

Love Thy Neighbour: Work as love



1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. (John 15:1-14)

What is your reason for living? What is the purpose or cause that animates your whole life?

For many it is their daily work. It is said of the workplace today "Meaning is the new money"; meaning is the chief thing many in the workplace are pursuing. Many organisations shape themselves around this. This is how General Electric CEO Jeff Immelt put it to his employees: "To be a great company today you also have to be a good company. The reason people come to work for GE is that they want to be something bigger than themselves. They want to work for a company that makes a difference, a company that is doing great things in the world".¹

There is something good and right about this. But for the Christian person they have a higher cause. You have been created "for the Father's glory" (15:8, cf Isaiah 43:6-7). We have been made to glorify Him, to make Him famous. And a key way we glorify Him is by "bearing much fruit" (15:8), in particular the fruit of love (15:9-14, cf John 13:1, 34; 15:17). We show the world something of the God who is love by being people marked by love.

How does this apply to our work? We too seek to do good work that loves others, that does "great things in the world". But we do this as an end in itself, not a means to an end. We do not do this ultimately for personal or organisational fulfilment. Rather we do it because it shows the world something of the Father, and so glorifies Him. We live and work for the Father's glory by being people characterised by love. We love others in our workplaces. And we love others with the very work itself that we do. Our work impacts hundreds, if not thousands of people every day, so we seek to maximise the ways in which the output of our hands loves others.

1. How does your work help others? How does your work harm others?
2. How can you increase the ways that your work helps, and limit the ways that it harms?
3. How can you remind yourself each day of the purpose that should shape your whole life?

FOR MORE
lifeatwork.org.au/watch

¹ "Money and morals at GE", fortune.com