our truest and deepest vocation (from the Latin word for “calling”) is to do our part to advance the multifaceted mission of God in the world.
- This calling shapes everything else we do in life, including our work—or what we sometimes refer to as our “vocation.” Of course, God may guide us to specific jobs for expressing our fundamental calling to live for the praise of God’s glory (Eph. 1:12).
- As doctors and lawyers, clerks and waiters, actors and musicians, and parents and grandparents, we lead a life worthy of our calling to Christ and his activity in the world.

THE SYNERGY OF WORK
1. Work is an opportunity to reflect the image of God.
- Every human being is an image-bearer of God. As Genesis 1:26 reads: “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.’” One way humanity models God’s image is through our daily work. Though work may feel mundane at times, it is an opportunity to joyfully reflect God’s creativity and celebrate the unique gifts and abilities we’ve been given.
- As Genesis 1:26 goes on to explain, one aspect of being an image-bearer is exercising dominion. Dominion implies stewardship and a sacrificial sense of responsibility for creation. Through our work, we have the opportunity to exercise dominion.
2. Work is an opportunity to pursue shalom.

- Work is not only a way to provide for ourselves, but an opportunity to bring about shalom and human flourishing in the world. Through our daily work, we are able to partner with God in the ongoing task of renewal.
- Work is not only a means to support ourselves, but an opportunity to reflect the image of God, serve and bless others, and pursue shalom. May we resolve to re-unify work and worship—consecrating our ordinary, daily work as holy, meaningful, and a key part of God’s plan for renewal in the world.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Your generosity is positively changing lives in our church, community, and around the world. Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 that whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will reap generously. Thank you for continuing to help others see the generous nature of the body of Christ through your giving.

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