

What is a Christian view of work?

Or, should Christians approach work differently than the way someone who does not follow Jesus works?

I think there should be.

We need to have a bigger vision of what work is.

Especially if we are followers of Jesus.

Because what gives our work meaning is not that someone gives us green pieces of paper or zeros in our bank account.

It is not money that gives our work meaning, but it is Jesus.

And if Jesus is the one who gives our work meaning.

Then that means work that we do not get paid for is meaningful and purposeful to Jesus.

And that means that God cares about that kind of work.

Really by that kind of work I just mean anything that we do in the world.

Anything that we do to contribute to the flourishing of human beings in the care of creation in the world God has given to steward.

Anything that we do is work.

Whether it is work you are paid for as your job.

Whether it is work you do around the house or in your garden.

What we're gonna see is that scripture is concerned about is not what you do for work but how you do your work.

And the primary issue that God is concerned about in your life is not what you do for work, but how you do your work.

So our sermon this morning is gonna look at that. How does God want us to do our work?

Open your Bibles to Proverbs 22:29

### **1. Do good (work) that (honors) Christ.**

**"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men."**

The Proverb is not just calling us to observe this man.  
It is calling us to imitate him.  
There are two things we need to take from this.  
The first is that we need to try to do skilled work.  
What I mean by that is that we need to work hard doing our work as unto the Lord.  
And we need to do that work well.

This proverb is encouraging us to be like the man who is skillful in his work.  
Now skillful implies something about the quality of the work.  
It does not imply that they are at work.  
It does not just imply that they do their best in their work. It implies that this is someone who is good at their work.  
And not just good at their work they are so good that their skills gains notice.  
They are honored for good at their job they are.  
They do it so well other people want to learn from them.  
Other people want to honor them.

We should be people who strive to be skilled God has given us to do.  
We want to get better at.  
We want to improve our work.  
We don't wanna do the bare minimum.  
We don't cut corners and do things the easy way.

But it's not just about doing it the right way it's also that we should be trying to get better.  
We want to improve.  
We should try to be learning.  
We shouldn't just try to coast based on what we've done before.

And that should be true of whatever our work is.

Whether it is work we do volunteering at a non-profit like Chris, the Safe Center, One True Light, Beautiful Day or Kindred Community, or many others.

We should strive and want to do that well and skillfully.

The work we do around the house.

The work we do raising and caring for our children and grandchildren.

All of that work should be done well.

The way we approach and do our work as Christians, should be different.

Now there can be a danger if we put too much emphasis on being skillful.

Because God is after our faithfulness, not our talent.

It is not as God is a general manager of a sports team.

As if he is sitting up in evaluating who he will call to his children based on how skilled they are.

He wants us to do our work and the primary way we do work is being faithful with the skills we've been given.

Skillfulness and excellence is not more important than holiness.

I worked briefly for a mega-church where one of their values, and it was a value mentioned in their mission statement was excellence.

So they would say things like this like we need to do things to the best of our ability and make them excellent.

The college I went to would say things like if it's Christian it should be better.

Because we want like excellence.

The danger is when excellence became a higher value and holiness.

Because it wasn't about being faithful and honoring God, it was about being the best.

Being the best and the most skillful can get in the way of following Christ.

When you wanna have the best football team and not the most holy football team you make different decisions.

Now you have somebody on the team, even if they're not a Christian because they're really good.

Now you're willing to overlook someone selling cocaine.  
Because they are an all-American and might get drafted.  
And if you don't have them, you will be excellent anymore.  
Church to treat people as disposable.  
Because they are not what is important of excellence that's important.

That's not with the Proverb, that's not what God's word calls us too.  
Because your work will not be excellent to God if it is not holy.  
Your work will not be skillful if it is not like Jesus.

And we should do our work in a way that honors Christ.  
We do this because ultimately, we understand that we are not working for ourselves.  
Maybe some of you own your own business or you've been your own boss.  
And you like that because you can do whatever the boss wants  
Even if you are your own boss, you need to do your work as if it's for Jesus.  
Because it is for Jesus.  
He has given this work to us.  
Whatever kind of work that it is.  
Placed in a circumstances in your life to put you where you are now.  
Want to do what he's giving you.

We should do this as if Jesus came down, stood in front of us and told us  
this is the work I want you to do a good job.

Colossians 3:23, **"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,"**

Whatever the work we do, we should do it well for Christ.

We should work as if He is the boss.

We should do good work to honors Him.

Because it would not honor him if we cut corners if we did a bad job.

We also need to be sure that we are doing that work in a way that reflects  
Jesus to the world.

Because if our work is not good and holy, then it does not please Christ.

Let us look at some examples.

If I became the greatest preacher known to man.

But it's because I've spent all of my time ignoring my family so I can preach excellent sermons.

That is not an excellence that pleases God.

Jonathan Edwards was one of America's greatest theologians and arguably one of our greatest pastors.

He wrote numerous books and lots of great sermons.

He was a genius and would write notes of every scrap of paper he could find.

Sometimes they were just random thoughts, sometimes they were sermons.

One piece of paper had two sermons.

He wrote one sermon about the duty of a pastor and church.

It calls for pastors especially to be faithful even when there is pressure to do otherwise.

The other sermon is on the requirements for communion.

How we need to not just have faith, but also live holy lives.

The piece of paper he wrote those two sermons on was a receipt.

One side of the paper describes his purchase of a 14 year old girl named Venus.

A human being made in the image of God purchased as a slave.

The other side was all about holiness.

One side of the paper has excellence in theology and preaching.

The other side was severely lacking in Christlikeness.

We need both good work and holiness.

If you were job is building a house you'll see it as the contractor.

And you build the most beautiful house that has ever been built.

You don't cut a single corner.

You do everything the right way.

You did so well in fact the contractor that looks at what you didn't say wow they did amazing they did this better than I would.

Happen the whole time you did that you were cursing at your employees.

You refuse to pay them a fair wage so they could live.  
Dishonored God with how you acted while you worked.  
That is not the kind of work that pleases God.  
Excellent house skill for work but not Christian work.

You see this a lot with youth sports.  
For so many parents in our country it is an idol.  
They chase excellence and skill.  
And they sacrifice regular church attendance.  
They sacrifice time with God and His people in the pursuit of greatness.  
But you and your children could achieve all of their sports dreams.  
They could get a full ride to a division one school.  
They could become Olympic gold medalists and professional athletes.  
But all of that skill means nothing if it does not honor Christ.

We need to aim to do both.  
We do whatever the work God has given us to the very best of our ability.  
And we try to get better we give it all that we have.  
We don't cut corners.  
We are lazy.  
We try to be skillful.  
And we do it as if we are working on to the Lord.  
It is not just the quality of our work. It's the contents of our heart as we work.

I don't know about you, but I can do good work with a terrible attitude.  
But we need to do good work with a good heart.  
But like Faith and Work, these two have to go together.

And all that we do in our lives is Work.  
You might be retired.  
That isn't totally let you off the hook the following this verse.  
Hanging out with those grandchildren, great grandchildren, work ain't it?  
Well, how can you be a skillful honoring incredible grandparent?

How can you still do the work of a parent to grown children who maybe even bossing you around in a way that is good and honors Christ.

Those of you who have young children watching over your children is incredibly difficult work.

And when you do it with skill, and with an attitude that honors Jesus it can be incredible.

We need to work outside and creation and in your garden.

That has worked that honors God when you do it well when you care for the bit of creation that he has entrusted to you.

When we do our work well, it bears witness to Jesus.

Really every kind of work that we do bears witness to Jesus.

It will either make people want to know more about Jesus because of how we work and how we follow Jesus in our work

Or it will make us not want to follow Jesus.

It will make people want nothing to do with us because we do our work.

There is a man in a church I grew up in Nebraska.

He was a mechanic.

I don't know how much school he had. I don't think it was a lot.

He spent his days in the garage working on cars.

He was incredible mechanic.

Personally, I'm not very handy so every time anything goes wrong, I grow more and more in my respect for skilled mechanics.

One of the best things about him and his garage was that he did his work in a way that honor Jesus.

He was honest.

He would never sugarcoat things would never lie to you.

He would tell you the repairs that you definitely needed to make.

He would tell you the ones that you probably should make, but you might be able to get away with not for a while.

He would tell you stuff that he probably couldn't do a good job, but there were someone else you might want to take it to because he knew that he did a good job with that.

For decades, he just works his garage helping peoples cars. Keep working. He serves at his church.

Every week he goes with the jail ministry to talk to men that are behind bars and chair with him a little about Jesus.

Small man in a small town.

But his skillful work matters.

He does good work that honors Christ.

### **I. Because we will stand before the king.**

**"Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men."**

OK, what does it have to do with Jesus?

That is a question that we should always ask anytime we're studying God's word.

We should ask what this passage has to show us about the gospel and how it points to Christ.

In the Proverbs, that is especially important.

The Proverbs are practical and straightforward.

You could read this you could stand up and proclaim, and you could preach an entire sermon and you would never have to mention if you didn't want to.

And you could just give a good raw raw let's all be good at our jobs and we will have success sermon.

But you will miss the fullness of the mystery if you don't get to Jesus.

When you read Proverbs on your own, ask yourself what is this Proverb have to do with Jesus?

How does it to Jesus?

How does Jesus live out?



And we see that Jesus does his work in the name of God.

The work of Jesus does lead to him standing before rulers because of his skill.

Jesus is an example of this.

That's helpful that's good, but it doesn't quite get to the gospel.

We can also see this verse tells us we will stand before kings.

Now we know that may not be true in our everyday experience.

However, Jesus is a king.

And one day, we will all have to stand before him.

He will evaluate our work, not based on our skill, but our faith.

That's how I've got there from this proverb.

The reason we should aim to do good work that honors Christ is because

Because one day we will stand before Jesus.

One day when you die and you depart to be with Jesus or when Jesus returns, we will all go and stand before the great white throne.

Those who follow Jesus and put their faith in him will be rewarded, and those who have rejected Jesus will be cast out to eternal tournament.

The scripture also tells us that there will be rewards.

Colossians 3:23-24 **"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."**

We will be rewarded for what we have done for Jesus.

And there appears to be some variance in the rewards.

In some ways that is standing before Jesus will be like a performance review.

He's gonna go over all that we have done for him.

All the work that we got paid for all the work we didn't get paid for.

If we have done it, we have done it in a way that honors him, even if it was for obscure people Jesus and Jesus will reward us for doing it well.

Or if we haven't done it that well we still get to be with Jesus we still need to be rewarded. We're not gonna be disappointed, but we will not be rewarded as richly.

However, we do need to remember and understand something.

This is a Proverb.

It is not a spiritual promise.

This is not a spiritual principle.

It is a statement of wisdom.

It is more general.

It is not guaranteeing and promising that everyone who does good and skillful work will be recognized before kings and world leaders.

It does not mean that if you are good at your work and do it well, then everything will go well for you.

If you interpret it this way, then you will be disappointed.

And this leads to lots of disappointment when people misunderstand the Proverbs.

I don't mean that the Proverb is not true because it is.

Those who get presidential medals, pulitzer prizes, and other awards are usually people with incredible skill and talent.

Some of the greatest writers, poets, artists, and others we have.

Those who work hard, improve, and become great will normally experience the rewards of that.

They will get promoted and be successful.

That is the whole American dream.

We work hard, do our best, and achieve our dreams.

That can be true.

But often it is not.

Sometimes people stand before kings and have success because of nepotism.

Their dad is a famous director so they get cast in a film while someone who has spent decades honing their craft in theater never gets an audition. Sometimes it is just because they were born into money.

The child of a billionaire buys a company and makes himself the CEO instead of the woman who came from nothing and worked her way up. Sometimes the most talented and skillful are never given an opportunity. We've probably seen unknown people who have been incredibly skilled. Yet they got passed over.

They got laid off.

Sometimes the most talented the most skill do not make it.

Maybe you've experienced this if you discovered an artist or a band or television show or something where you're just like wow this is one of the greatest things I've ever seen and yet no one appreciates it.

No one seems to acknowledge their skill

And something much worse gets much more popular.

Some of that is life.

We live in a broken world where things don't work how they should.

God created the world and it was good and filled with peace.

But sin Has fractured and broken the world.

Now things don't work the way that they're supposed to.

Now injustice can reign.

Now, sometimes the most killed don't get the reward that they deserve.

Sometimes the bad guys win.

But this is a Proverb.

Again, it's just showing us in the ideal world and everything is functioning as God intended to those who work hard and who are the most skillful get honored.

But what does it mean?

Just because it does not guarantee success does not mean we shouldn't work hard. It is not an excuse for laziness.

I also want to say that there is no obscure work with God.

There is no work that is obscure.

Remember when I was talking to Rica our an exchange student.

And she found out she was going to stay with us and Duncan, Oklahoma and she had to go look up what in the world that is because she's from Germany.

She was worried about what kind of obscure place she was being sent to. Places like Duncan, Marlow, and Comanche can seem or feel obscure compared to the vastness of our globe.

But they are not obscure or meaningless to God.

A lot of us, especially in the kind of our American ideals we want the best. We want to have lives of significance.

We want our work to matter and to be seen, preferably as many people as possible.

But a lot of us are working, feel very obscure and insignificant.

Doing small things and I think it's important but doesn't feel like it in the moment.

Doing your best to have patience with your children and trying to teach them what they're supposed to do.

Pulling weeds in a garden, even though you know, you have to do it again in a few days because they keep growing back.

Making your bed unbelievably insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe.

But the hope of the gospel is that in Jesus work is not in vain.

It's been one of our benedictions.

And it's one of my favorites because I hope that it sends us out and proclaims and remind us Work no matter how obscure no matter how in vain when it's done in Jesus name.

When you do your work for Jesus.

When you do your work in the name of Jesus, it has meaning.

Even the menial and even the tiny.  
Because when we stand before Jesus, He has seen it.  
We will stand before kings.  
And those who have done good and Christ honoring work will be rewarded beyond measure.  
No matter how much they were overlooked here.

That is part of the hope of the gospel.  
The sermon is a lot about work.  
It's a lot about what we need to do and make sure that we do it well with the right attitude.  
And we will stand before and have to answer for the work that we have done.  
But the primary reward.  
The primary reason that we will be able to go to be with Jesus forever and heaven for a while, and then the new heaven and the new earth.  
The reason that we will get to do that is because of what Jesus has done.  
The reason that we will be able to go boldly before the throne of God, even if we know that so much of our work has not been good has not been honoring to God.  
The reason that we stand boldly is because of the work that Jesus has done.  
Is because of the perfect life that Jesus lived because of his sacrificial death in our place on the cross, and because he has credited all of his righteous works to our account.

Group projects are my least favorite form of work.  
You ever done a group project in school or maybe even for your work?  
I've never liked groups because they're usually terrible.  
You have people in your group do not do anything, even though they had stuff they were supposed to do.  
And at least it was me to do your work and their work because you want to get a good grade.

It presented to the teacher and all the work on it, even though you might be the only one who actually contributed something meaningful to the work.

In a way the gospel is like a project.

We're supposed to present before God, a perfect life without sin.

But the only thing any of us contributed was lots and lots of sin.

We kept bringing the project down and sidetracking everything and getting it worse, and we deserve to fail.

Except Jesus came and he decided to join our group.

And Jesus does all of the work is we didn't contribute a single thing to it yet Jesus writes our name on it.

And then we get through rewards of the work that Jesus did.

In a small way that's what the gospel is like.

Jesus did all of the work. All we did was contribute our sin in our failure, and yet when we stand before Jesus, one day, we will get to be richly rewarded because of the work that Jesus did.

When we recognize the depth of the beauty of the gospel.

How should we respond?

We should respond by doing good work that honors Christ.

Because we know our salvation and reward is secure.

Look the work is already been turned in. It's already been graded and if you have put your faith in Jesus, he's already given you a passing grade.

Your salvation and your secure

But this should motivate us and make us want to work for Jesus.

This should make us wanna live our faith and do honors, and because we will stand before.

We don't wanna be ashamed of what we have done.

## Conclusion

- Do good (work) that (honors) Christ.
- Because we will (stand) before the (king).

I read this Proverb and as I think about the work that we have been invited to do it motivates me to want to honor Christ.

We don't have to motivated fear can be motivated by love.

We can be motivated by the gratitude of the gospel.

And we can be encouraged that Jesus cares about our work.

It is not about what we do for work, but how we do it.

In our obscure works, it feels like nobody sees and nobody cares and we will die and no one will ever know what we did.

Jesus knows.

Jesus sees

Jesus smiles.

And Jesus will reward you greatly for the work that you have done when we do it in his name through his power for his glory.