

GOD LOVES WORK

A Four-Day
Devotional



HOW TO USE **THIS RESOURCE**

The following is a four-day devotional, which can be done anytime to pause and reflect on God's hopes and love for your work. You are welcome to do the reflection on your own, but it would be even better if you did it with a friend, coworker, or family member.

**Offered in love in the name of the God who
loves work!**

Genesis 1:1-2:3

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, [a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

GOD LOVES WORK

BECAUSE GOD IS A WORKER.

REFLECT

As the opening chapter of the Bible makes clear, God is a maker. **God loves work because God is a worker.** St. Irenaeus said that “God’s glory is a human being fully alive.” God loves work because he delights in the flourishing of humans, the crowning work of his creation, and part of human flourishing is to take delight in our work, as God does in the work of creation.

In his work of creation, God routinely “sees” his work. Are you regularly taking time to step back from your work and admire what God has equipped you to do and accomplish? How might you build in both individual and communal practices to “see that your work is good?”

One of the best ways to integrate our work with our faith is to view our work as **making** rather than **producing**. Although God is the only one who creates out of nothing, he graciously allows our work to also be creative making, rather than mere production. In your own work, what are you actually making, as related to or even distinct from what you are producing?

On the seventh day of creation, God rests. The seventh day is the first thing in the Bible to be called holy. Is there enough sabbath rest in your life? What sabbath practices do you need to commit or recommit to? Why do you think sabbath rest is a commandment?

PRAY

Either before your day (imagining what you will be doing), or at the end of your day (remembering what you did), sit in silence, smile to yourself (actually put a smile on your face), and imagine God smiling with you.

Genesis 11:1-9

Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2 As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

3 They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 6 The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

8 So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why it was called Babel—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

GOD LOVES WORK

BECAUSE WORK HAS THE POTENTIAL TO FORM US INTO CHRISTLIKENESS.

REFLECT

If Genesis 1 is the picture of what work should be, then Genesis 11 is the first picture in the Bible of what work should not be. Humans have a new technology (brick and mortar), and without proper thoughtfulness or care simply start using the technology (sound familiar?). What is more, the work is designed not to bless others or honor God, but to “make a name for themselves.” With every brick of the tower that was laid, their work was forming them, making them more and more selfish and self-absorbed. **God loves work because work has the potential to form us into Christlikeness**, rather than away from it, as was the case with the Tower of Babel workers.

Think about your work: which routines and tasks do you think tend to repeatedly make you less like Christ? Which parts of your job routinely make you more like Christ?

Recognizing our own brokenness and the brokenness of work, in what ways are you going about your work “so as to make a name for yourself?”

Is there any dimension of your work in which you are not being properly thoughtful and prayerful about the means of your work (as those in this passage were with the brick and mortar)?

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you how your work is forming you, either into Christlikeness or away from it.

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DAY THREE

READ

EXODUS 31:1-11

Then the Lord said to Moses, 2 "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5 to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. 6 Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: 7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent— 8 the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, 9 the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand— 10 and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, 11 and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you.'

GOD LOVES WORK

BECAUSE GOD IS A CRAFTSMAN.

REFLECT

The first time in the Bible we hear of someone being filled by the Spirit it is for the purpose of craftsmanship. Bezalel and Oholiab (make a note for future dog names) are filled with the Spirit and appointed by God to do and lead the creative and artistic work needed to make the tabernacle and all of its accoutrements. **God loves work because God is a craftsman**, and the craftsmanship of humans brings him pleasure and joy. At his core, he is a maker. He even came in human flesh to spend the majority of his time working in relative obscurity as a craftsman (Mark 6:3).

What craft do you practice, and how might you approach your work differently once you see it as a way to imitate the Craftsman himself?

Although you might not be an artist or a craftsman, what element of your work is the most creative? Which element is the most artistic?

The tabernacle was the place that God dwelled, and the same word is later used to describe the Incarnation of Christ (who "tabernacled" among us - Jn. 1:14). Christ now lives in his followers, making all of us a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). How might you make your workplace increasingly a place of welcome for God's presence?

PRAY

Throughout your day today (or tomorrow!) stop and make note of at least three times when your work could be described as creative, artistic, or as craftsmanship. Mark those moments with a simple prayer of gratitude.

MARK 10:46-52

46 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

52 “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

GOD LOVES WORK

BECAUSE IN OUR WORK WE CAN HEAR CRIES FOR MERCY.

REFLECT

This passage is not a traditional “faith and work passage,” as the other passages in this God Loves Work Devotional have been. Just like any Bible passage can guide us in prayer, any Bible passage can guide us in work. In both cases, this guidance often comes by cultivating and redeeming our imagination. Jesus always had his ears tuned for people on the margins, like Bartimaeus, who were crying for mercy. **God loves work because in our work we can hear cries for mercy.** Hearing a cry for mercy at work could be noticing a change in a coworker’s tone of voice, finding a way for a helpful product to become available for an underserved population, or hiring a marginalized employee.

What cries for mercy are you hearing in your work? What cries for mercy do you think you are missing?

When Jesus hears Bartimaeus’ cry, he stops. Are you willing to stop your work when you are confronted with injustice or brokenness? Does your pace/ambition/drivenness prevent you from hearing these cries?

Jesus asks Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you.” In asking this, he honors Bartimaeus’ humanity. In what ways are you asking this question of those you serve in your work?

How would you answer Jesus’ question if he came to your workplace and asked you the same question?

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you ears to hear the cries for mercy that arise in your work, industry, and community.

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