

Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: Exodus 20:9

Man is not to remain idle within the six days given him of God to Labour. Before commanding man to rest on the Sabbath day, God commanded him to work for six days. Many have thought to themselves that they keep the fourth commandment by resting on the Sabbath (Saturday) yet they omit the section of work. How do you rest when you have not worked?

After creating man, the Bible then says, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. Genesis 2:15.

He was to dress the garden in six days and the seventh Day was given to man not as a day to continue working but as a day in which he may rest from labor.

What results from not working?

I have been shown that much sin has resulted from idleness. Active hands and minds do not find time to heed every temptation which the enemy suggests, but idle hands and brains are all ready for Satan to control. The mind, when not properly occupied, dwells upon improper things. **Parents should teach their children that idleness is sin.** I was referred to Ezekiel 16:49: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." 1T 395.2

Children should be taught very young to be useful, to help themselves, and to help others. Many daughters of this age can, without remorse of conscience, see their mothers toiling, cooking, washing, or ironing, **while they sit in the parlor and read stories, knit edging, crochet, or embroider.** Their hearts are as unfeeling as a stone. But where does this wrong originate? Who are the ones usually most to blame in this matter? The poor, deceived parents. They overlook the future good of their children, and in their mistaken fondness, let them sit in idleness, or do that which is of but little account, which requires no exercise of the mind or muscles, and then excuse their indolent daughters because they are weakly. What has made them weakly? In many cases it has been the wrong course of the parents. A proper amount of exercise about the house would improve both mind and body. But children are deprived of this through false ideas, until they are averse to work. It is disagreeable and does not accord with their ideas of gentility. It is thought to be unladylike and even coarse to wash dishes, iron, or stand over the washtub. This is the fashionable instruction which is given children in this unfortunate age. 1T 393.2

There is a class of young ladies in this age who are merely useless creatures, only good to breathe, eat, wear, chat, and talk nonsense, while they hold in their fingers a bit of embroidery or crochet. But few of the youth show real sound judgment and good common sense. **They lead a butterfly life with no special object in view.** When this class of worldly associates get together, about all you can hear is a few silly remarks about dress, or some frivolous matter, and then they laugh at their own

remarks which they consider very bright. This is frequently done in the presence of older persons, who can but feel saddened at such lack of reverence for their years. These youth seem to have lost all sense of modesty and good manners. Yet the manner in which they have been instructed leads them to think it the height of gentility. 1T 394.2

Who is exempted from labour?

I know many are now ready to mention people whom they think are not obliged to work. I will yet ask you another question before you give out your answer. Who is exempted from obeying the fourth commandment? I answer none. Doth not the fourth commandment say that six days shalt we labour? So, who is exempted from work?

Among the Jews, physical toil was not thought strange or degrading. Through Moses the Hebrews had been instructed to train their children to industrious habits, and it was regarded as a sin to allow the youth to grow up in ignorance of physical labor. Even though a child was to be educated for holy office, a knowledge of practical life was thought essential. Every youth, whether his parents were rich or poor, was taught some trade. Those parents who neglected to provide such a training for their children were looked upon as departing from the instruction of the Lord. In accordance with this custom, **Paul had early learned the trade of tentmaking.** AA 346.2

Biblical appeal for man to Labour.

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Genesis 3:19

Everyone must labour to obtain bread. Apostle Paul, in his second letter to Thessalonians, says, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, **that if any would not work, neither should he eat.**" 2 Thessalonians 3:8

Why did Paul write about work to the Thessalonians?

At Thessalonica, Paul had met those who refused to work with their hands. It was of this class that he afterward wrote: "There are some which walk among you disorderly, WORKING NOT AT ALL, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, **that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.**" While laboring in Thessalonica, Paul had been careful to set before such ones a right example. "Even when we were with you," he wrote, "this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." Verses 11, 12, 10. AA 347.3

It is at Thessalonica that we first read of Paul's working with his hands **in self-supporting labor while preaching the word**. Writing to the church of believers there, he reminded them that he "might have been burdensome" to them, and added:

"Ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." 1 Thessalonians 2:6, 9.

And again, in his second epistle to them, **he declared that he and his fellow laborer while with them had not eaten "any man's bread for nought."** Night and day we worked, he wrote, "that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."

2 Thessalonians 3:8, 9. AA 347.2

Extremism/fanaticism about Labour.

During the long period of his ministry in Ephesus, where for three years he carried forward an aggressive evangelistic effort throughout that region, Paul again worked at his trade. While Paul did thus [laboring with his hands], there were some professed people who held extreme views on labour alongside ministry.

There were some who objected to Paul's toiling with his hands, declaring that it was inconsistent with the work of a gospel minister. Why should Paul, a minister of the highest rank, thus connect mechanical work with the preaching of the word? Was not the laborer worthy of his hire? Why should he spend in making tents time that to all appearance could be put to better account? {AA 351.1-2}

...Misguided souls have taught that the attainment of true holiness carries the mind above all earthly thoughts and leads men to refrain wholly from labor. Others, taking extreme views of certain texts of Scripture, have taught that it is a sin to work--that Christians should take no thought concerning the temporal welfare of themselves or their families, but should devote their lives wholly to spiritual things. The teaching and example of the apostle Paul are a rebuke to such extreme views. {AA 348.1}

Paul set an example against the sentiment, then gaining influence in the church, that the gospel could be proclaimed successfully only by those who were wholly freed from the necessity of physical toil. **He illustrated in a practical way what might be done by consecrated laymen in many places where the people were unacquainted with the truths of the gospel.** His course inspired many humble toilers with a desire to do what they could to advance the cause of God, while at the same time they supported themselves in daily labor. Aquila and Priscilla were not called to give their whole time to the ministry of the gospel, yet these humble laborers were used by God to show Apollos the way of truth more perfectly. The Lord employs various instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose, and while some with special talents are chosen to

devote all their energies to the work of teaching and preaching the gospel, many others, upon whom human hands have never been laid in ordination, are called to act an important part in soul saving. {AA 355.1}

There is a large field open before the self-supporting gospel worker. Many may gain valuable experiences in ministry while toiling a portion of the time at some form of manual labor, and by this method strong workers may be developed for important service in needy fields. {AA 355.2}

Lessons to ministers laboring in new fields.

Young men who desire to exercise their gifts in the work of the ministry, will find a helpful lesson in the example of Paul at Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, and other places. Although an eloquent speaker, and chosen by God to do a special work, he was never above labor, nor did he ever weary of sacrificing for the cause he loved. "Even unto this present hour," he wrote to the Corinthians, "we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labor, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it." 1 Corinthians 4:11, 12. {AA 354.2}

Should then God's ministers be entangled in unnecessary Labours in the six working days?

There are basically two extreme views about work that is to say, no work doctrine and over working (full engagement in business that no time is left for God's service). All these two extremes must be avoided.

When God raises up men and women to labour for Him, it seen along ages that those people would be self-supporting until some time. They would labour with their hands to see how the work can be supported. God allows it thus because if the gospel minister stresses much about being supported at the very beginning of the work, people would think otherwise. Today, religion has become to many, a business. Wherever you go to preach the gospel, people think that you need money.

To take away this prejudice, gospel ministers who start up the work have to be self supporting.

Paul tells us why he had followed this course in Corinth. It was that he might give no cause for reproach to "them which desire occasion." 2 Corinthians 11:12. While he had worked at tent making, he had also labored faithfully in the proclamation of the gospel. He himself declares of his labors, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." And he adds, "For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not

burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong. Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you. . . . And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." 2 Corinthians 12:12-15. {AA 350.3}

Then as the work advances and people are acquainted with it, more resources come in and those labourers are relieved from the burden.

This can be seen when the apostles who were administering to temporal matters had to be relieved from this work so that they could dedicate themselves more to religious matters.

Why couldn't the apostles continue serving as deacons?

"Summoning a meeting of the believers, the apostles were led by the Holy Spirit to outline a plan for the better organization of all the working forces of the church. *The time had come, the apostles stated, when the spiritual leaders having the oversight of the church should be relieved from the task of distributing to the poor and from similar burdens, so that they might be free to carry forward the work of preaching the gospel.* "Wherefore, brethren," they said, "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." This advice was followed, and by prayer and the laying on of hands, seven chosen men were solemnly set apart for their duties as deacons. {AA 89.1}

The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to *the general financial interests of the church*, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole. {AA 89.2}

Does the principle above still work for us today?

The same order and system that were necessary in the days of the apostles should be maintained in the church of today. The prosperity of the cause depends very largely upon its various departments being conducted by men of ability, who are qualified to fill the positions in which they are placed. *Those who are chosen of God to be leaders in the cause of truth, having the general oversight of the spiritual interests of the church, should be relieved as far as possible from cares and perplexities of a temporal nature.* Those whom God has called to minister in word and doctrine should have time for meditation, prayer, and a study of the Scriptures. Their clear spiritual discernment is dimmed if they are obliged to enter into the lesser details of business, and to deal with the various temperaments of those who meet together in church

capacity. **All difficult matters of a temporal nature should be brought before the proper officers, to be adjusted by them.** But if these matters are of so perplexing a character as to baffle the wisdom of these officers, they should be carried into the council of those who have the oversight of the entire church.--RH Feb. 16, 1911. {PaM 149.2}

Today, gospel ministers have desired to apply this full-time service to themselves at the start of the work. They have even demanded that every church member should be a full-time minister. What has resulted has only brought reproach to the truth and our God. Both the minister and church members become miserable, poverty stricken, begging bread, until when even paying church rent becomes a problem.

Is God really honoured when we fail even to pay rent for the place of worship? Is this the giving of glory to God as addressed in our end time message when the landlord says, “no more worshipping from here since you have not paid for the last three months?” I pray that God may open your mind upon this subject. We need to understand when we are to engage full-time in gospel lines, otherwise people will think that we just money minded [yet it is not the case] when we keep begging from them.

Our pioneers laboured at the start of the work and later on as the work advanced, counsel was given that ministers can be supported as they were sent to distant fields. Ellen G. White says;

My husband left the railroad, **and with his ax went into the woods to chop cordwood.** With a continual pain in his side, he worked from early morning till dark to earn about fifty cents a day. He was prevented from sleeping nights by severe pain. We endeavored to keep up good courage, and trust in the Lord. I did not murmur. In the morning I felt grateful to God that He had preserved us through another night, and at night I was thankful that He had kept us through another day. **One day when our provisions were gone, my husband went to his employer to get money or provisions.** It was a stormy day, and he walked three miles and back in the rain. He brought home on his back a bag of provisions tied in different compartments, having in this manner passed through the village of Brunswick, where he had often lectured. As he entered the house, very weary, my heart sank within me. My first feelings were that God had forsaken us. I said to my husband: "Have we come to this? Has the Lord left us?" I could not restrain my tears, and wept aloud for hours, until I fainted. Prayer was offered in my behalf. When I breathed again, I felt the cheering influence of the Spirit of God, and regretted that I had sunk under

discouragement. We desire to follow Christ and to be like Him; but we sometimes faint beneath trials, and remain at a distance from Him. Sufferings and trials bring us near to Jesus. The furnace consumes the dross and brightens the gold. {1T 82.2}

When are we to be relieved temporal matters?

I have been instructed in regard to the importance of our ministers' keeping free from responsibilities that should be largely *borne by business men*. In the night season I was in an assembly consisting of a number of our brethren who bear the burden of the work. They were deeply perplexed over financial affairs, and were consulting as to how the work could be managed most successfully. {9MR 169.1}

Some thought that the number of workers might be limited, and yet all the results essential be realized. One of the brethren occupying a position of responsibility was explaining his plans, and stating what he desired to see accomplished. Several others presented matters for consideration. Then One of dignity and authority arose, and proceeded to state principles for our guidance. To several ministers the Speaker said: {9MR 169.2}

"Your work is not the management of financial matters. It is not wise for you to undertake this. God has burdens for you to bear, but if you carry lines of work for which you are not adapted, your efforts in presenting the Word will prove unsuccessful. This will bring upon you discouragement that will disqualify you for the very work you should do--a work requiring careful discrimination and sound, unselfish judgment." {9MR 169.3}

Why do you think such a counsel was not given at the start of the work back in 1840s?

Ministers are not ordained as businessmen?

Not a few ministers are neglecting the very work that they have been appointed to do. Why are those who are set apart for the work of the ministry placed on committees and boards? Why are they called upon to attend so many business meetings, many times at great distance from their fields of labor? Why are not business matters placed in the hands of businessmen? The ministers have not been set apart to do this work. The finances of the cause are to be properly managed by men of ability, but ministers are set apart for another line of work. Let the management of financial matters rest on others than those ordained to the ministry. {7T 254.4}

Ministers are not to be called hither and thither to attend board meetings for the purpose of deciding common business questions. Many of our ministers have done this work in the past, but it is not the work in which the Lord wishes them to engage. Too many financial burdens have been placed on them. When they try to carry these burdens, they neglect to fulfill the gospel commission. God looks upon this as a dishonor to His name. {7T 255.1}

Those who are employed to write and to speak the Word should attend fewer committee meetings. **They should entrust many minor matters to men of business ability, and thus avoid being kept on a constant strain that robs the mind of its natural vigor.** They should give far more attention to the preservation of physical health; for vigor of mind depends largely upon vigor of body. Proper periods of sleep and rest and an abundance of physical exercise are essential to health of body and mind. To rob nature of her hours for rest and recreation, by allowing one man to do the work of four, or of three, or even of two, will result in irreparable loss. {9MR 169.4}

Finances should be managed by those not set aside for preaching.--The finances of the cause are to be properly managed by businessmen of ability; but preachers and evangelists are set apart for another line of work. Let the management of financial matters rest on others than those set apart for the work of preaching the gospel. Our ministers are not to be heavily burdened with the business details of the evangelical work carried on in our large cities. Those in charge of our conferences should find businessmen to look after the financial details of city work. If such men cannot be found, let facilities be provided for training men to bear these burdens.--RH Oct. 5, 1905. {PaM 111.1}

It is God's design that such workers shall be freed from unnecessary anxiety, that they may have full opportunity to obey the injunction of Paul to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." 1 Timothy 4:15. While they should be careful to exercise sufficiently to keep mind and body vigorous, yet it is not God's plan that they should be compelled to spend a large part of their time at secular employment. {AA 356.1}

Why did Paul labour with his hands?

During the long period of his ministry in Ephesus, where for three years he carried forward an aggressive evangelistic effort throughout that region, Paul again worked at his trade.....He illustrated in a practical way what might be done by consecrated laymen in many places where the people were unacquainted with the truths of the gospel. His course inspired many humble toilers with a desire to do what they could to advance the cause of God, while at the same time they supported themselves in daily labor....{Read AA 355.1 for details}

HOW IMPORTANT IS WORK?

Work is a blessing, not a curse. A spirit of indolence destroys godliness and grieves the Spirit of God. A stagnant pool is offensive, but a pure, flowing stream spreads health and gladness over the land. Paul knew that those who neglect physical work soon become enfeebled. He desired to teach young ministers that by working with their hands, by bringing into exercise their muscles and sinews, they would become strong to endure the toils and privations that awaited them in the gospel field. And he realized that his own teachings would lack vitality and force if he did not keep all parts of the system properly exercised. {AA 352.3}

When Paul first visited Corinth, he found himself among a people who were suspicious of the motives of strangers. The Greeks on the seacoast were keen traders...Paul was acquainted with their characteristics, and he would give them no occasion for saying that he preached the gospel in order to enrich himself. He might justly have claimed support from his Corinthian hearers; but this right he was willing to forgo, lest his usefulness and success as a minister should be injured by the unjust suspicion that he was preaching the gospel for gain. He would seek to remove all occasion for misrepresentation, that the force of his message might not be lost. {AA 349.1}

Useful physical labour is a part of the Gospel.

The great Teacher, when enshrouded in the pillar of cloud, gave direction that every youth should learn a trade. Thus, the people would be enabled to earn their own bread. And knowing how hard it was to obtain money, they would not spend their means foolishly. {AUCR, December 1, 1899 par. 1}

Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, learned the trade of a tent-maker. There were higher and lower branches of tent-making. Paul had learned the higher branches, and he could also work at the common branches when circumstances demanded. Tent-making did not bring returns as quickly as some other lines of business, and at times it was only by the strictest economy that Paul could supply his necessities. {AUCR, December 1, 1899 par. 2}

Why did Paul connect mechanical labour with the preaching of the Gospel? Was not the labourer worthy of his hire? Why did he not spend all his time in preaching? Why waste time and strength in making tents? But Paul did not regard the time spent in making tents lost by any means. While working at his trade he gave an example in diligence and thoroughness. He was "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." {AUCR, December 1, 1899 par. 3}

Paul was an educator. He preached the Gospel with his voice, and by intelligent labour, he preached it with his hands. He taught others in the

same way that he had been educated by one who was regarded as the wisest of human teachers. As Paul worked skillfully and rapidly with his hands, he related to his fellow-workers the specifications which Christ had given to Moses in regard to the building of the tabernacle, as recorded in Exodus, chapters 24-27. For his own encouragement, and for their benefit, he repeated to them many portions of the Holy Scriptures. He taught that supreme honour is to be given to God. He told them that the skill, genius, and wisdom brought into the work of building the tabernacle, were given by God, to be used for His glory. He repeated the communications from God to Moses found in Exodus 35:20-35, and chap. 36:1-7. He taught that in this the Most High was instructing men as to the manner in which the necessary work in our world should be done. {AUCR, December 1, 1899 par. 4}

What must be done while at work?

But Paul did not regard as lost the time thus spent. As he worked with Aquila he kept in touch with the Great Teacher, losing no opportunity of witnessing for the Saviour, and of helping those who needed help. His mind was ever reaching out for spiritual knowledge. He gave his fellow workers instruction in spiritual things, and he also set an example of industry and thoroughness. He was a quick, skillful worker, diligent in business, "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Romans 12:11. As he worked at his trade, the apostle had access to a class of people that he could not otherwise have reached. He showed his associates that skill in the common arts is a gift from God, who provides both the gift and the wisdom to use it aright. He taught that even in everyday toil God is to be honored. His toil-hardened hands detracted nothing from the force of his pathetic appeals as a Christian minister. {AA 351.3}

GOD BLESS THE WORKS OF THY HANDS