



## [Ecclesiastes 2:24](#)

(24) Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.

*New King James Version*

In [Matthew 6:31-33](#), [Jesus](#) informs us what our primary focus regarding work should be:

Therefore do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the [kingdom of God](#) and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Undoubtedly, earning a living is important to life. However, we can easily drift into over-emphasizing the day-to-day, wage-earning job above Christian responsibilities. At the same time, the Kingdom of [God](#) can easily suffer from the “out of sight, out of mind” syndrome. To guard against this happening, we must consciously put God's Word and work as our highest priorities. This is not to say that [Christian works](#) should be given the greater time but that we must have a higher regard for them. We must consider it an absolute necessity not to neglect them.

*Work* is defined as “the physical or mental activity directed toward the accomplishment of a project one has either been assigned or undertaken on his own volition.” God, in whose image we are being created, is our overall Model. The first image God gives mankind of Himself is of Him working.

[Genesis 1:26](#) establishes the early time-setting when work was shown as an assigned responsibility of mankind:

Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;

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let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over [all the earth](#) and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Most of the Bible's first two chapters are comprised of showing God working. In our culture, people generally think that as one rises in importance, he is relieved of most work, a flawed concept to say the least. In His culture, nobody is higher than God, and in [John 5:17](#), Jesus states that God works continually. Genesis 1 and 2 provide as clear an example of His activity as is found in Scripture.

[Hebrews 1:3](#) further clarifies the Creator's continuous work:

. . . who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the majesty.

His “upholding” indicates continuous, purposeful, and energetic movement toward carrying out a purpose.

[Genesis 2:15](#) adds to our understanding of God as our Model of work and of work being an assigned responsibility: “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the [garden of Eden](#) to tend and keep it.” If we follow the orderly, step-by-step sequence of events as God creates, He did not create [Adam and Eve](#) until everything physically necessary for living was in place and operational. The narrative shows that He led them to the Garden, and His first command to mankind, represented by them, lets them know that they had to work to guard the Garden from deteriorating and to make it productive.

Note three significant things from this opening revelation about work:

- 1) God gives no indication to man that he is entitled to something for nothing.
- 2) The command to work preceded Adam and Eve's [sin](#), so we must understand that work is not a penalty for sin. [Genesis 3:17-19](#), God's pronouncement of Adam's curse, makes this point plain:

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all

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

The curses for their sin definitely made work more difficult, but the responsibility to work continued otherwise unchanged.

3) Therefore, [Ecclesiastes 2:24](#) highlights God's original command regarding work: “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.” Thus, work is a blessing, a valuable gift from God.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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