

Purpose in Hard Work  
Pastor David Seabaugh  
Immanuel, Elmhurst

Have you ever noticed that many of the best things we hope for and we celebrate also come with the promise of a lot of hard work?

Anyone who has welcomed a new child into their lives knows the joy of that arrival and the immense work it takes to care for that precious, helpless human. Congratulations on the newborn! Now you get to be sleep deprived for three months... or more!

What happens when you are accepted to the prestigious college for that advanced degree? Yippee! Now it's time to work harder than ever to learn even more things!

The same is true of the church. Every ministry that God allows us to have is a cause to celebrate. It's also a lot of hard work to make it happen.

Is it worth it? So often, it is! A certain satisfaction comes with hard work, especially when it accomplishes something valuable. There is a reason it feels good. God made us that way.

From the very beginning, God created us to work: *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.* Genesis 2:15

Solomon, seeking the true purpose of every moment in life came to this conclusion along the way: *So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot.* Ecclesiastes 3:22

I often go to this verse from Paul when I begin to weary in my work: *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. You are serving the Lord Christ.* Colossians 3:23-24

Put all of this together and we see that God has a purpose in our efforts. God designed us to rejoice in the labor He gives us and to dedicate those duties to Jesus our Savior. Now, I want to be clear. Our hard work doesn't earn us a place in heaven. It's not like God loves us more when we work hard. Rather, working selflessly for what is good is the natural response to being set free by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The sacrifice of Jesus cleanses our consciences, heals our hearts and empowers our efforts to do good in the world.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* Ephesians 2:8-10

The free gift of salvation is beautiful good news! It also comes with a job description. Follow Jesus. When we work hard in the service of Jesus for the benefit of others, we

imitate the sacrifice of Christ and represent Him to the world around us. It's not easy. In fact, it might actually be painful, as it was for Jesus. However, it's worth it.