



# Designed to Work: When Work Doesn't Feel Like Worship

**Theme:** "Work leads us to worship. A life of work and responsibilities for paying checks, teach us gratitude in a way that having more than what we need will never do."

**Bible Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:18

**Starting Questions:** Do you see work as a burden? Are you grateful for the workload God permits in your life, even in times of stress, burden, or low pay? What do you usually do in such circumstances?

## 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks to God in every situation, for this is his will for you in Christ Jesus.

## Reflection Reading

Mom kept the gritty green soap by the sink for dad to scrub the grease out of the creases of his hands. Tractor grime and machine oil made a home in his fingernails.

As a child, I would watch his pocket knife scrape the black from underneath his nails. They never stayed clean for long. Roads needed grading, cattle were hungry, and fences never mended themselves.

Those dirty, work-worn hands held me and tucked me in at night. While some men punched out blue-collar jobs with disdain, my father arrested each day with joy.

I still glimpse that joy in him today. As he drives a bailer through wind-swept, Oklahoma fields, he brags about his view from the cabin, as if to say, *can you believe I get to do this all day long?*

Interrupt him and you'll hear the same maxim, "We're burning daylight." Although Dad's no armchair theologian, he understands as well as Adam the outcome of man's fall: dusty earth and sweat on his brow. But Dad has never seen work as a curse.

Dad's habits teach a message of faithfulness in the way he wakes up every day to welcome work as a reward.

As a child, Dad didn't believe in church, and I wasn't sure if he believed in God. If he prayed, it was while he chopped wood or sowed fields by the last light of day.

He hasn't memorized much Scripture but can preach about how an open heart can find joy in the mundane, and how a sharp mind can find interest in almost anything. And he can talk for days about agriculture if you let him.

His life speaks about finding purpose in labor, how to toil well without trading peace for grumbling.

Isn't there always room to gripe about our lot in life?

But Dad's learned the expense of complaining isn't worth the return. A paycheck-to-paycheck life teaches thankfulness in a way that having more than you need never will.

I can't recall a day his hands haven't found something to do. Maybe that's just life on a farm.

Or maybe it's because he doesn't see work as a burden. He chooses to see work as life-giving instead of soul-draining.

Today my father's fingernails still attract dirt from every direction. He often jokes that he gets to play in the dirt with his favorite toy, a mini bulldozer. As he clears pastures and levels earth to make ponds and houses, you would never know he's working.

He tells me he's made his peace with the One who never stops working on our behalf.

I think work can lead us all to worship if we'll let it.

### **Dynamic Reflection**

1. How are you being grateful for your work?

2. Do you often complain about any circumstance?

3. What would your life look like if you came to God in the midst of stress?

## **Application**

1. How did your mentality and actions change after reflecting on this?
2. What can you do to practice this teaching in your work environment?