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Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm
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How Do We Balance between Work & Leisure as a Christian in a Post Pandemic World?

That is a good question. The global and local pandemic have changed the way we work and do leisure these 2 years. Work (even from home) and leisure are God's gifts to the human race.

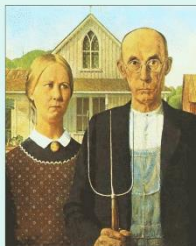
Our attitude towards them in our society is generally dominated by a secular and pragmatic outlook. The gradual decline of moral and spiritual values in our culture is also reflected in how people spend their leisure time. Today the confusion about work and play had degenerated into this: Someone once said, "**We worship our work, work at our play and play during worship.**" Christians need to rethink, and rediscover God's blueprint for us in this vital aspect of our life.

Work can be defined as "**the meaningful employment of our time that results in productivity and fruit of our labour.**" The Bible asserts the value of industrious work. Solomon said, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*" (Eccl 9:10). The Protestant tradition made much of work as a creation ordinance. The **Reformers extolled diligence in work as a primary virtue in the Christian life.** It was commonly known as the Protestant Work Ethics in the later years. The Puritans in 17th century England emphasised on the same theme. William Perkins said, "man must live by the labour of his own hands and feed upon his own bread."



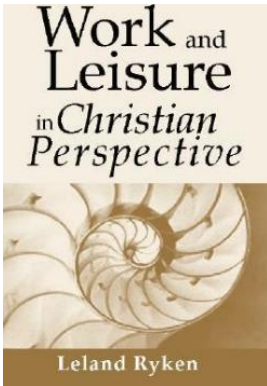
Protestant Work Ethic

- Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
- Sometimes called the **Puritan work ethic**, is a value emphasizing the necessity of constant labor in a person's calling as a sign of personal salvation. Protestants beginning with Martin Luther had reconceptualised work as a duty for the benefit of the individual and society.



Richard Bernard added, “**idleness is a great sin, the nurse of all vice.**” Or, the common adage, “An idle mind is a devil’s workshop.” Work should be viewed as a calling in which the worker is a steward and he is accountable to God (Eph 4:1). The goals of work are firstly, spiritual - to glorify God and secondly, humanitarian - to serve men and society.

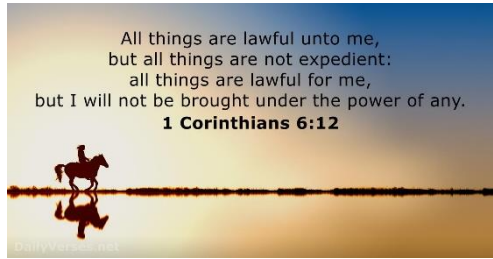
Today, the purpose and value of work is clouded by many material pursuits and the pandemic as well. The consumer ethic, coupled with the success ethic (in a meritocratic and elitist society like Singapore), the new work arrangements after the health crisis affects our career ethic. People value work as a means towards attaining success; with one of the signs of success as having a prestigious career or many promotions. The Singaporean proverbial dream consists of the five C’s—Condo, Car, Club, Card and Corporate success. More importantly to the Christians are the 3 C’s—our **Creator**, our **Consecration to Christ**, and **Contempt of the world**. To achieve success, workers thought that they must deny themselves of leisure, their families and their friends. They would have a competitive spirit that often even trample upon other people on the way to economic success. Christians ought not to be so, for there is a higher purpose for us in the spiritual realm than just material gains and power on earth. The glory of God is our chief concern



The concept of leisure, on the other hand, is quite elusive and difficult to define compared to work. Some have simply defined leisure as the antithesis of work and called it non-working time. While this may be true in some sense, I find it insufficient and misleading. Ryken Leland believes leisure is **discretionary time**—time used fruitfully to the glory of God apart from the obligation of work, family, and society. It is an activity positively chosen for personal enrichment. It can be a time for physical, spiritual and intellectual and social refreshment, like reading a book or going for a walk or even interacting meaningfully with someone over a conversation. **Yet leisure is a matter of mental**

and spiritual attitude, not as a result only of physical or external dimensions. (A person on leave from work may not be enjoying leisure.) I think leisure provides the occasion for learning, growth and free expression, for rest and freedom, for rediscovering life in its entirety. It is a search for repose, for creativity and freedom. It serves many useful functions. Jesus had occasions of leisure with His disciples, as in Mark 6:31–32, we read, “*And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.*”

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:12, *“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”* There are some things we do



not do as Christian even in the name of leisure or relaxation. For example, dancing in a sleazy night spot, taking drugs, smoking, watching violent/horror/immoral movies or doing yoga which has religious connotation in its philosophy and origin.

The author treasures reading good Christian books, exercising that includes long walks with my wife, swimming, cycling, or listening to Christian music or messages, or playing the guitar or sharing and fellowshiping with others or just resting. It is more than non-work; it has a positive benefit for our body and soul. I believe it is essential for a healthy ministry, a healthy mind and body as well. **If you don't come apart and rest awhile, you may just plain come apart!** Take a book and go to the beach or quiet place to read. Seek the Lord in meaningful moments of life away from the hue and cry of work, family and community. Take a break (e.g., holiday, go on a cruise or walk in the park or listen to a sermon or Christian music) from work from time to time. We need it for the refreshing of our bodies and souls.

In the Gospel, we see the record of Jesus and the disciples engaged not just in work but also in times of physical and spiritual refreshment (Mark 7:42; 8:10; Matt 15:21, 29; Luke 16:22; John 10:40). Jesus took time off from the busy schedule of healing people, casting out demons and preaching and spent much time with the disciples privately. **It was a time for personal refreshment as they retired from work and reinvigorated and re-energised themselves with the fellowship of the Lord and one another. Jesus often retreated to a mountain to pray** (Mark 6:46). That is the source of spiritual strength and vitality for the continuance of the demanding Christian ministry. In the same vein, our bodies need the necessary rest and restoration. Leisure is an opportunity to repair our weary bodies and to recuperate from the stress and strain of the day. Leisure need not be non-activity. Work hard while it is time to work and have a meaningful and fulfilling time for recreation and leisure as well.



Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:13, *“And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.”* You can be reading a Christian book or resting on the beach or even listening to good edifying music or light exercise. Taking care of some plants or fishes or birds or a pet may be quite refreshing. I find it helpful physically to walk, swim, or go on the treadmill twice or thrice a week. I like to read a book during my free time and to just rest on a

Sunday afternoon. There is a time for everything (Eccl 3:1–2). God has made us in a way that we do not work continuously to our physical detriment but **there is a day of rest in the week to recuperate, refresh, repair and reinvigorate ourselves in the Lord and physically too.** In some companies, it is common to see employees selling their annual leave to make more money and work on Sundays for overtime as well. This is not necessary a wise thing to do. Do not deprive yourselves of these wonderful privilege and pleasure.

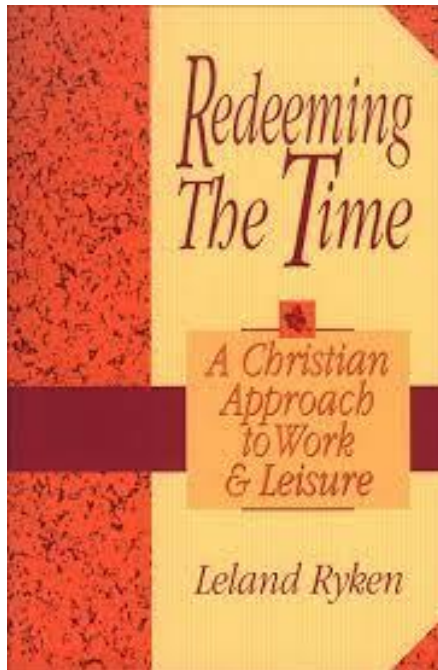
Moderation in leisure means avoiding the idolatry in leisure. Leisure pursuit can become a religion as well when people put other interests in the centre of their lives instead of God. For example, if everyday is play, then play will become tedious work one day. **A good leisure life must meet spiritual and moral standards and contributes to one’s personal wellbeing in constructive ways by opening up possibilities not present in the routine of work and obligation.** Leland noted that the Puritans gave us a perspective on what is generally not acceptable for leisure. The Puritans rejected games of chance like gambling, bear baiting (i.e., cruelty to animals), horse racing and carousing in and out of taverns. They were also wary of idleness, loafing and aimless inactivity. **They honoured the Lord on the Sabbath in worship and rest and is committed to corporate worship and communion with the Lord and His people in his sanctuary, and did spend more time with the family and the brethren in consecrated sharing and the reading of the word of God and meaningful play too.**

Conclusion

The pandemic requires certain carefulness in safety measures like wearing a mask and that is in good order and we travel with greater requirements. It is possible that a legitimate work or leisure can be turned into idolatry, inordinate affection and does not augur well for a person's spiritual and physical and mental health and vitality amid the pandemic. It can be excessive playing with the HP games, Netflix, Instagram, Transformers or other little obsessions including pets, and other hobbies can be possible idols. Others are enamoured with excessive YouTube movies, NBA, rock music or worldly entertainment (ie especially occultic or violet or immoral ones). Some are enamoured with their leisure that they neglected family, prayer, work and worship. Be careful that these things be not carried to the extreme. It can do more harm than good to us spiritually and mentally too. Hope this helps.

Jack Sin

(NB: For deeper studies, read Ryken Leland, Redeeming the Time, A Christian Perspective of Work and Leisure, 1995)



i n v i t a t i o n
2.5.2022
CHURCH MAY DAY SEMINAR

**Biblical Insights & Practical Approaches
For One's Physical & Mental Health**

MESSAGE 1

by Dr Johannah Soo
Lecturer, Food and Consumer Science, NIE

Nutrition and our Physical Health

MESSAGE 2

by Rev Dr Jack Sin
Pastor and Lecturer

Biblical Insights for Preserving our Sanity in an Insane World



MONDAY, 2 MAY 2022



9.30AM - 12.30PM



SOVEREIGN HOPE BP CHURCH
160 PAYA LEBAR ROAD, ORION@PAYA LEBAR, #04-06
SINGAPORE 409022



Interested participants need
to register with Dn Yue Kay at
97450311 by 21 April 2022

Greetings from Myanmar

Greetings in the blessed Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Pastor, just to inform you that have collected the money today, which is sent by the Sovereign Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church as a love gift for my family. My wife and I would like to express our gratitude to Sovereign Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church for her generosity. May our LORD bless and use her more to extend the Kingdom of God for His honor and glory. We are also thankful to Rev. Dr Jack Sin who is the pastor of Sovereign Hope BPC, all committees, and all members as well. God bless you all!

In Christ,
Benjamin & Sui Men
Lecturer in BRS
Yangon, Myanmar



(NB: Pray for bro Benjamin who is going to start teaching the Word of God in Biblical Reformed Seminary from June and the other faculty members. Pray for the Lord's strength and comfort upon the family as his wife recently suffered a miscarriage.)



Resurrection Sunday Worship Service

17 Apr 2022



Welcoming our new church member - Samuel Wong



Sweet Fellowship in Christ!

Thank God for loving hands that prepared the sumptuous Breakfast Fellowship!



Memory Verse

Phil 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Resurrection Sunday Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks this morning on “**Poor & Yet Rich**” (*Matt 5:5, Phil 4:10-19*), continuing the new quarterly series on “**Biblical Paradoxes of Life Expounded**”.
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on “**Temporal & Eternal**” (*1Jn 5:1-13*).
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Study on 4 Early Old Testament Characters – Joseph
 - Studies in Deuteronomy – Dn Kwong Leen
 - Burmese Bible Class - James
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. **May Day Seminar will be held on Mon, 2 May 2022 at 9.30am to 12.30pm in church** on the theme “**Biblical Insights & Practical Guidelines on Physical and Mental Health**”. Interested to attend are to register with Dn Yue Kay.
8. **The Church camp will be from 16-18 June at Changi Cove** on the theme “**Biblical Precepts for a Vibrant Christian Walk**” by Dr Jack Sin. Registration Forms are available from Dn Yue Kay and all are encouraged to register as soon as possible as there is a limited capacity.
9. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 6 May 2022, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
10. Those who wish to bring a new friend to the worship service, kindly inform the safety officer Dn Yue Kay or Pastor at least a day in advance.
11. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
12. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**