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## **When You Don't Like Your Job**

Genesis 2:7-15

October 14, 2007

Peter Hiett

On May 21, 1983, I left the scholastic world and entered the work world. I had a Phi Beta Kappa degree in geology from the University of Colorado. I did well because I loved geology. As a kid, geology was like my play, my recreation. I loved rocks. I lived to hunt rocks and fossils. *Geology*.

So I graduated but couldn't get a job. Nineteen eighty-three was the year of the oil glut. On May 21, I graduated; on May 28, I got married.

At my wedding reception, all the little, old ladies on Susan's side of the family would wait for a lull in the conversation and then say, "So Peter, how are you going to support your beautiful, young bride?" It was the same question her father asked, just with a different tone.

All summer I desperately tried to find a job. One day I saw in the paper this ad: "Demonstrate Hydraulic Equipment." I immediately pictured myself driving backhoes and front-end loaders at the Convention Center. I went to the address in the ad and couldn't seem to find the hydraulic equipment company. All I could find was a Kirby vacuum cleaner outlet. I walked by several times, and then it hit me: hydraulic . . . vacuum . . . *suck*.

Well, I was desperate, terrified of failure, and **afraid**. So soon I was selling Kirby vacuum cleaners door to door.

It was awful, and I was awful. I'm the worst Kirby vacuum cleaner salesman that ever lived. I sold one vacuum to a relative under cost, meaning the Kirby Company and I *paid her* to buy it. It was **futile**.

Every morning I had to go into the Kirby office before I hit the street, and I had to stand in a circle holding hands with the other "Kirby professionals" smoking cigarettes as we sang in unison [singing]:

Oh when the Kirby pros go marchin' in,  
Oh when the Kirby pros go marchin' in,  
Oh yeah we count our sales by the number, For that money we adore.

I kind of mumbled the words. It felt to me like idolatry.

You may not sing the song, but most people work for money. And that is futility. We will all die, and it will all burn.

My last sales call was to this poor, young, unwed mother renting an apartment without carpet. I knew I was there because she wanted the complimentary cutlery set. I

also knew that the last thing she needed was the \$800 Cadillac of vacuum cleaners. I had to call in before I left her residence to report on the demonstration.

I told my boss everything. But he kept giving me lines to feed her. I'd say, "She has no carpet, no money, no food for her kids," and he'd say, "Show her how skin gets caught in her mattress and leads to decay, disease, and possible death!"

But I couldn't do it. I felt like a mercenary . . . or worse.

Karl Marx taught that this was the problem with our industrialized, capitalistic civilization: Capitalism leads to **alienation**. We use people to love things (like money) rather than using things (like money or vacuums) to love people.

And so we become alienated from other people, using people or competing with people for things. We're alienated from people and alienated from our work.

That is: In an industrialized society, there's nothing of Peter Hiett in the vacuum he sells. It's just the same as every other vacuum on the assembly line.

I read about a guy who kept hearing rattling in the door of his brand new car. Finally, in frustration he took the door apart. And this is what he found: a bolt hanging on a string with a note taped to it that said, "Placed here by Rob."

See, Rob was desperate to put something of himself into his work. And I was too.

So I just couldn't get myself to sell that poor woman an \$800 vacuum. My job *sucked*. (Get it? . . . *sucked* . . . vacuums . . .) Work *sucked*. **Fear, futility, alienation, and meaninglessness.**

So I quit vacuum cleaner sales that very day. The next year I went to seminary, and now I work in a church.

But I'm still anxious. Now I have to support my middle-aged (*young* middle-aged) bride and four kids. I don't know how to make church *work*. Yet this is how I make a living.

Instead of one boss with a clearly defined goal— "Sell the Cadillac of vacuum cleaners," I have a couple thousand bosses, each with a different and poorly defined agenda for me, and there's *no way* I can please them all! It's futile.

And it's alienating. We've got budgets, programs, capital expenditures . . . people become tithing units or ways to boost my ego. For most pastors, it's really not about money but power, prestige, and influence. So if we're honest, we pastors sing:

Oh when the saints go marchin' in  
Oh when the saints go marchin' in (to my building),

Oh yeah we count our converts by the number,  
For the power, prestige, and influence we adore.

You see, as a part of the competitive, capitalistic, Christian religion industry, I turn people into things and use them as food for my ego.

Alienated from people and alienated from my product, I used to sell vacuums, and now I sell Jesus. And the Jesus that sells best is an assembly line, market-researched, upper middle class, American Jesus sold to people who want to pass the test, who want to use Him to get into heaven and keep their tails out of hell!

I sell Jesus so people can use Him. What does that make me? And what does that

make Jesus? I used to be in the vacuum industry, and now I'm in the religion industry. And *work sucks*.

Now, I hope you know that I'm joking . . . kind of . . . kind of not.

- And I think you all can relate. You all work in some way or another.
- And I suspect most jobs fall somewhere between pastor and vacuum cleaner sales.
- And I suspect that most of us don't picture our jobs as Paradise.

We think, "Paradise would not be my job, and certainly not work, because work feels like it's cursed."

Well, we're back in Genesis 2. It's the sixth day, because God is making man in His image.

Genesis 2:7:

*Then the LORD God formed the man [Adam] of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

Notice that the garden is in Eden on the east side. We'll see that Eden appears to be a large region roughly the size of Old Israel. Eden probably means "delight." The garden is on the east side, like Jerusalem is on the east side of Old Israel. In fact, Orthodox Jews believe the Temple Mount is the original location of Eden. And that is pretty significant, for an awful lot happens in that location.

You see, this is the beginning of the greatest story ever told: the story of wisdom and life Himself, hung on a tree on a hill, and a river that flows from a throne in an eternal city of precious jewels and gold that is the garden of delight.

*And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. [Nobody seems to be able to identify this river or this place.] And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. [Cush is Egypt or Ethiopia, so the Gihon is probably the Nile.] And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. [The Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile*

form the border of Old Israel.]

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it [till it and keep it].*

The Lord God took the Adam and put him in the garden of delight *to work* . . . to work in Paradise! And what's he doing? Serving Mai Tai's to tourists from Cleveland? No. He is in Paradise, and soon he'll be joined by a very beautiful and very naked lady, with whom God commands him to "be fruitful and multiply." Work, work, work! But work sounds almost fun.

And now in regard to the garden of delight, God commands Adam to "till it," "work it," and "keep it." In other words, "Adam, do some gardening."

You know, gardening is interesting work, because when you garden, it becomes obvious you really don't make stuff—make life. God makes it, and He lets you help. You can't make one tomato . . . but when you're at peace with that, it's really fun to help—to work and keep a garden.

In fact, how many of you have a garden? Do you people realize that you can get better tomatoes with less work, far cheaper, down at Safeway? But you still garden. You "till it and keep it," because you want to.

1. You're not **anxious**, because you know you can always buy tomatoes at Safeway.
2. It's not **futile**, because you're really not growing tomatoes. You're growing fun, relaxation, and wonder. So your work is really *rest*.
3. And it's not **alienating**. You can't wait to bless your neighbors with zucchini squash—zucchini squash that feels like a part of your very self.
4. Each zucchini is packed with **meaning**.

You garden because it's fun!

It's fun because you don't have to do it for a living. You don't have to do it for a living, because people like my grandpa garden for a living. They're called farmers, but for them, gardening is usually not fun.

I think my grandpa must have been made in God's image, because they both were into cursing the ground. "This dad-gummed, flippin', Nebraska soil!" I think for grandpa, work sucked, like it was cursed somehow.

But not for Adam in Genesis 2 in Paradise. What was work like for Adam in Paradise?

In physics, I learned that work is force applied over distance. And that's interesting, because that means:

- Skiing bumps at Mary Jane is work. Exhausting, tiring work. But it doesn't seem like work but play!
- Dancing is work, but it's rest.
- Recreation, dancing, play is *work*.

So perhaps no one works as hard as children. One day it hit me watching the kids: Everything they did was what Susan and I did, except they were having fun!

- They played house.
- They had toy hammers and saws and an Easy Bake Oven.
- They even had a vacuum cleaner that didn't suck, and they'd vacuum for hours.
- They played church, and they played hard.

But they did not make a living at it. They did not believe that life depended on their work.

Jesus said, "In order to enter the kingdom [to get back to the garden], you must become like children."

You know, in our purpose statement for our church we say, "We don't want to play church but be real church." But maybe we *should* "play church" like my kids played church. Maybe unless we *play* church we can't *be* real church, for you must become like children to enter the kingdom. They don't work for a living, just as you don't garden for a living.

What happened to work?  
How come it feels like a curse?

Well, as you know, Adam and Eve tried to make a living from their work. The snake convinced them that their lives depended on their work, so they worked to live.

Remember they were the gardeners; they tended the trees; that was their work. And the snake told them that the produce of their work would make them in the image of God. So they worked to live.

And as you know, God showed up cursing. He cursed the snake, and He cursed the ground. And it was actually a gift to Adam. It would teach Adam:

- You cannot make your life with your work.
- You cannot save yourself with the knowledge of good and evil (the law).
- You are saved by grace through faith, and this not of yourself. And faith in that truth is the doorway to Paradise.
- Your life is a gift, not the product of your work. You get to help, and you get to watch it grow. But you don't create *you*.

So as the Apostle Paul writes, "Creation has been subjected to futility in hope." Work has been cursed so you could receive the blessing that is grace. His name is Jesus, and He delivers you from the curse. He bears your curse, and *He* makes your living. He gives you His life.

Paul writes:

For it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” . . . Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.”

(Galatians 3:10, 13)

Jesus redeems us from the curse, and Jesus gives us His life. So our living does not depend on our work. It is the gift of God in Jesus, The Life. When we believe that in faith, we no longer work to live. We live to work. As Paul writes, “Life means fruitful labor for me.”

We live to work, and that work is a blessing . . . like play, like dance, like worship, like gardening. It’s recreation that is my re-creation when I work by grace in the faith of Jesus.

It does not mean my work won’t be brutally hard and thoroughly exhausting. It means it will be blessed, not cursed.

In Colossians 3, Paul writes:

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

“Whatever you do.” Do you realize that a Christian cannot have a secular job? Because whatever job you have is your calling. Even if God calls you to quit, you are to quit to His glory.

No Christian has a secular job, and no Christian is unemployed. You are all employed by God. He may use General Motors to pay your salary, but He’s your employer.

Even if you’re unemployed, He has employed you in His service wherever you go, even the unemployment line!

Now, if you say, “Okay . . . what does He want me to do?” Well, I don’t know. I’m not a dentist or a carpenter or a mom . . . *you* are. Ask him.

- If you’re a dentist, I would guess He’d want you to fix teeth and not overcharge people.
- If you’re a carpenter, He’d want you to love people by making good tables and chairs.
- If you’re a mom, I suppose He’d want you to love your children as He loves you.

*Ask him.* You’re working for Him no matter what you do.

Paul goes on:

Slaves, 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. 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.

Critics say Paul didn't abolish slavery. But I think he did. You are not a slave if you're willing to serve, and even less if you love the one you serve. "Slaves," he says, "you work for Jesus." And "Masters, you do as well." He abolishes slavery from the inside out.

You see, selling vacuums door to door felt like slavery. But it didn't *have* to be slavery, not if in my heart I was working for my Lord Jesus.

Dorothy Sayers points out that from the outside in, the work at a prison and the work at a monastery look like the same work under the same law: poverty, obedience, and chastity.

Yet from the inside out, the difference between the prison and monastery is the difference between death and life, cursing and blessing.

You see, I think Paul is saying, "If you don't like your job, get a new boss." In other words, never work for *men*; never work for your *self* or your *living*. Work for Jesus, and then you're no longer a slave. You're blessed, not cursed. How so?

1. You no longer need to **fear**. In fact, you're commanded not to fear. Your life, your livelihood, your success does not depend on your work.

When Jesus was crucified, He cried, "It is finished!" When He commissioned His disciples, He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." That is, "I'm in charge. Go therefore and use your Easy Bake Ovens. Get out your Junior Carpenter Tool set and go to town! Peter, preach and stop stressing! I will build my church, and I am your living. Have faith. No fear." Scripture says, "He always leads us in triumph." Even if we die, *especially* if we die, we triumph.

2. No **fear** and no **futility**. "All things work together for the good with them that love God and are called according to his purpose." So He tells me:

Peter, you're called according to my purpose. It all works. And you have only *one* boss, *one* Lord. It's not 2,000 people you cannot please. I will talk through them, but you work for me. It's me you please and *can* please. Any moment you can please me simply with faith. That's success.

God planted a garden, but we forget what He's growing. Faith and mercy is the harvest of this earth . . . not numbers on charts, money in bank accounts, or bodies in seats. It will all burn. But faith, hope, and love abide.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. And God is growing that fruit in you. You *are*

God's stinky, dirty, broken field, and God is growing His produce in you.

So the way God measures success is very different from the way this world measures success. You could be an absolute failure in this world: broken, abandoned,

beaten, naked, scorned, and nailed to a tree. A failure in this world, but the glory of God in the next.

So whatever your job, work for Jesus.

3. No **fear**, no **futility**,  
the opposite of alienation,
4. and full of **meaning**,  
the love of God poured out.

Mother Teresa wrote, “Wherever God has put you, that is your vocation. It is not what we do but how much love we put into it.”

“Love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. We love because He first loved us.” We are His field, His garden of delight. Let Him reap a harvest in you.

Tony Campolo used to tell this story about his friend Charlie with whom he studied in graduate school. Charlie was a believer and wanted to serve the Lord. Upon graduation, Charlie took a position teaching at Trenton State University teaching literature.

Three weeks into his new job, he quit. His mother called Tony saying, “Tony, talk to Charlie. He quit! He’s a PhD in English literature. What else could he possibly do?” Good question.

Well, Tony found Charlie living in an attic apartment in Hamilton Square, New Jersey.

“Sit down, man, sit down,” Charlie said. So Tony flopped in his bean bag chair. “I quit, Tony, I quit.”

“I know. Why’d you quit?”

“I can’t teach, man, I can’t teach those people. Every time I walked into class and gave a lecture, I died a little.”

He would share deep, passionate, spiritual truths gleaned from his own existential struggles and the world’s great literature, only to have some kid raise his hand and say, “Do we have to know this for the test?” Mercenaries.

Tony empathized and said, “Well, how are you feeding yourself?”

Charlie replied, “I’m a mailman.”

Tony said, “Terrific. A PhD mailman.”

“Yeah, there aren’t many of us,” said Charlie.

“Well, Charlie, if your gonna be a mailman, be the best mailman you can be!”

Charlie looked at Tony and said, “I’m a lousy mailman.”

“What do you mean a lousy mailman?”

“Well, everyone else gets the mail delivered by 1:00. I never finish until 5:30 or 6:00.”

Tony said, “Why does it take you so long?”

“I visit,” he replied. “You wouldn’t believe how many people on my route never



got visited until I became their mailman. Lots of them are interested in literature, and they want to talk. Some are hurting, and I get to comfort them with the words of the great poets. The only problem is, I can't sleep."

"Can't sleep?"

"Who can sleep after twenty cups of coffee?"

And so it became clear: Charlie was no ordinary mailman. He was working for Jesus, delivering his mail

. . . but he was paid with your tax dollars. How cool is that?

No fear, no futility, no alienation.

Tony says Charlie is the only mailman he knows for whom all the people on his route get together, rent a gym, and throw a party each year on his birthday. And that party is a foretaste of heaven.

You may not experience that party in this world, but love Jesus and love your neighbor, and you are storing up treasure eternal in the heavens.

You may be a geologist, an English professor, a Kirby vacuum cleaner salesman, or a mailman going door to door. It doesn't matter what you do but how much love you put into it—how much Jesus is in it. He is the love of God poured out.

Put your faith in Jesus, work for Jesus, and your work is blessed. No fear, no futility, the opposite of alienation. And all the meaning in the world. Jesus *is* the meaning in you. You see, we don't simply work for Jesus; we commune with Jesus.

Old Testament scholars point out that the garden is a picture of the tabernacle and later the temple which was built on the traditional site of the Garden of Eden.

The Hebrew words translated "work it and keep it" can also be translated "worship and obey," and that's God's design.<sup>1</sup> To work is to worship; to worship is to commune with God in His temple. And we are His temple.

To the side of the Temple Mount there is a garden. Jesus was hung on a tree in that garden. His tomb was in the same garden. When He rose from the dead, Mary thought He was the gardener.

And she was right. He is the Ultimate Adam, and He said, "Abide in me. Apart from me you can do nothing."

When we walk in faith, when we worship, we commune with Jesus. His work becomes our work. We are His garden, temple, and body. And so through us the Son glorifies the Father. That is His work. And that work is life.

So when I believe, my work becomes His work, and that work doesn't suck. It's a taste of Paradise.

Have you ever looked someone in the eye and said, "In the name of Jesus, you're forgiven"?

It's Paradise.

It's gardening in Paradise.

And it's your job.

Picture your boss at the end of a conference table. You're about to get a review. If

you're in school, picture the teacher or principal. Maybe your boss is a group, so picture the group. Maybe your boss is yourself. In my experience, that is the hardest boss to work for.

Bless your boss. They're a gift to you. Sometimes He speaks through your boss. Bless them. But now say, "I love you, but Jesus really is my boss. I work for Him."

Picture Jesus. He walks in and kisses them, and they trade seats. Look at Him: a crown of thorns in His skull, fresh wounds in His hands and feet, and His eyes are a flame of fire, burning with love and desire for you.

He pays your salary. He makes the sun rise. He grows the tomatoes, corn, and potatoes. He gives you your next breath. You work for Him.

As you prepare to come to communion, ask Him, "Boss, what do you want?" Maybe He wants you to change jobs. Maybe He wants you to do the same job but do it differently with a new heart—His heart.

For on the night He was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given for you. Take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same manner after supper, He took the cup and said, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood shed for the forgiveness of sins."

If you want to work for Jesus, come to the table, take His body, take His blood, and become His body and blood in a world that desperately needs to hear and see and know. It's the Gospel. In Jesus' name, believe it and become it.

#### [Communion]

Lord Jesus, we sit at the end of the conference table, we look at the sorrow and love that flows mingled down, and we realize that every scar on our body matches a fresh wound on yours.

So, Lord, we say that there's no one we'd rather work for. You get up from your chair, run around the table, and envelop us in your arms. We become your very Body—your Bride—your temple—your garden. So be glorified in us, Lord Jesus, we ask. Amen.

### Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

~ *Genesis 2:7-14*

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. . . . But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, . . . Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher).

~ *John 19:41-42; 20:11a,15-16*

The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, . . . Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

~ *Revelation 21:18-19; 22:1-2*

The writer of Genesis has identified the “land” prepared in Genesis 1 with the garden of Eden described in Genesis 2. The garden of Eden anticipates the tabernacle where God desired to dwell with his chosen people. . . .

The garden of Eden extended from the “river that flows through all the land of Cush” to the “River Euphrates.” Since in Genesis the land of Cush is linked to Egypt (Genesis 10:6), the second river, the Gihon (Genesis 2:13), was apparently understood by the author as “the river of Egypt.” . . .

When we move to Genesis 15, we find that the land promised to Abraham—the promised land—is marked off by these same two rivers, the Euphrates and the River of Egypt (Genesis 15:18). Note that the area marked off by these two rivers in Genesis 15 is essentially the same region covered by the garden of Eden in Genesis 2. When the general boundaries are compared, it becomes clear that the writer of the Pentateuch intends us to identify the two locations with each other. God’s promise of the land to the patriarchs is thus textually linked to His original “blessing” of all humanity in the garden of Eden.

We find the same linkage in the prophetic literature and the New Testament. God’s promise of blessing through the seed of Abraham is linked to his blessing of the nations and all humanity.

~ *Dr. John Sailhamer, Genesis Unbound*

Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

~ *Romans 5:14-15*

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

~ *Genesis 2:15*

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; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

~ *Genesis 3:17-19*

It is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” . . . Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

~ *Galatians 3:10b, 13-14*

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together." . . . But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." . . . So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. . . . Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."

~ *John 4:31-36; 5:17, 19; 6:27*

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

~ *Galatians 5:22-23*

Wherever God has put you, that is your vocation. It is not what we do but how much love we put into it.

~ *Mother Teresa, My Life for the Poor*

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Slaves, 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. 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. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

~ *Colossians 3:17, 22-25*

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

~ *Ephesians 6:5-9*

Luther and Calvin did away with the monasteries and, in turn, made the whole world into a monastery.

~ *Max Weber*

In hardness of condition and lack of liberty there is little to choose between Dartmoor [prison] and a Trappist monastery, and the looker-on might readily suppose that in both "the problem of work" had been "solved" in the same way. "Poverty, obedience, chastity" is the rule of life in both; and the convict might appear to have the advantage, since he is far likelier than the monk to return to the world some day and in the meantime enjoys a good deal more freedom of speech. Yet between the employed and the unemployed, between the secure and the insecure, between the bound and the bound there is a difference too great to be seen in the schedules of employment.

~ *Dorothy Sayers, The Mind of the Maker*

It is impossible for a Christian to have a secular job.

~ *Rob Bell, Velvet Elvis*

The works of monks and priests in God's sight are in no way whatever superior to the works of a farmer laboring in a field, or of a woman looking after her home.

~ *Martin Luther*

To work is to pray.

~ *Augustine*

A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a society is a house built upon sand. . . . The habit of thinking about work as something one does to make money is so ingrained in us that we can scarcely imagine what a revolutionary change it would be to think about it instead in terms of the work done. It would mean taking the attitude of mind we reserve for our unpaid work, our hobbies, our leisure interests, the things we make and do for pleasure—and making that the standard of all our judgments about things and people. We should ask of an enterprise, not "will it pay?" but "is it good?"; of a man, not "what does he make?" but "what is his work worth?"; of goods, not "can we induce people to buy them?" but "are they useful things well made?"; of employment, not "how much a week?" but "will it exercise my faculties to the utmost?" . . . Work is not primarily a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. . . . For his work is the measure of his life, and his satisfaction is found in the fulfillment of his own nature, and in the contemplation of the perfection of his work.

We should no longer think of work as something that we hastened to get through in order to enjoy our leisure; we should look on our leisure as the period of changed rhythm that refreshed us for the delightful purpose of getting on with our work.

The greatest insult which a commercial age has offered to the worker has been to rob him of all interest in the end-product of the work and to force him to dedicate his life to making badly things which were not worth making.

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 astonishing? How can any one remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life? The Church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays. What the Church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables. Church by all means, and decent forms of amusement, certainly—but what use is all that if in the very center of his life and occupation he is insulting God with bad carpentry? No crooked table-legs or ill-fitting drawers ever, I dare swear, came out of the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Nor, if they did, could anyone believe that they were made by the same hand that made heaven and earth. . . .

Incompetence and untruth always result when the secular vocation is treated as a thing alien to religion. When you find a man who is a Christian praising God by the excellence of his work—do not distract him and take him away from his proper vocation to address religious meetings and open church bazaars. Let him serve God in the way to which God has called him.

~ *Dorothy Sayers, Creed or Chaos*

Traditional English translations of verse 15 threaten to obscure two important points.

The first is the change in vocabulary for the Hebrew word for “put.” Unlike verse 8, where a common term for “put” is used, in verse 15 the author used a term elsewhere reserved for two special uses:

1. God's “rest” or “safety” which He gives to man in the land (see Genesis 19:16; Deuteronomy 3:20; 12:10; 25:19);
2. The “dedication” of something before the presence of the Lord (see Exodus 16:33-34; Leviticus 16:23; Numbers 17:4; Deuteronomy 26:4,10).

Both senses of the term appear to lie behind the author's use of the word in verse 15. Man was “put” into the garden “in God's presence” where he could have fellowship with God (3:8).

Second, English translations have often overlooked the specific purpose for God's putting man in the garden. In most versions, man is “put” in the garden “to work it and take care of it” (2:15). Although this interpretation is found in translations as early as the Septuagint, there are serious objections to it. . . . A further difficulty in seeing Genesis 2:15 as a reference to man's “working” in the garden is that later in this same narrative, “working the ground” is said to be a result of the Fall (3:23). The narrative thus suggests that the requirement of “work” was an ironic reversal of man's original purpose of “worship.” If such is the case, then “working” and “keeping” the garden would provide a poor contrast to “working the ground” after the Fall.

In light of such difficulties, a more suitable translation of the Hebrew text can be found in several early manuscripts: that the man was put into the garden “to worship and obey.” Man's life in the garden was to be characterized by worship and obedience. He was to be a priest, not merely a worker and keeper of the garden.

~*Dr. John Sailbamer, Genesis Unbound*

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

~ *John 15:4-5*

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

~ *Revelation 21:22-26*

Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.

~ *Isaiah 60:10-11*

# **When You Don't Like Your Job**

Genesis 2:7-15

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, p. 76