

The Nature of Work as a Healthcare Professional – The Difficulties

Genesis 3

(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)

Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

1. What are the things which frustrate you as a healthcare professional? Make a list of all the things which you find difficult, annoying and frustrating.
2. How do you normally deal with those frustrations?

What does God have to say?

Read Genesis 3:1-19.

When Adam and Eve sin God decrees a number of curses. Firstly the serpent is punished with a curse (3:14-15). The woman is then told her pain in childbearing will increase (3:16). Finally God curses, not man, but the ground (3:17-19).

1. What impact does God say His cursing of the ground will have on work?
2. We saw in Genesis 1-2 (previous study) God gives humanity the role of “ruling”, “subduing” and “taking care of” the earth in their work. Does God’s cursing of the ground do away with this responsibility? Why or why not?

It’s important to note that God’s commands relating to our work, namely, that we are to “rule”, “subdue” and “take care of” the earth are made BEFORE the ground is cursed. The curse does not remove those commands, it just makes our task of being obedient to them more difficult.

Read Romans 8:18-21.

3. How does the Apostle Paul speak about the cursed ground in the New Testament?
4. What is the creation looking forward to?

God promises that one day He will redeem His creation and restore it. The hope for the Christian person is living in that restored creation, the new heavens and the new earth where our relationship with the ground will not be strained but as God originally intended it to be (Isaiah 65:17-2; Revelation 21:1-5). So when your work is toilsome rejoice in, and hold onto that hope and pray that Jesus might come soon and restore all things (Revelation 22:20).

Putting it into practice

1. Look back at the list you made at the start. How can you see the impact of the ground being cursed in each of those areas in your field of healthcare?
2. How does knowing our work will be difficult and frustrated help us? How might we need to change our expectations about our work and its productivity?
Some examples: We should expect to work difficult hours, come up against difficult people to work with, and difficult patients to treat.
3. What motivation is there to keep working well when work will continue to be frustrating until creation is redeemed?
4. How can you be distinctive in the way you handle the frustrating situations you just considered compared to your colleagues?

For reflection and prayer...

Having realistic expectations about our work will help us to not react badly when things naturally go wrong. Pray you'll approach your work with realistic expectations, knowing that it will often be frustrating and hard.

But don't forget the hope of creation being redeemed. This is great news! Do you truly believe it, celebrate it and live in the light of it? Spend some time meditating on this truth and praying the Holy Spirit will prompt you to remember this in tough times.

Bible Bites

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes by a group or an individual)

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Thinking about life as a student in healthcare

1. What are the things which frustrate you as a healthcare professional? Make a list of all the things which you find difficult, annoying and frustrating.
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What does God have to say?

Read Genesis 3:1-19,

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” ⁴“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

¹¹And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” ¹²The man said, “The woman you put here with me —she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

¹⁶To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

¹⁷To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

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Read Romans 8:18-21,

¹⁸I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.’

1. How does the Apostle Paul speak about the cursed ground in the New Testament?

God promises that one day He will redeem His creation and restore it (Romans 8:18-21). The hope for the Christian person is living in that restored creation, the new heavens and the new earth where our relationship with the ground will not be strained but as God originally intended it to be (Isaiah 65:17-2; Revelation 21:1-5). So when your work is toilsome rejoice in, and hold onto that hope and pray that Jesus might come soon and restore all things (Revelation 22:20).

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