

# *Thank God It's Monday?*

Proverbs 22:29; Exodus 35:30-35

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Where do you spend most of your waking time? Think about it! Review Monday, not tomorrow's holiday, but most Mondays, how do you spend your hours? Look at your morning, afternoon, evening and night. Record your activity on the sermon insert. If you are a wage-earner, your location and activity depend on the nature of your job. If you are retired or home-making, they depend on your volunteer activities, hobbies, family needs and health. Is Monday indicative of most your week? Does Tuesday follow closely? What are the routines? What days are quite different?

When we think *church*, most of us think of a building or worship service. However, if we think like God, we will picture a people who most the week are deployed in neighborhoods, schools, businesses, offices and worksites. Do you know that you are there because God wants you there? There are exceptions. Do you remember Jonah? He was on a ship against God's will. Have you heard of Balaam? This very gifted man was killed because he went to the wrong place and hung with the wrong crowd. I suggest that, if you are drawing a paycheck from certain businesses that curse or prey on people, such as pornography or gambling, you might consider whether you're walking the path of Jonah or Balaam. In most cases, however, your vocation or location is where God wants you. The Apostle Paul wrote:

*Each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him... Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you-although if you can gain your freedom, do so. Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to. (1 Corinthians 7:17, 20-21, 24, NIV)*

This was the rule for every church Paul shepherded. Even if you were far away from God when you got married, even if you acknowledged no God when you located in a neighborhood or got your job, you were to stay there after you put your faith in Christ because God was working in your life and in your station in life before faith was in your heart.

For God, there is no secular/sacred division. God's work is seen on Main Street and in malls. God's work is accomplished in factories, offices and golf courses. My young friend Ben Utecht entertains people for a living by occasionally catching a pass and by hitting, as hard as he can, entertainers from another city. Is playing football for the Indianapolis Colts God's work? As long as they are not playing the Vikings! Actually, I know that football with its violent collisions offends the sensibilities of some. Personally, I have trouble watching boxing although I did see the Rocky movies. I have witnessed with horror some of the injuries of those sports and in no way desire to justify those injuries anymore than those that have been suffered in logging, coal mining, truck driving, computer operation or nursing. Despite the thorns and thistles in our toil, God is at work wherever people refresh, equip or empower others. God is at work wherever his creation is cared for.

Truly, God passionately cares about your daily schedule. God gives you skills for the blessing of his creation. In Exodus 35 we read:

***The LORD has filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, intelligence, and skill in all kinds of crafts. He is able to create beautiful objects... And the LORD has given both him and Oholiab... the ability to teach their skills to others. (Exodus 35:31-32, 34, NLT)***

This passage reveals that creativity, teaching and physical skills are spiritual gifts. They are the work of the Holy Spirit in us. When you shop, you look at the fruit of God's work in humanity. That doesn't mean the enemies of God are not at work corrupting and harming people in both the

processes and products of our work. It does mean that God is present and invested in your workplace, wherever that might be and whatever stage of life you are in.

There are several implications. We'll look at four.

First, skills are important. They are a work of God's Spirit. When you develop a skill, you listen to God's voice and take God's hand; and your faith to learn and work can bless many.

Solomon asked:

***Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.*** (Proverbs 22:29, NIV)

We quickly observe that principle in people like Tiger Woods or presidential speech writers. They perform before or serve kings because their skills bless many. When you and I grow in skill, whether it is a vocation, the care of our own bodies in youth or advancing years, or even our response to nursing help if we are dependent, we lift the human spirit of others because God is working in us. Skill with legs, hands, tongue, ears and even facial gestures are works of God that bless others. Learn and develop skills knowing that God is at work in you. Human skills are a work of God's Spirit.

Second, since God is investing in your work, invite Him to join you. Do you welcome Jesus every day into your home, neighborhood and workplace? God gave us dominion over this earth. Welcome his partnership in that dominion. Invite him to direct and empower your work or activity. Invite God to your golfing and fishing experiences. After all, God knows how to refresh and develop people. Be sensitive to what offends God at work or at home. The more you give attention to the Bible, the more you'll discover what that is. We tend to be either naïve or jaded, and the Scriptures tenderize our conscience. When you know that something offends God, confess it and seek forgiveness. If it is nothing you can change, ask God for mercy and wisdom, and for change to occur. Do that often. I have heard stories from our church family

about this very thing. Some here faced challenges or difficult people at their worksite; and over time as they've prayed, they saw God transform individuals, remove individuals and change the atmosphere. I've also heard and read about businesses that have revived when employees or employers prayed. Some supervisors have repented for not inviting Christ into their workplace; and as a result, a chain of events transpired that transformed their company. One of the youngest and most prosperous telecommunication companies in the world owes its existence to this very thing. Invite God to come, direct and empower your work or activity.

Third, understand that you are placed where you are to be a sample of the gospel rather than a salesman for it. You are not David who won the daughter of the king by conquering 200 Philistines and presenting a piece of each one's flesh as proof. You are the salt that attracts the presence of God to your home, neighborhood or workplace. You are the light that reveals the reality and identity of God. You are a gospel sample that brings transformation. You are a sample in adversity and in prosperity. Your work is to restore the flesh and spirit of others.

Fourth, recognize that the church you belong to is bigger than this congregation. God is using the fellowship of Bethany to bring certain vision, gifts and skills to the world; but other Christians in your workplace and neighborhood are part of your church family too. Pray for them. Let them know you support them and pray for them. See what develops. God will work in the church deployed. There are prayer groups and prayer partners forming in neighborhoods and businesses. Just pray and bless, and then see what God does.

In Luke 19:10, Jesus said that he had come to seek and to save what was lost. One thing that was lost, according to Genesis 3, was our workplace. It became burdensome with thorns and thistles. When you kneel for Communion today, thank God that Christ's death was for the redemption of you, your home, your neighborhood, activities and work. May it be done!