

Scripture and Labor

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A. Physical Nature of Labor

1. As old as creation (Genesis 2:5,15)

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

2. Ordained by God (Genesis 3:17-19)

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return

3. One of the commandments (Exodus 20:9)

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work

4. From morn until night (Psalm 104:23)

Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening

5. With the hands (1 Thessalonians 4:11)

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

6. To life's end (Psalm 90:10)

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away

7. Without God, it is vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:11)

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

8. Shrinking from labor denounced (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

B. Spiritual Characteristics of Labor

1. Commissioned by Christ (John 4:38)

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours. (Jesus)

2. Accepted by few (Matthew 9:37,38)

Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.

3. Working with God (1 Corinthians 3:9)

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building

4. By God's grace (1 Corinthians 15:10)

But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

5. Result of faith (1 Timothy 4:10)

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

6. Characterized by love (1 Thessalonians 1:3)

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

7. Done in Prayer (Colossians 4:12)

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

8. Subject to discouragement (Isaiah 49:4, Galatians 4:11)

Isaiah 49:4

Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God

Galatians 4:11

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

9. Interrupted by Satan (1 Thessalonians 3:5)

For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.