

## **What Christian Stewardship and Labor Day Have In Common**

In July, I wrote about Christian stewardship's connection to Independence Day (4<sup>th</sup> of July). This month, I would like to reflect on Christian stewardship's connection to Labor Day which we as a country celebrate on the first Monday of September each year.

Our country has long valued hard work and labor. Hard work and labor has made us the global leader that we are in the world today. It has in part given us victory in world wars and helped us through difficult economic times (like the Great Depression of the 1930's). We have numerous laws in our country to protect both employers and workers. Many people find their identity and their dignity through labor.

God cares about labor too. Did you know the word "labor" or some form of it is mentioned in the bible 112 times? God knows that a good part of our life is our work. God invites all of human kind to be collaborators and co-creators with Him. Our work is a reflection not only of our self, but also of God at work in us. Our work, our ultimate vocation as Christians, is to build up the Kingdom of God.

Psalms 127 verse one says: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it". Our labor generally contributes to "building" something whether it be goods, services, a home, or character. Whatever you are building, are you allowing the Lord to build with you? Is what you are busy building helping build the Kingdom of God? If not, maybe you are laboring in vain.

When we practice Christian stewardship we do not labor in vain because we labor for God who ultimately gives us purpose and meaning. The bishops of the U.S. teach us this wisdom by writing "The Christian Steward...receives God's gifts gratefully, cultivates them responsibly, shares them in love, and returns them with increase to the Lord". If we all labored with this attitude, can you imagine what kind of world we would live in? It would be the kind of world God has in mind for us....His Kingdom!

Happy "Labor Day" every day my sisters and brothers in Christ.

Tom Yost