

We Labor for God
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The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.
(Genesis 2:15, ESV)

This week our nation observes Labor Day. Unofficially, it marks the end of the summer season and can be a time when we as Americans enjoy time spent together with friends around cookouts. Officially, though, Labor Day celebrates those whose work has brought about many great achievements in our nation's history.

Work isn't always fun. Sometimes it can be downright demanding. Labor oftentimes takes its toll on one's body, mind, and spirit. You might be especially grateful for a day off work given how things have been going at your workplace – even if you work from home! – but it's also possible that you still have to spend time working when others have the day off. Work can be a pain. It wasn't always so!

In a brief glimpse of life before humanity's fall into sin, Genesis 2 points us to a truth that might get overlooked as we learn about God's plan for His creation: work isn't a bad thing. God gave mankind the gift of being useful. In the beginning, our first parents got to take care of the Garden of Eden, managing it as plants grew and animals thrived according to the Creator's design.

While I hope that you find some joy and satisfaction in the work that you do, that doesn't always seem to be possible in our broken, post-fall world. Struggling with our labor is part of the consequence of humanity's rejection of God's design for life. (Genesis 3:17-19) To be sure, the Son of God didn't step down into our world primarily so that you could enjoy whatever it is you do to earn a living. But because Jesus came to redeem you – all of you – even the work that you do comes under his care.

As a baptized child of God, know that the labor you do, you do for God (see Colossians 3:22–24 for more on that). Your Creator is at work through you to care for His Creation, whether you're an accountant, farmer, public servant, homemaker, health care worker, or one of the thousands of other types of workers in our world. In that way, God cares for our world through you.

This Labor Day week, whether you are on the job or are enjoying a rest from labor, may God bless you with a renewed sense of purpose and joy, giving you a bit of that satisfaction that our first parents knew as they worked in Eden.

We pray:

Gracious God, You created mankind and gave us a role to be of service in this world. Thank you for workers in our nation. Bless their labor with success and satisfaction, especially those with dangerous or strenuous jobs. Provide opportunities for work and prosperity for those unemployed or underemployed. Grant that we all might always remember how we would serve you by serving our neighbors and employers through the work we do. In Jesus' Name. Amen.