

Thank God It's Monday!

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Day One

Thank God it's Monday! I'm sure you have already said that today, haven't you? No? Are you more prone to say, "Thank God it's Friday!"?

Often, we see work as a necessary duty, toilsome and difficult, often unpleasant, frequently boring, but nonetheless essential. Typically, on Monday mornings, as we face a new work week, we're more likely to be thinking "I'll be glad when the weekend gets here, and I don't have to go to work."

You know, God is the originator of work, and work was a part of his wonderful plan for people.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Genesis 2:15).

Adam was given a job as a farmer of sorts, and it was not a secular job; it was a sacred trust from God. Work is God's perfect plan for people. God meant it to bring purpose and fulfillment to our lives.

How did we get to the "Thank God it's Friday" attitude? Well, once sin entered the picture through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, everything good God created was corrupted, including work. Sin caused work to be cursed. You'll find that curse in Genesis 3 where God said to Adam:

Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground ... (Genesis 3:17-19).

Paraphrase: You'll have to work, like you've been doing, but now it's going to be full of difficulties. You'll earn your living, but the thorns and thistles will make it unpleasant, and it will be painfully toilsome at times.

Maybe that sounds like a description of what you face as you start your work today, whether it's in a workplace or in your home. But because we, as believers, have been set free from the curse, we can also be set free from this sin-cursed attitude toward work. This week I'm going to try to give you a birds-eye view of the redeemed attitude toward work we should have—and can have—as believers.

Day Two

Tell me the truth: Were you delighted to go to work today? Or were you thinking, "Whoa, it's only Tuesday; four more days until the weekend"?

Why do we find this fairly universal attitude toward work? Everyone seems to live for the weekends. The title of my series this week is "Thank God It's Monday!" because if you're a Christ-follower and have been set free from sin and its curse by faith in Jesus, then you can—and should—have a totally different view of your work. You should be able to honestly say, "Thank God it's Monday—or Tuesday!"

We saw yesterday God gave Adam work to do in the Garden of Eden, and until sin entered the picture, work was something to be enjoyed, something fulfilling and meaningful. Everything God created was good, so work was good. The original workplace was pleasant, a place of fellowship with others and with God, a place of cooperation and obedience. Adam's job was to take care of the garden—or farm—and that was a sacred assignment from God, not some secular job he had to do to earn a living.

But once sin entered, that original plan was corrupted. And from that point on work became drudgery. Do you wonder why your workplace seems so miserable sometimes, or why relationships are so strained where you work, or why it's so difficult to get motivated in your job? It's because work has suffered the "thorns and thistles" of the curse as found in Genesis 3.

In our corrupted workplaces, people reject God and often any other authority placed over them. There may be little cooperation and lots of jealousy. Seems like everybody is out for number one with little regard for the welfare of others. The workplace is ruled by human nature and that is a sinful nature.

And here you are, a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, forced to go out into that corrupted workplace five days a week! Do you sometimes just long to be set free from this sin-corrupted work environment?

Here's the thing. Jesus came to redeem us from the curse of sin, but he purposely left us in this world. We now have the amazing opportunity to demonstrate what work is really supposed to be like—yes, even in the midst of that corrupted workplace! Have you ever thought about the privilege you have to show your world how God intended work to be? Do you do that? Would you like to?

I'll give you some suggestions starting tomorrow.

Day Three

Work as given by God can be fulfilling, rewarding, meaningful, and pleasant. Right, you're thinking, if you work for some Christian organization or church. No, that's not what I mean.

In Genesis 1 and 2 we see the first work assignment given by God to Adam and Eve. He told them to be fruitful and increase in number—to fill the earth and subdue it. To rule over the creature world, and to name all the living creatures. Then he assigned Adam the job of taking care of the garden. That was Adam's job description.

Notice as originally intended, work was assigned by God and man obeyed. And it's interesting to note the first job description would be thought of by most Christians today as a "secular" job. But since God assigned it, it had to be sacred, right? The same is true today. The nature of the work you do does not determine if it is sacred or not. Work is sacred when it is assigned by God.

Now, I ask you to think of your own work situation, whether you're in the workforce or working without a paycheck! Has your work been assigned to you by God? Are you confident you are in the job God wants you to be in? God doesn't ask us what we want to do. He assigns us work.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

God is not here to make us feel fulfilled in the career or work that we choose. We are here to do the good work that he has prepared for us to do.

Maybe going to work is hard for you because you're asking God to help you accomplish your plans, and he's waiting for you to give him the blank piece of paper and ask him to write the plan. Even when you get the job you think you want or make the money you want to earn, if it is not God's plan for your life,

you're going to be miserable. Work is rewarding and fulfilling only when we are obediently doing the work God has assigned us to do.

How do you know what God wants you to do? You spend time with the Lord and his Word, you put first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and I promise you, without fail, you'll know whether God wants you where you are or whether you're supposed to be somewhere else.

When we have the job God intended for us to have, work is redeemed from the curse. It is sacred. We can do our work to God's glory, and we can enjoy work as originally intended by our Creator.

Day Four

Thank God it's Monday! I know it's Thursday. But the title of my series this week is "Thank God It's Monday," because when we are born from above, we can truly say that and mean it.

Work is a gift from God, and as intended by him, it brings contentment, fulfillment, enjoyment, and all those good things we keep looking for. The problem is, work fell under the curse when Adam and Eve sinned, and from that time on, it has been corrupted by sin. That corruption has caused many to have an unhealthy attitude toward work, and that includes Christians.

Here's the great news.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' (Galatians 3:13).

Jesus Christ came to redeem us from the curse of work. With Jesus in control of your life, you can realize the original purpose of work and be set free from the corruption that has made work a dirty word for many.

Now, to do that, you must first have a personal relationship with Jesus through faith. Then, you must make sure the work you are doing is God's assignment for you. God has work for each of his children to do, and when God gives you work, it is sacred. Whether you call it secular or sacred, if you're doing what God wants you to do, it is sacred work.

Looking at Adam again, he was given a divine job assignment, and as long as he was willing to obey, he was living in paradise. Work was wonderful; everything was sweet. But he was also given the freedom to rebel against God's plan for his life, and unfortunately, he chose to do that. You and I have the same freedom to rebel against God's plans for our lives, but when we do, we pay the price.

If you want to transform your workday into something meaningful and worthwhile, develop the right perspective toward the work you do, and do it as unto the Lord. Think each day that you report to Jesus. You work for him, and you will be demonstrating a totally new attitude, which will show to everyone you work with and for.

Day Five

Thank God it's Fri ... Monday! My guess is some of you have already thanked God it's Friday, but what I've been trying to do this week is to help you see how you can truly learn to say, "Thank God it's Monday." Thank God for work, for your job assignment, and for what God is going to do with you and through you in your job.

Look again at the first work assignment as given to Adam; God never left him alone. God was always there with him. If you have received Christ as Savior, you are never alone; he is with you in all your work.

In fact, he has invited us to come to him and take his yoke upon us. A yoke is a wooden block that holds two animals together while they work. Jesus wants to share his yoke with you, to have you work right beside him, and the good news is, his yoke is easy. When you go to your job each day yoked up with Jesus, working with him beside you, your job become much easier. That's one way Jesus redeems our work from the curse.

Now, think of all that contention in your workplace; that dog-eat-dog attitude that permeates your job; the unfairness and discrimination and selfishness that is rampant. It all started when work was cursed with thorns and thistles. But because Jesus became a curse for us on the cross, we don't have to live under that curse anymore, and that means we can and should have a transformed attitude toward work.

This means you can demonstrate the transforming power of Jesus Christ by your attitude toward work, because you've been set free from the curse of the law through faith in Jesus Christ. You may have to work in a corrupted environment, but you don't have to be corrupted by it. You can stand out in that crowd as a bright light of hope by demonstrating a transformed attitude toward your work.

You see, the only way that workplace will be changed is when the individual hearts of people are changed. And God may have you there for that very reason—to help some of those people see their need for God through the way you work. Pretty exciting, don't you think?

But it must begin with your attitude toward work—an attitude of thankfulness, an attitude of anticipation, an attitude of doing what God has called you to do. Then you can honestly say: Thank God it's Monday!