

Exodus 20:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

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

The Sabbath command begins with permission to work—'six days shalt thou labour', שְׁשָׁת יָמִים תִּعְבֹּד (sheshet yamim ta'avod). Work isn't curse but calling; labor has dignity. The rhythm is six-then-one, work-then-rest, mirroring Creation's pattern. 'All thy work' (כל-מְלָאכָתֶךָ, kol-melakhtekha) means complete your tasks in six days—the Sabbath isn't catch-up day but genuine rest. This sanctifies ordinary labor: the six days of work are as commanded as the seventh day of rest. God ordains both work and rest; both glorify Him. Secular/sacred divide collapses—plowing and praying, building and Bible-reading, all done unto the Lord.

Historical Context

In the ancient world, continuous labor with no regular rest was common, especially for slaves. God's command to work six days and rest one protected workers from endless toil while dignifying labor itself.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this command dignify ordinary work as God-ordained, not just 'ministry' work?
2. What does completing your work in six days teach about diligence and trust?

Interlinear Text

שָׁבַת שׁוֹמֵן יְמִינָה תִּמְלִיכְתָּךְ : כָּל וְעַש יְתִהְעַש וְעַש כָּל
Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work
H8337 H3117 H5647 H3605 H4399

Additional Cross-References

Luke 13:14 (Parallel theme): And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Exodus 23:12 (Parallel theme): Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

Exodus 34:21 (Parallel theme): Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.

Leviticus 23:3 (Parallel theme): Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

Exodus 35:2 (Parallel theme): Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.