

BIBLICAL REASONS TO WORK

Bible Reason #1—*To share with the poor and needy.*

Read Ephesians 4:28; Luke 3:11; James 2:15, 16.

More than 500 million people are malnourished or starving in the world today. If we stood those people side by side, they would encircle the globe more than six times.

The Apostle Paul makes it painfully clear that one reason for working and earning money is to have something to share with him who has need. The question is, who has need? Jesus answered that in Luke 3:11 when He said, "If someone asks you for food and clothing, give it to him."

We can give our unwanted clothes to an individual or family who is in need, to Goodwill or The Salvation Army, or to a children's home. We can respond to people when we see they need food by taking time to help them get it. This is not always comfortable or easy, but we were called by God to work in order to share. Consider these figures from World Vision. Recently one penny sent 51¢ worth of vitamins to families suffering from malnutrition. A dime sent 36¢ worth of high protein food to undernourished children. A quarter sent \$5.25 worth of prescription medicines to people suffering from illness.

We must not forget that sharing with the poor and needy is one primary reason for work!

Bible Reason #2—*To spread the gospel.*

Read Philippians 4:15, 16; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Corinthians 8:9, 10.

The Bible is clear that we are to use our resources (money) to spread the word about Jesus Christ. True, it will mean giving up some money and becoming poorer for the sake of the gospel. But, remember, Jesus was rich. He had it all, but he became poor, gave up everything, so we could be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9, 10). Ecclesiastes 11:1 says 'Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.' Here is a spiritual principle—what we give will ultimately be a blessing to us in some way.

So whether we are preachers or missionaries, or whether we are working in the professional business world, the Bible clearly states that one major reason for our work is to spread ' through our daily contact and influence.

Bible Reason #3—*To provide for yourself and your family.*

Read Luke 3:14; Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

One purpose for our work is to provide the things we need to live. The Bible says if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. The Bible does not say we cannot enjoy our lives. It does say that we are aliens in the world. We should approach things differently than those who are not Christians.

We all have wants, and sometimes we get caught up in the rush to have a lot of things. This is not a Biblical purpose for work. Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

How many of you have closets that are full? Dresser drawers that are full? A garage that is full? A stomach that is usually full? The root of the Greek word for rich is *pleroma*, which means *full*. We are rich when we are *full*.

Bible Reason #4—*To fulfill your life.*

Read Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:12, 13, 22; 5:18-20; 9:10.

What gives you a sense of fulfillment in your life? A feeling of having it all together? Completing a school year? Finishing a term paper? Wearing the right clothes? Making it through a day without any major sin problems? Or just making it through a day?

The Bible says that "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This . . . is from the hand of God." (Ecclesiastes 2:24). In the next chapter Solomon says, ". . . moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God," (Ecclesiastes 3:13). And finally, Solomon says with conviction, "Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

The Bible stresses that fulfillment in our work is something good, something to be happy about, and something that is a gift from God. For the Christian, fulfillment in our work cannot come apart from living by faith in God and in the will of God.

Never let anyone try to tell you God doesn't want us to seek fulfillment in the labor we do on this earth. But remember, the Word says, "Whether . . . you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).