



CONNECT WITH
GOD'S HEART
FOR THE WORLD

Bible Study

by David and Rose Brewer

Co-Directors of SEED (*Sustainable Empowerment through Economic Development*)

The Meaning and Purpose of Work

SEED Livelihood Network partners with Free Methodist churches around the world to help groups start and operate self-sustaining businesses. In our work, we often find people both in the USA and overseas have a misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of work – or, as we like to say, a broken relationship with work. This study will explore the origin of work, our broken relationship, and how God restores that relationship. Then it concludes with application questions about what God expects of us related to work – and not just paying work, but *all* work.

The Origin of Work

Read Genesis 2:4-9, 15

What does God do in these verses? What does He create?

Verse 5 says that “no shrub had yet appeared on the earth.” Why was this the case?

What implications does this have for Adam’s creation?

Read Genesis 2:18-22

What does God say in verse 18? And what does He do based on this statement?

What does God expect from His creation of Eve based on this passage?

What implications does God’s creation of Adam and Eve have for our relationship to work?

The Breakage

Read Genesis 3:17-19

This is the curse on Adam after the fall. What is his curse?

How is this different from his relationship to the land in Genesis 2?

Leader’s Note: It is good to notice, if it isn’t brought up in discussion, that Adam’s curse was unique: Eve had never given birth, so though it would be painful, she had nothing to compare it to; but Adam (and Eve) had tended the Garden of Eden for ... months? years? and now it would be totally different.

The Restoration

Read John 5:1-11

Briefly summarize what happens in this passage: who is in it and what happens?

What is the Sabbath? How do you define it? Did Jesus – or did the healed man – break the Sabbath?



Read John 5:16-17

Why does Jesus say it's okay for Him to heal on the Sabbath?
What are the implications of that defense for Jesus? For the healed man? For us?

Read Isaiah 55:1-2

Who is speaking here? What does He invite people to do in verse 1?
In what ways do we spend money on what is not bread and labor on what does not satisfy?
From verse 2, how does God explain how we can buy food and drink without money?
Does this remind you of any other Scripture passages? (*Jesus' temptation about "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"*)

Application Questions

One of the reasons we were created was to be a co-worker with God. Do you agree or disagree?
What stands in the way of our being God's co-workers?
How can our status as God's co-workers be restored?
What implications does this have for your approach to work – vocational, and also ministry, volunteer, and other types?

Pray God will speak to us about what He wants us to be doing and how to do it – and that we will commit ourselves to having ears to listen, and not spending our money on what is not bread and our labor on what does not satisfy. And pray He will give us eyes to see how we can better partner with people around the world who need sustainable livelihood. For more information, see seedlivelihood.org.