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## YOUR LABORS

With Labor Day weekend behind you, it's time to get back to work! Do you like many others view your "work" as a kind of curse, a necessary evil in your life? Actually, you were created to work!

Right thinking, informed by God's revelation in the Bible, says you are created in God's image, to represent Him on earth, as you help tame the creation, making it productive and useful for yourself and others. But the rebellion of the first man and woman, Adam & Eve, made human labor burdensome and difficult, as a natural consequence of disobedience.

The Bible talks a lot about blessings and curses, and they're related to your personal response to God's goodness. Deuteronomy 28 is just one of many passages. Verse 1 says "**Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments... all these blessings shall come upon you, because you obey...**"

Wise parents use this same principle to train their children. Doing good and right things results in great rewards. Disobedience brings unpleasant consequences.

The many blessings listed in Deuteronomy 28 directly relate the obedience of God's people to the fruit of their labors, their work. They include their livelihood in the Promised Land, the well-being of their personal lives, families, and communities. The fruit of their own bodies, their flocks and herds, their fields and households, will all see the blessing of God as they are obedient to Him. They will even be victorious over enemies who try to take away their blessings.

Blessings come when you trust and obey God, as the consequences of living in right relationship with Him. Consequences of disobedience are dramatically different, and exactly the opposite of the promises of good. If you disobey God, you will bring all manner of trouble into your life, family, and community. It's not even about God punishing you, because YOU bring on the consequences of disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28 goes on to say, "**But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God or be careful to do all His commandments and His statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you... (v47) Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of things...**"

Did you see that? The very things that you work hard for -- "the abundance of things" -- can themselves lead to the consequences of disobedience. All that "stuff" you're working so hard for gets in the way of serving God with "joyfulness and gladness of heart."

Why? Because you're working for stuff, and not for God. You're missing the whole point of life, which is "*love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and will, and your neighbor as yourself.*" The Bible says God blesses you so that you can bless others. Instead, if stuff is all you want, you'll likely get it, because that only requires hard work. But working for stuff alone misses the very reason you are created in God's image. It misses the blessings and aims right for the curses, so that's what you'll get.

Is there a remedy? Thank God there is! The way out of seeing your work as "work" is tied to your relationship to God Himself. He is not only your Creator, but your Redeemer too. Your "work" can never earn your salvation. You receive it as a gift. Jesus personally paid the penalty for your sin, to reconcile you with God, erasing the rebellion, and empowering you by His Holy Spirit to love, obey and serve Him.

Your Creator offers you a way to be re-created. Your Redeemer gives you a new heart and mind, so you can serve Him "*with joyfulness and gladness of heart.*" Then obedience is not burdensome, but blessing! Then, loving God and working for the good of others, results in God's blessings in your life. Simple.

Want to be blessed in your work? Believe in Jesus as your Lord & Savior, and live out His new life in you. Work hard to trust and obey God, by His power within you -- and even your work, the fruit of your labors, will be blessed!