

MONDAY MANNA

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WHAT'S THE REASON BEHIND YOUR WORK?

By Robert J. Tamasy

Why do you go to work? For many of us, we would not have to blink before answering: "I work to make a living." "I work to earn an income that can support the kind of life I want to live." "I work so I can pay my bills." None of these answers are wrong, but are they good enough?

Recently I attended a breakfast meeting where the guest speaker said we should consider this question from another perspective. "Do you work to earn a living?" he asked, "or do you work to make a difference?"

Without question, work does enable us to live and meet our financial obligations. Bills do not pay themselves. And food, clothing and other necessities don't miraculously materialise. If we need something, it requires money to obtain it. However, as the speaker suggested, if we approach work only for the compensation we receive, we will regard it as an obligation and not an opportunity.

There are many ways we can make a difference through the work we perform and responsibilities we carry out. A law enforcement officer, for example, can either view his or her job as being paid to apprehend law breakers, or begin each day with an unwavering determination to use their roles of authority for making their communities better places to live. Teachers can regard their jobs as sources of income or as a way for having a positive impact on the lives of their students, helping to shape them into productive people.

Some professions, such as practicing medicine or law, or being top executives, often enable people to earn lucrative incomes. But as many people have discovered, no matter how much money you earn, it is never enough. When one wealthy businessman was asked, "How much is enough?", he immediately responded, "Just a little bit more." So, the excitement over how much one gets paid soon fades. However, if the focus is on making a difference in the world, or in the lives of individual people, there is no limit to the intangible rewards we can receive as we go to work each day.

We see this truth addressed in the Scriptures in many ways. Here are some examples:

We are created to do good. Nowhere in the Bible does it say the purpose of work is only "to earn a living." It does say, however, the work we are uniquely positioned and called to perform has been specially designed for us. *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (Ephesians 2:10).

Through our work we can bring light to a world of growing darkness. For many reasons, we live in a world of growing negativity. Times often seem increasingly dark and disheartening. Through our work, we have the privilege of bringing the light of hope, affirming the life-giving truths and principles God has presented through His Word, the Scriptures. *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16).

We can find fulfillment in work well done. God has entrusted each of us with specific, unique talents and abilities. In doing our work – and serving others – we also are honouring Him. *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might..."* (Ecclesiastes 9:10). *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.... It is the Lord Christ you are serving"* (Colossians 3:23-24).

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

When you initially read the question, "Why do you go to work?" what was your answer?

Do you agree with the statement that working just to earn an income or to make a living is not a good enough reason for going to work? Why or why not?

What does it mean to make a difference through the work we do? What kind of difference do you think you can make – or are already making – through your work?

How can we go about working "with all our might" or "with all our heart," even in the midst of mundane, uninspiring tasks and responsibilities we must perform?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 12:24, 14:23, 22:29

Ecclesiastes 11:6

Romans 12:9-13

2 Timothy 3:16-17