Lesson: Labor Day

Labor Day became a federal holiday in 1894; it is observed on the first Monday in September. Labor Day was advanced by labor unions to elevate the American worker and the contributions that labor has made to our growth as a nation and in securing our way of life. It is a day to reflect on personal achievements, to plan for the future, and to thank God for the blessing of gainful employment. Hard working citizens deserve a breather, to enjoy a day off and celebrate the opportunities and possibilities available to those who eagerly and vigorously pursue their vision of the American Dream.

This country was built on hard work, and it will continue if we work hard all of our days. This doesn’t mean one should never retire from their job, it means that God’s work never ends. And this nation has stood tall because we were doing God’s work in addition to our own. Do not let deluded pundits convince you that you will be taken care of, so you needn’t bother developing a hard work ethic. Because it is that ethic which has prospered us. God will be our shield and protection if we continue on the right path; and that will require labor, and for some, heavy lifting. As far as those deluded pundits, who talk without stopping or taking pause, in order to dodge doing any work or answer any questions; they are lazy and expect you to support them because they think they are more important, which is why they think they should be calling the shots for you.

God is calling the shots, and He is sorely displeased with sloth: one of seven deadly sins in the Catholic church. Sloth opens the door to many more grievous sins: substance dependency; hate and resentment; conspiracy; sexual immorality; capital crimes in general; and sins that lead to death. And as far as the government, we the people are supposed to be calling the shots.

* PRO 6:6–9 ~ You who are lazy, consider the ant. The ant has no supervisor, guide, or ruler yet manages to provide plenty of food. How long will you sleep, lazy people; when are you going to wake up?
* PRO 10:4–5, 26 ~ Whoever slacks off will become poor, but the diligent will become rich. Whoever gathers during the summer is wise; whoever sleeps during the harvest is shameful. As vinegar is to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sloth to an employer.
* PRO 12:24 ~ The diligent person will be in charge, and the lazy ones will be slaves.
* PRO 13:4 ~ The lazy person desires many things and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent person will be fully satisfied.
* PRO 14:23 ~ In all of your labor there is profit; but idle talk trends only towards poverty.
* PRO 20:4 ~ The slothful person will not plow when it is cold and will end up begging during the harvest, and have nothing.
* PRO 21:25 ~ The desires of the slothful lead to death; for his hands refuse to work.
* PRO 24:30–32, 34 ~ I visited the field of the slothful man and the vineyard of the ignorant man and all I found were thorn bushes and broken fences. And I learned from the experience. People like that will receive poverty like hard labor, and neediness like an armed robber.
* PRO 26:13–16 ~ The lazy person will not work, giving stupid excuses like, “There could be a lion in the street.” Just like a door on its hinges, the lazy person is attached to the bed, tossing and turning. The lazy person is too tired even to lift a spoon to eat. Lazy people can convince themselves better than seven people with a good excuse.
* 2 TH 3:10–12 ~ When we were with you, we gave you this rule: if a man does not work, he should not eat. We have heard that some of you are lazy. They are not busy, they are just busybodies. We urge these people, in the name of Christ, to settle down and to earn the bread that they eat.
* 1 TI 5:8 ~ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, especially his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

God will bless your work if you do it His way; and you will prosper and so will those you work for whether business, family, or community. Those who work hard are happier and have higher self-esteem, especially when they trust in God to provide direction, thereby contributing to the greater good and the glory of God. Yes, work can be tiring, boring, or unpleasant; but the payoff far outweighs the fact that the job may be difficult, time consuming, and exhausting.

* PSA 90:17 ~ Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands; yes Lord, establish the work of our hands.
* PRO 16:3 ~ Commit your acts to God and He will establish your thoughts.
* ECC 9:10–11 ~ Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, device, knowledge, or wisdom in the grave where you are going. I returned, and realized that the race does not belong to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor sustenance to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the skilled, but time and circumstance happen to everyone.
* PHP 2:14–15 ~ Conduct your business without arguing or complaining, so that you remain blameless and harmless, as sons of God; without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation where you shine as lights in the world.
* PHP 4:13 ~ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Remember to take a day each week to rest, worship, and be refreshed. There is such a thing as working too much. Workaholics end up wasting time with unproductive work, if not counterproductive. When it’s break time, take five; when it’s quitting time, go home. Sometimes you may have to work overtime, but it won’t kill you. Keep this in mind, the world has many deadlines, but God has the same deadlines for every human: death, and the second coming. Make sure you listen to the Holy Spirit and stay on a path illuminated by the love of Christ; and you’ll qualify for a great job in heaven, working for God with the best benefits package ever, and lasting for eternity.

* PRO 11:18 ~ The wicked work deceitfully; but for those who sow righteousness there will be a sure reward.
* ECC 12:14 ~ God will judge every work, including works done in secret, whether good or evil.
* ISA 65:17–25 ~ I am creating new heavens and a new earth. The former will be remembered no more; it will not even come to mind. Be glad and rejoice forever in that which I the Lord create; I will create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people will be a joy unto me. They will be heard for all of their days; while the sinners, though their days may be many, will be accursed. My people will build houses and inhabit them; they will plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof. They will not build a house for another to inhabit, or plant a vineyard for another to consume. My people will enjoy the works of their hands, for their labor will not be in vain nor will it cause them trouble. For they represent the blessed seed of the Lord, as well as their offspring with them. Before they call, I will answer; and while they speak, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; but dust will be the serpent’s supper. The Lord says, “Nobody will harm or destroy those who abide on my holy mountain.”
* JOH 9:4 ~ Jesus declared, “While it is day, we will do the work of Him who sent me, for the night approaches when nobody can work.”
* JOH 14:12 ~ Jesus promised, “Truly I tell you, those believing in me will do the works that I do; and greater works than these shall they do, when I have gone to be with my Father.”
* 1 CO 3:13–14 ~ Everyone’s work will be seen for what it is because the light will illuminate it; it will be revealed by the fire which tries every person’s work as well as his or her dedication. If that which is built endures, the builder will be rewarded. If it burns down, the builder will suffer the loss but will be saved from the flames.
* PHP 1:6 ~ Be confident, for He who began a good work in you will prolong it until the day Christ returns.
* JAM 1:4 ~ Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be complete and want for nothing.

Labor is a good thing. Not only because it is a command of God, but it is His way. It’s not like God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit do not work very hard on our behalf. They are at work night and day, every day; for an eternity past, present, and future. And we will work too, doing things one cannot imagine; and God will bless all of our work done in the light. We have bosses on earth; most of them have earned that authority. They have bosses, and their bosses have bosses, but the one who is sovereign is God. We work for Him to receive an eternal inheritance; and He works fulltime for us, to provide our heritage which is already kept secure in paradise.

* HAB 1:5 ~ Take note, you heathen; regard and wonder marvelously, for I will work a work in your days which you will not believe, though you were told.
* JOH 4:33–34 ~ After His disciples implored Him to eat, Jesus informed them, “My nourishment is doing the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.”
* JOH 5:15–17 ~ The Jews were annoyed by Jesus healing others on the Sabbath. Jesus answered them, “My Father has been at work all the while, and I work too.”
* 1 TH 4:11–12 ~ Be studious and hold your tongue; mind your own business. Do the work of your hands as you have been commanded, so you can walk honestly towards those who are without, and that you may lack nothing.

Dear heavenly, omnipotent Father, let us never forget that you are the boss. Bless our labor that it will glorify you and contribute to the greater good. Help us to remember, we do it all for Christ, and it never will be boring, tiresome, or unhelpful when we remember your Holy Spirit is present to watch and guide. If things get tough, dangerous, or taxing, remind us that in our weakness we become strong, because your Spirit is pulling us through, reenergizing us along the way. Help us always to shine your light in the workplace by being honest, ethical, helpful, considerate, thoughtful, thorough, loyal, and conscientious, knowing that this will be noticed by you, Lord, as well as the people we work with and work for. We give you the glory for everything we have accomplished; help us remember to be humble, and give you the credit whenever someone praises our efforts. And let us not be hesitant to give credit to our family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and students, with added encouragement included. In Jesus’s name, whose work on the cross paid for everything, Amen.

By Andrew V. Barber (posted: 09/01/2023)