

“Full-Time Christian Service?”

If someone asked you the question, “Are you in full-time Christian service?” many of us would wrongly respond, “Oh, no, I could never do that!” Since we are approaching Labor Day, it is timely that we remind ourselves just how far off-base such an answer is.

Recently World magazine author Gene Edward Veith wrote: “Vocation [or ‘calling’] is nothing less than the theology of the Christian life....[which] provides the blueprint for how Christians are to live in the world and to influence their cultures.... Our multiple vocations—in the family, the culture, and the workplace—are where sanctification and discipleship happen.” I believe Veith’s different areas of calling are better defined as Church, family, and public square (which would include the workplace).

The Bible clarifies that all of us are called by God into our line-of-work. To start off, work itself is an integral part of the will of God for all mankind (2 Thessalonians 3:10). In Genesis 2:15 God commanded Adam to work. God made us in His image (Genesis 1:26-28) which, in part, means He created us to work as He works (John 5:17). Our labor is a calling from the Lord in that He has governed our situation in such a way that we find ourselves doing the work He has given us to do (cf. Acts 17:26; 1 Corinthians 7:17). This does not mean we cannot change jobs, strive to improve our situation (1 Corinthians 7:21), or even switch to something we believe fits better with God’s calling for us (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1). It does lead us to conclude that all ethical, legal workplace roles are callings from God. After all, the very first person spoken of in the Bible as being filled with the Spirit of God was not a prophet or pastor, but an artisan, Bezalel, whom the LORD called to serve Him (Exodus 31:2-3).

How does our job function as a service of God? Here is a brief summary:

- It is part of your obedience to God (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10).
- It provides a service to other people (Proverbs 31:24)
- It helps support your family (Proverbs 31:21)
- It provides opportunity for you to trust God (Habakkuk 3:17-19).
- It provides opportunity to help those in need (Proverbs 31:18-20; Ephesians 4:28)
- It enables you to support the work of God (Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Timothy 5:17-18).
- It enables you to glorify God by bringing order to the world, providing for others’ needs, and showing His ability to provide for us and others (Psalm 8:5-6; Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15).
- It puts us in a mission field with people to win to Christ, which is at the heart of His will for the New Testament Church (Matthew 28:19-20).

So, this Labor Day be encouraged. Whether you are a stay-at-home mom, a teacher, provide a service, work in manufacturing, grow food, whatever you do, you can approach your work not just to please others or earn a paycheck, but that you might serve and honor your Lord (Colossians 3:23).