



Minding the Gap - September 2015

A Faith and Work Publication

Welcome to Minding the Gap, a monthly thought about faith in the workplace!

“Another View of Leisure”

At the end of the first chapter of Genesis and the beginning of the second, there is a wonderful passage about **work and leisure**. "*God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning of the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.*" (Genesis 1:31-2:3). The three phrases that strike me - "**God saw**", "**it was very good**" and "**he rested**" have given me a new understanding with respect to the concept of "leisure".

Fast-forward to today and it seems the generally understood view of leisure is an activity or a period of time which you seek or need to get away from your work. For a variety of reasons, our work takes on an enslavement or sentenced mentality. However, this is not what's portrayed in the biblical passage. Leisure or rest as the scripture names it, is activity or period of time the Creator has to look back on and enjoy the accomplishments of the past "six days", where God expended a great deal of energy in creating. And, I think we can agree to create life out of "non-life" does require a lot of energy. Likewise for us, it requires a lot of effort to create solutions for the problems or challenges of our work. Now, when we're done, do we take time to step back and admire or celebrate what we've accomplished? My guess would be: "Slim or Never, and Slim just left town".

In a recent book by Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, he writes of a 20th Century philosopher, Josef Pieper who says: "Leisure is the condition of considering things in a celebrating spirit...Leisure lives on affirmation. It is not the same as the absence of

activity...It is rather like the stillness in the conversation of lovers, which is fed by their oneness." For us, the challenge is to find time/space/moments in our leisure to lean back ("he rested"); to see what we've accomplished ("God saw"); and to celebrate its goodness-even if it was difficult or painful("it was very good"). Not only does this put energy into your leisure, but also blessing on your work.

In conclusion, let me just mention some "leisure activities" we had in my work with the Reell Corporation:

- Once a year, we would gather over refreshments in our common space to look at the products we'd developed or were developing, and celebrate these accomplishments.
- Also, once a year Reell held a Coworker Appreciation Dinner to review the year and celebrate ourselves as a community of work.
- Work directors were encouraged to take time within the Annual Review process to look back and smile on the accomplishments of the "direct report".

So, go forth and by yourself or within your work community, use a portion of your leisure time not to run from your work but to "lean back, smile and see the beauty of your work".

Blessings to all of you in your world of work!

- Jim Grubs

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