



3.1 Each member understands the sacred dignity of work, both their own and of those they work with.

Q. For starters, what would you define as “work” and where does it take place?

Q. How would you define “worship” and where does it take place?

Read Genesis 1.

Q. What is the first thing God shows us about Himself? What is He doing?

Read Genesis 2:5-15.

Q. What job did God give Adam?

One of the first things we can take away from the Bible is a view of God. For six days He is actively creating with organization, with a process, and with a rhythm. There are distinct outcomes with a review and an evaluation. This first revelation of God shows Him at work.

Then he creates Adam in His own image and gives him work to do. Note that this is all *before* sin entered the picture.

AVO WHAT?

To understand where the idea of sacred work comes from, we can look to God's Word for a deeper study. There is a Hebrew word that we need to learn--**Avodah**. In the ancient Hebrew text of the Bible, forms of this word would be used interchangeably to mean work, worship, and service. Does having one word as a foundation for these three activities mean anything for us today?

These days it's easy for us to separate these ideas (work, worship, and service). We work at "work", but we worship at "church." In our minds these are very different activities in very different places. But is that the way God created things to be? Read these two excerpts:

*...**AVODAH**, ON THE OTHER HAND, SUGGESTS THAT OUR WORK CAN BE A FORM OF WORSHIP WHERE WE HONOR THE LORD GOD, AND SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS. THE WORD FOR WORK IN HEBREW, **AVODAH**, IS THE SAME USED FOR PRAYER. **AVODAH** CONNOTES SERVICE. WORK IS NOT ONLY A NECESSARY PART OF LIFE; IT IS A FORM OF SERVICE TO THE WORLD, TO THE REST OF HUMANITY, AND TO GOD. WE ARE MEANT TO BE OF SERVICE, TO BE PARTNERS WITH GOD IN THE ONGOING CREATION OF THE WORLD.*

THE LIKELIHOOD THAT 40-PLUS PEOPLE, WHO WROTE IN THREE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, LIVED ON THREE DIFFERENT CONTINENTS, IN DIFFERENT ERAS, WOULD COME UP WITH ONE CONTINUAL MESSAGE, ONE CONTINUAL THEME, AND ONE CONTINUAL PLAN OF SALVATION, IS NOTHING SHORT OF MIRACULOUS. NO OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOK SHARES THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE.

- RABBI MICHAEL STRASSFELD

DEPENDING ON WHO YOU ASK, ESKIMOS MAY HAVE OVER 100 DISTINCT WORDS FOR SNOW. WHY? BECAUSE LANGUAGE HAS A UNIQUE ABILITY TO CREATE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THINGS IN OUR MINDS. LANGUAGE CAN ALSO, HOWEVER, BRING TWO IDEAS TOGETHER.

*THE ANCIENT HEBREWS HAD A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF HOW FAITH AND WORK CAME TOGETHER IN THEIR LIVES. IT SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISING, THEN, THAT THEY USED THE SAME WORD FOR WORK AND WORSHIP. THE HEBREW WORD **AVODAH** JOINTLY MEANS WORK, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE. THE VARIOUS USAGES OF THIS HEBREW WORD FOUND FIRST IN [GENESIS 2:15](#) TELL US THAT GOD'S ORIGINAL DESIGN AND DESIRE IS THAT OUR WORK AND OUR WORSHIP WOULD BE A SEAMLESS WAY OF LIVING.*

IN SOME VERSES THE WORD **AVODAH** MEANS WORK, AS IN TO WORK IN THE FIELD AND TO DO COMMON LABOR...:

“SIX DAYS YOU SHALL WORK (AVODAH).” – EXODUS 34:21

“THEN MAN GOES OUT TO HIS WORK (AVODAH), TO HIS LABOR UNTIL EVENING.” – PSALM 104:23

IN OTHER VERSES, **AVODAH** MEANS WORSHIP, AS IN TO WORSHIP YOU, O GOD.

“THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP (AVODAH) ME.” – EXODUS 8:1

“BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSEHOLD, WE WILL SERVE (AVODAH) THE LORD.” – JOSHUA 24:15

AS FOR ME, JOSHUA SAYS, I WILL **AVODAH**. I WILL WORK FOR, AND WORSHIP, THE LORD. THIS IS A POWERFUL IMAGE TO THINK THAT THE WORD FOR WORKING IN THE FIELDS IS THE SAME WORD USED FOR WORSHIPPING THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB. **AVODAH** IS A PICTURE OF AN INTEGRATED FAITH. A LIFE WHERE WORK AND WORSHIP COME FROM THE SAME ROOT. THE SAME FOUNDATION.

FOR NO ONE CAN LAY ANY FOUNDATION OTHER THAN THE ONE ALREADY LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST. – 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11

SO OFTEN WE THINK OF WORSHIP AS SOMETHING WE DO ON SUNDAY AND WORK AS SOMETHING WE DO ON MONDAY. THIS DICHOTOMY IS NEITHER WHAT GOD DESIGNED NOR WHAT HE DESIRES FOR OUR LIVES.

- AUSTIN BURKHART

SACRED VS. SECULAR

It is interesting that the concept we call secular, from the Hebrew word (‘חילוני’) in English spelled hll, communicates the idea of “not sacred” and related to “prophane” . . . It is also (‘גסות’) Latin with the word “seclorum” communicating the concept of “without God”, i.e. secular vs. sacred.

Sacred, on the other hand, is the exact opposite of secular or profane. It includes everything set apart for God, and “avodah” pulls work, worship and service into this understanding. We get to lift up the work of our hands to Him and He sees it as worship.

INTEGRATION

Sacred work, then, is the integrated life God intends for His children. His desire and design is to integrate everything we do as a life lived for Christ. If He sees your work as sacred, then that is reality, and we get to line up our view with His. Your work is worship. Your work is sacred.

Q. How might this truth of sacred work affect your view of Monday-Saturday?

SUMMARY

- God reveals Himself as a worker and He creates Adam with a job.
- God's Word shows us we can participate in sacred work.
- Sacred work is an integrated life that bring all things we do under the headship of Christ. Everything all week long is by Him, of Him, and for Him.
- Your work of leadership is sacred to God.

LEADERSHIP CONNECTION QUESTION

Q. If you see the work of your business (both your activity and the activity of your employees) as sacred, how might this change your view of your own leadership?

RESOURCES FOR NEXT STEPS

- **RightNow Media@Work**
Work as Worship Bible Study
<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/674>
- **Book**
Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work by Tim Keller
https://www.amazon.com/Every-Good-Endeavor-Connecting-Your/dp/1594632820/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2FMFJ9IGC6ZBG&keywords=tim+keller+books+work&qid=1702925727&srefix=tim+keller+books+work%2Caps%2C157&sr=8-1