



Week 2 – God’s Plan for Work

1. The *primary* focus of God’s creative work in Genesis 1 & 2 is how God **ordered** creation. God created canvases (water, land, heavens) and then he “painted” on the canvases by populating them with created things. He brought form to the formless; order out of chaos.
2. God could have created a completed earth, but he chose not to. It still needed **cultivation** to make it fruitful (Gen. 2:5-6). He provided the raw materials but left the work to be completed by man.
3. God planted a **garden** in Eden (which means “paradise”). (Genesis 2:8)
 - It was a perfect place of **peace**. It was free of hostility, conflict, anxiety, anger, resentment and envy. Eden was a place of perfect contentment and safety.
 - Eden was the original **temple** where God and man communed in a sinless relationship (Gen. 3:8). Adam and Eve were naked & unashamed – before each other and before God. Without sin, there was no reason to cover up or hide. Shame was completely absent.
 - Eden was the **blueprint** for what God intended the rest of the world to become.
4. God commissioned Adam with a job that was important and rewarding (Genesis 1:28-31, 2:15-25).
 - Adam, as the bearer of God’s image, was to do a work **similar** to God’s. Adam could not create out of nothing as God had done, but he could develop the raw materials to expand the Garden until it covered the whole earth.
 - God put Adam in Eden to **work** it and **keep** it (Genesis 2:15). Adam was to be both a gardener and a guardian of Eden. There was no division of work between sacred and secular. Physical work was also very spiritual because it glorified God and fulfilled God’s purposes for the world he made.
 - Adam exercised **dominion** over creation, not as an owner, but as a trustee. He worked under God’s authority as the ultimate owner of everything.

Summary: God’s original plan for work was for man to bear his image through work by extending paradise to the ends of the earth. All work was spiritual because it was meant to glorify God and was to be in submission to God’s purposes.

Therefore, we, like Adam, are called to worshipfully labor in service to God and others in the domain in which God has placed us by rearranging, organizing and cultivating the raw materials at our disposal striving to create, preserve and protect places and spaces that are conducive for human flourishing.



Small Group Questions

1. Take a few minutes and share your homework from last week. Describe your calling (what work you enjoy doing and why, how that work benefits others, and how you bear the image of God in the doing of your work).
2. In Genesis 1-2, God created an environment for man to commune with him as man worked. In what ways does your work draw you closer to God? Does it ever make you feel distant from him? If so, why?
3. The garden was a perfect place of peace (without hostility, conflict, anxiety, anger, resentment, envy, etc.). In what ways might this peace create a productive environment for work? How does that compare to your own work environment?
4. We are called to cultivate and manage creation as a steward, or trustee, rather than as an owner. In what ways do you act as a steward in your own work? How does the idea of stewardship give meaning to your work?
5. While God finished the work of divine creation, the world still needed to be “subdued” in order to reach its potential. In other words, God chose to leave some work undone by him in order to provide opportunity for work by us. What does this communicate to you about God’s love for us?

Homework

Adam’s responsibility was to work and keep the garden. “Working” the garden was focused on cultivation to make it productive for God’s purposes. “Keeping” the garden was focused on preserving and guarding what was cultivated. This can be translated into our time as work that is focused on developing and work that is focused on maintaining. Thinking about your own work, what aspects of your calling involve development? What aspects involve maintaining what has previously been developed? Which do you enjoy most, developing or maintaining?