

The Way of Wisdom 5
From 9 to 5 and Beyond: Balancing Work and Rest

Work = “investing time and energy in accomplishing a task”

Work

Most of the passages in Proverbs are encouragements to work hard. (Proverbs 12:11; 14:23; 20:13)

God is a working God (Gen 1.1; John 5.17)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The God of the Bible is a working God, a God who gets his hands dirty making and managing creation.

Jesus says, *“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”* (John 5.17) Jesus, God in the flesh, was a working man, a *tekton*, which means “builder.”

Work reveals the image of God in us (Gen 2.15)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. God’s intention for humanity is that we work and care for his creation.

All work has dignity, not because the job gives dignity to the person, but because the person gives dignity to the job. A job can never give a person doing it more dignity than they already have as someone made in the image of the creator God.

Work is part of being fully human

Because we are made in the image of the God who works, we have a felt need to work, to accomplish something with our lives.

Rest

The Bible doesn't talk much about leisure, but it does talk about rest.

Holidays and Holy Days (Gen 2.3)

And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve's first full day of life was a "holy day," a "holiday."

Sabbath Rest = Stopping

This call to rest with God is tied up in the Hebrew word "Shabbat," or "Sabbath" = "stop, or cease activity."

Sabbath rest is different from leisure activity. It is taking time to rest and reflect on what God is doing in and through you.

Unless we take the time to stop and see ourselves as creatures made in God's image, with value and dignity, we'll be tempted to believe the lie that we find our value and dignity in what we do, rather than who we are.

Take Aways

All of us may not be able to work in jobs that we enjoy, or that we feel are meaningful, but we can all seek to work diligently at what we do. Work is a good thing; it reflects part of our identity as creatures made in God's image.

On the other hand, if we're going to live wisely, our work needs to be balanced by rest; real rest, not just a different kind of activity.