

to be God-centered (Matt 6:33) are to be accomplished through God's grace (cf. Eph 2:10).

The deeds of the saints, both in the spiritual (Matt 4:10; Luke 4:8) and in the physical realms (Acts 20:34) are to be done for God's glory and purposes (Matt 5:16). Their works are to be shown clearly to have been "done through God," worked by those who are living by the truth (John 3:21).

Far from denigrating the principle of "honest pay for an honest day's work," our literature upholds this work ethic as it describes God's honorable activity and relates this concept to the activities of men. The principle of cause and effect in work is set forth in the Bible's teaching that man's work is to be divinely motivated as he serves God and his fellowmen.

The buying-selling, profit-payment motif is prominent in the stories and accounts of the Gospels and Acts. Doing good work (Matt 25:21, 23), receiving proper pay (Matt 20:8), engaging in private buying and selling (Matt 13:44) and profit making (Luke 19:23) are all put in a good light as meaningful activity for man to do. But because of the sinful, depraved nature of fallen man, all of this work ethic is tempered with instructions and warnings about fairness, about not exacting more than is due (Luke 3:13), using restraint (Luke 3:14), exhibiting mercy and forgiveness (Luke 7:42), instructions about God-centeredness (Matt 6:33), warnings about God's and man's judgment (Luke 12:20), care for others and for the poor (Luke 12:33; Mark 10:21), and concern for one's goal in work -- why am I doing it? For God's glory?

The Gospels and Acts, in upholding the same Bible and Protestant work ethic as do the Epistles of Paul, strike a balance between the hard work-self-denial philosophy, on the one hand, and the self-fulfillment philosophy described by Yankelovich, on the other. With God as central in all work and activity, hard work (Matt 13:3, the sower) and self-denial (cf Matt 10:37, 38; Mark 8:34-36) are to be for God's glory and thus truly good and purposeful. On the other hand, the believer's self-fulfillment also is to be centered in the Lord and all that he does is to be done for God's glory. The believer finds self-fulfillment in loving God and doing his will (John 14: 15), and he takes the pattern for life from Jesus who said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

The instructions for living in this way are the basis for the Protestant work ethic in its purity, and such a biblically-based work ethic highlights the meaning of Hannah Arendt's view that:

True freedom can flourish only when the "treasure" is not wholly spent on private satisfaction. Freedom always involves the larger community, what Romans called the *res publica*. What thinkers of the eighteenth century called the "public happiness" and what we would today call society or culture.<sup>28</sup>

On the contrary, when man departs from the norms of the Gospels and Acts, and of all of Scripture, he is destined to end up with a distorted view of the true meaning of self-denial and self-fulfillment and with a distorted view of the pattern and purpose of work which should be done for God's glory and for man's good.