



Outline

Lesson 11 - Labor: Created to Create

- I. Introduction – The “Labor” Command
- II. God’s design for this sphere
 - A. Culture’s view of work – generally negative and considered a curse
 - B. Importance of this sphere, though we generally don’t address it
 - 1. It funds everything – all material goods are produced in this sphere
 - 2. Yet it also produces pornography, illegal drugs, abortion, etc.
 - C. Reflection of God’s nature – God worked and saw that it was good – God stamped us with his divine image and has given us the privilege of being his creative stewards
- III. General Economic Model and Seven Economic Principles
 - A. All things belong to God
 - 1. Our materialistic drive is a reflection of Satan’s lie that more “stuff” will satisfy us
 - B. God appointed man to be a creative steward of his goods with ownership rights
 - 1. Definition of steward and economics: management authority of God’s goods
 - 2. Proper, Biblical attitude of employees and employers
 - C. Theft and coveting of another’s goods is wrong
 - D. Skills and abilities to work come from God
 - E. Work is profitable, good, and to be pursued; laziness is not
 - F. Love God and not your goods
 - G. Be compassionate and generous with your good to those in need
- IV. Responsibility to the poor

- A. Scriptural mandate to show compassion to the poor
 - B. The poor need work and the sphere of labor has the primary responsibility to provide those work opportunities
- V. Arts and Media - Is beauty relative?
- A. God's standard – Psalm 101:3 – “I will set before my eyes no vile thing”
 - B. Overwhelming power and presence of media – “Whoever controls the media, controls the culture”
 - C. Soli Deo Gloria – For God's glory alone – We need to have this same perspective, that God would be glorified in all we do



Lesson Guide

Lesson 11 - Labor: Created to Create

Introduction

We now turn our attention to the northwest and embark on a tour of our fifth social sphere: *Labor*. By the time this tour is finished, we will have made a number of striking discoveries about this system. We will have found that creative labor is a vital element of God's plan for the social realm; that work is *not* a "curse," as it is often represented today, but an essential element of our humanity; that it is, in fact, rooted in the nature of God Himself, the Original Worker. We will also learn that the structure of this sphere parallels that of the others we have already visited in that it also appears triune in design. And we will begin to see that the importance of work is closely related to our divinely given responsibility to care for the poor.

Themes

"What is work?" Present that question to a cross-section of the population and you'll probably receive a wide variety of answers. Unfortunately, within the context of contemporary culture it's increasingly likely that a preponderance of these responses will be negative in tone. Many people use phrases such as "a bummer," "what I have to do for money," or "the only way to get to Friday" to describe their feelings about work. Even Christians sometimes reference the fall as support of their view that labor is nothing but a *curse*.

In this Lesson, Dr. Tackett makes the case that these disparaging attitudes toward work are completely at odds with the scriptural worldview. He even goes so far as to argue that they can be interpreted as yet another manifestation of the *Cosmic Battle* – in other words, that they are destructive *lies*. Far from being a curse, creative labor is a glorious privilege. It flows out of the heart of God Himself, who labored six days to bring the world into existence, stamped His inventive and energetic image upon mankind, and placed Adam in the garden to tend it, beautify it, and increase its productivity. The creativity of man, then, while subject to the effects of the fall, is nevertheless a mirror-image of the creativity of God. It is designed to be a source of joy so fulfilling and wonderful that the Lord deemed it necessary to give us the fourth commandment in order to insure that we would set our work aside and rest at least one day a week!

This sphere, like that of the family, the church, and the state, is founded upon *relationships*. These relationships, which are ordered according to scriptural principles (see, e.g., Ephesians 6:5-9), fit the general triune pattern we have observed in other areas. God has granted the stewardship of His *material goods* to *owners*; and these *owners* are in turn accountable to Him for the use of His "stuff" and responsible for the welfare and productivity of the *workers* who operate under their direction and authority. Within this sphere, which Dr. Tackett calls the "engine room of culture," wealth is generated that has the potential to meet the physical needs of mankind; and the responsibility for the compassionate use of this wealth, he argues, falls primarily upon the shoulders of those who are engaged in the field of Labor.

As a special sub-heading of this topic, we will also consider the implications of this discussion for media and the creative arts. Here, too, says Dr. Tackett, there is a fundamental “truth issue” at stake; for under the sovereignty of God and His eternal ethical standard, *beauty* in the arts should be consistent with *goodness* and *truth*. This is a subject of special concern in a time like ours when, as Dr. Francis Schaeffer averred, “Whoever controls the media controls culture.” Within this context, it is imperative that Christians begin to make their influence felt in the field of creative art.

Points to Watch For

Participants on this tour may find themselves challenged – in some cases uncomfortably so – in the area of their personal views of work. It may be important to handle the discussion in such a way that they will be gently *encouraged* to explore the joy of engaging in creative labor rather than made to feel guilty about having a “TGIF” attitude toward the working week. It’s also worth noting that Dr. Tackett’s ideas about compassion and relief for the poor – namely, that labor needs to create job opportunities for the needy rather than leaving this area of concern solely to the state – may become the occasion of some lively political and social debate.

Discussion Questions

- 1) **What did you see on this tour? Which of these were particularly striking to you? Why?**
- 2) **Dr. Tackett begins this tour by reminding us of the 8th Commandment – “Thou Shalt Not Steal” – and what it implies about property and ownership rights. How is this relevant to the ensuing discussion of labor and economics?**
- 3) **Why does Dr. Tackett temporarily re-name the fourth commandment “The Labor Command?” How does this tie in with Jesus’ declaration that “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”?**
- 4) **Read Genesis 3:17-19. What is the focal point of the *curse* that God pronounces on Adam in these verses? How might a correct understanding of this curse impact our thinking about the sphere of labor and the place of work in our lives?**
- 5) **What are some ways that the Old Testament principle of “gleanings” might be applied within the context of our modern economy? What is the key difference between this approach to helping the needy and that of the “welfare state”?**
- 6) **Makoto Fujimata, founder of the International Arts Movement, argues that the Church needs to find ways to re-establish itself as a *center* of creative and artistic activities. Why is his vision so important to the future not only of the Church, but of western culture as a whole?**



Key Terms

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Creative Steward: God has stamped His divine image of creativity upon us, giving us the privilege to be creative agents within this physical realm.

Economics: Management of the property that ultimately belongs to God over which He has placed a steward and over which that steward will be held accountable.

General Economic Model: God is the owner of everything, and we are given stewardship rights and responsibilities over His material goods.

Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1397-1468): Named "Man of the Millennium" as a result of his 1455 invention of the printing press. The first book of the press was the Bible and God used Gutenberg's work to providential spread the gospel to the entire earth.

Seven Economic Principles: 1 - All things belong to God. 2 - God appointed man to be a creative steward of His goods with ownership rights. 3 – Theft and coveting of another's goods is wrong. 4 – Skills and abilities to work come from God. 5 – Work is profitable, good, and to be pursued; laziness is not. 6 – Love God and not your goods. 7 – Be compassionate and generous with your goods to those in need.

Steward: A person (or a group of persons) placed in a position of management authority over someone else's property.

The Labor Command: Usually referred to as "the Sabbath Command"; Exodus 20:9, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work ..."