

Deuteronomy 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:

Analysis

The command 'Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work' establishes work as divine ordinance and human duty. God commands labor, not merely permits it. The six-day work week reflects creation order where God worked six days before resting. Work is not curse but calling, means of glorifying God and serving neighbor. The phrase 'all thy work' indicates thorough completion of weekly responsibilities, enabling genuine rest on the seventh day. This verse opposes both workaholicism (violating Sabbath rest) and laziness (refusing diligent labor). The Reformed work ethic sees all legitimate labor as sacred vocation.

Historical Context

Israel's agrarian economy required intensive labor: plowing, planting, harvesting, herding, building, and household management. The six-day pattern distinguished Israel from surrounding cultures with various work calendars. This rhythm sustained Israel economically while preserving weekly worship and rest. The Sabbath command protected workers from exploitation—even slaves and animals must rest. This humane labor law demonstrated covenant care for all creation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this command establish both work and rest as divine ordinances, opposing both idleness and workaholism?
2. In what ways can you view your weekly labor as sacred vocation, serving God and neighbor rather than merely earning income?

Interlinear Text

שֵׁשֶׁת	יָמֵי	תַּעֲבֹד	וַעֲשֵׂה	כָּל	מְלַאכְתְּךָ :
Six	days	thou shalt labour	and do	H3605	all thy work
H8337	H3117	H5647	H6213		H4399

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 20:12 (Parallel theme): Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.