

THE WORK OF OUR HANDS: GOOD OR BAD?

Often in the Bible God speaks of the work of our hands as something really good. In fact, under the correct circumstances he would really like to bless all the work of our hands.

(Deuteronomy 28:12 ESV) The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

But at other times he speaks to the work of our hands in the harshest of terms.

(Jeremiah 1:16 ESV) And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

It all depends on the object of our work. If we are working on the things for which God has created us and the things over which he has given us a stewardship, then he will generally speaking bless the work of our hands.

WHAT WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF THIS TYPE OF WORK?

God gave Adam and Eve the stewardship of tending the garden of Eden. He gave Adam the task of naming all the animals. God commissioned Noah to build an ark. And Solomon to build a temple. He blessed the Israelites as shepherds and farmers. God equipped Hiram with "other worldly" skills in gold, silver, bronze, etc. and an ability to read blue prints.

We find a God-given joy and fulfillment in the work of our hands that nothing else can match. We were created in fact to work with our hands. If you are skillful in any trade, then this is God's blessing on the work of your hands.

(Deuteronomy 30:9 ESV) The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers.

(Psalm 90:17 ESV) Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

(Ephesians 4:28 ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

(1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 ESV) And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

We, as humans, make things that we are not supposed to make, e.g. making things to worship.

(Psalm 115:4 ESV) Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.

(Jeremiah 25:6 ESV) Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.

(Jeremiah 25:7 ESV) Yet you have not listened to me, declares the LORD, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.

(Haggai 2:14 ESV) Then Haggai answered and said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the LORD, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean."

(Acts 7:41 ESV) And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

If we are making things that God prohibits, then the work of our hands will always lead to false gods and false worship. Thus this morning's text.

(Revelation 9:20 ESV) The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk.

Staring God and his wrath and judgment in the eye, they refuse to repent, to change their mind, about constructing their own gods and exalting those false gods above God Most High.

But this is really no surprise given the precedent. The children of Israel carried their idols to Canaan from Egypt. Even after a miraculous escape and God's deliverance from powerful Pharaoh, they still could not let go of the old ways.

(Joshua 24:14 ESV) Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

THE WORK OF OUR HANDS!

GOOD OR BAD?

IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT WE ARE BUILDING.