

The Gift of Creation

Do you ever feel like you're living your life on autopilot? Like suddenly you're at work in the morning, but you have no idea how you got there? As a result, we tend to ignore many details in our lives — things we should be spending more time thinking about and acknowledging. But, as we recently discussed, the Lord doesn't just want us to do good things (Phil. 4:9) — he also wants us to think about good things (Phil. 4:8)!

And so, what "good" things can we think about that we might pass by every day? How can we be more tuned in to life's great blessings? In this lesson, we'll stop and think about a few of God's incredible gifts, focussing on the creative process.

Wonder at God's Work in Nature

"And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 6:28-30)

The Big Idea: When we don't take in the natural world, we miss a window into the wonder of God's goodness and greatness.

It's undoubtedly important to immerse yourself in God's Word and learn more about him from the Bible. But don't rob yourself of the joy of glimpsing into his invisible attributes — his eternal power and divine nature — all around you (Rom. 1:19-20)! Take a walk, sit quietly in nature, and watch out for God's creative handiwork. Let the time you spend enjoying God's creation reinforce how excellent and loving he is.

Looking around at the complexity of this world, only God could have made *"heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them"* (Acts 14:15). Only a being with unmatched power and wisdom could have made such a rich and magnificent place. And it's not just his power on display, but we're also struck by his goodness — to each one of us! Like Paul said, *"He did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness"* (Acts 14:17).

The Big Question: How has God's creation impacted how you view him?

Embrace the Opportunity to Do Good Work

"Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:22-24)

The Big Idea: The chance to do good work and appreciate the work of others is worth celebrating.

As God the worker (John 5:17) created the universe, separating and ordering (Gen. 1:2-10), then filling it and making it useful (Gen. 1:11-31), we imitate him. Made in his image (Gen. 1:26), we subdue his good world (Gen. 1:28) with wisdom, creativity, and character that reflects his glory.

After the fall, the curse brought adversity to working the ground (Gen. 3:17-19), but work wasn't a curse. Even in Eden, God gave humans a job (Gen. 2:15). And he helps us work (Ps. 127:1; Prov. 16:3; John 15:5), allowing us to make a difference in big and small ways, from fixing a faucet to teaching the gospel. "*By working hard*" we receive the blessing of giving more than we get (Acts 20:33-35; cf. Luke 13:6-9). So even when the company, the people, and the job frustrate us, we find satisfaction in doing our part well. Because to "*enjoy life*" means pouring "*your might*" into "*whatever your hand finds to do*" (Eccl. 9:9-10).

The Big Question: How does your work change when you see it as a gift from God?

Stop and Enjoy Rest

"The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves." (Mark 6:30-32)

The Big Idea: Work is good, but God also created us to enjoy the sweetness of rest.

We serve a God who rested (Gen. 2:1-3). Remember Jesus napping in the boat (Mark 4:38-40)? God valued rest so much he required work to cease one day a week (Ex. 20:8). It must have seemed shocking to a group of slaves (cf. Deut. 5:15)! We take a day of rest for granted, but it wasn't always this way.

The Sabbath was "*a shadow*" of Christ (Col. 2:15-17; Heb. 7:12). But it reminds us God wants us to rest. "*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*" (Mark 2:27). We're valued for more than what we produce. Our work isn't as important as we think; life goes on without us getting stuff done for a while. "*It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep*" (Ps. 127:2). We can have "*sweet*" sleep (Eccl. 5:12; Prov. 3:24), trusting God to keep us (Ps. 4:8).

The Big Question: What do you learn from God's desire to give us rest?

Conclusion

When we consider nature, our work, and the blessing of rest, it's clear that we serve a God who cares about our happiness and well-being. He wants us to follow in his image and be a force for positive change in the world. And while it's easy to miss God's creativity and handiwork all around us, let's tune in to these blessings and live with gratitude towards our Creator!