

For We are His Workmanship

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Have you ever completed a task, reached a goal, or built something you looked back upon with some satisfaction? Not a feeling of pride or lifting yourself up but just a feeling of satisfaction. Maybe it's part of your home that you renovated or improved. It could be an object that you built or sewed. Perhaps it's the passing of an exam you studied hard for or a promotion you received at work, or even just mowing the lawn. You finish, look back upon the work, and think to yourself, "That's good."

It seems to be a natural tendency, perhaps instilled in us by God, to look back upon completed work this way. Our God did this during the process of creation. At several intervals on the third through sixth days of creation, God looked back upon His work and "*saw that it was good*" (**Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25**). Upon finishing the entirety of creation, He looked back upon the entire work and saw "*indeed that it was very good*" (**Genesis 1: 31**).

It is interesting to think of God reflecting on His work. It is something that we do, but to think of God who is so powerful to create -- not build but create -- all things, and here He is reflecting on the work, admiring what He made, and being satisfied with what He created just as He had created it. In the midst of all this work, He places man in the garden to tend the creation and a being to walk with in the Garden. It was perfect, and it was everlasting.

And then came sin. This damaged so much of what God created. In **Genesis 3:16-19**, God announces to the serpent, Adam, and Eve the consequences for bringing sin into the world. Children would be born through pain. Toil would be required to produce the food needed for life. Life would be finite. Their bodies would return to the dust from which they came. Also, as a consequence for their sin, Adam and Eve were thrown out of the garden, separated from God. Even the earth itself was changed. The ground was cursed and would bring forth thorns and thistles. It is impossible to accurately imagine what creation looked like before sin, but there was a difference. The ground was less yielding and less willing to provide food all because of sin that one man, Adam, brought into the world (**Romans 5:12**).

Fully relating to God here is impossible. We have never created such a thing as God has, nor will we ever. But we can imagine, or maybe even have experienced, a time when a work we took satisfaction in was ruined by someone or something else. At best, it is frustrating. At worst, it can be heartbreaking. If the cause is a person, and his or her actions were careless or had some purpose or intent behind them -- it wasn't merely an accident -- it can cause us great grief. We not only see what we worked for damaged or destroyed, but we also have the accompanying hurt of another giving us no consideration or concern for what we've done.

There are times in the scriptures when God used metaphors to show that He views our sin in such a way. One example is in **Isaiah 5:1-7** where He compares the nation of Israel to a vineyard. He had built this vineyard on a good hill with good ground, the choicest vine used, the ground cleared, the press built, etc. All that work and the yield is wild grapes.

Another example is in **Ezekiel 16**. There, God compares the children of Israel to a newborn girl that He found cast away in a field, uncleaned from birth, its navel chord still hanging from its body, and struggling in its blood. She was abandoned, and no one wanted her. But God took the child in, made her thrive, washed her, clothed her in the finest cloth, adorned her with jewels, gold, and silver, covered her in silk, and fed her with pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. She was beautiful. But when she matured, she gave herself to other gods.

In each of these instances, God put in the work, not for himself but for someone else, for His people. Their response was to turn away from Him towards sin, ruining or casting aside what He had created or provided. We can see at other places in the scriptures how God views this with a sense of grief. In **Genesis 6:6**, as God viewed the world's wickedness of man across the earth, Scripture says, "*And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*" He saw what had become of His creation, of what others had done in His creation, and He grieved.

This is important to remember as we are all faced with the temptation to sin. Sin isn't the breaking of some arbitrary rule created by an authoritarian God. Sin results in the defilement of what the Lord created. It separated His creation from Him and resulted in the entirety of creation being subjected to futility (**Romans 8:22**). When we choose to sin, it grieves our Lord, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ for good works, not for sin.