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# Contextual Analysis of Genesis 2:1-15 in Relation to Work, Rest, And Worship and Its Implication for a Technological Driven Society

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## Abstract
God assigned Adam a workplace in the Garden of Eden and outlined his job responsibilities: to dress and tend the garden (Gen 2:15). Scholars have thus explored work, its ethics, and benefits as a duty of humans. But these scholars have not paid adequate attention to the larger context of "work" in Genesis 2:15 in relation to rest, worship, and its implications for a technologically driven dispensation that is characterized by working hard and smart '24/7.' Therefore, this study through historical grammatical method examined the biblical concept of work and how it is complemented by rest and worship. Grammatical-historical hermeneutics served as the theoretical framework. The analysis of Genesis 2:1-15 revealed that work, as an essential duty and is divinely appointed to mankind. One-seventh of his time is also appointed for bodily and mental rest, and for spiritual refreshment in worshipping his creator. The observance of good rest not only affects work output but also lengthens life span whereas long hours of work without resting wears out strength and retards productivity. The inordinate use of high-technology devices such as phones are capable of denying man rest. Thus, there is need to create awareness on the need of workers to have adequate time to rest and worship the creator. The use of technology gadgets should be encouraged where they enhance work, rest and worship. Conversely, the inordinate use of technology devices should be discouraged when the use is capable of denying mankind of sound rest.

**Keywords:** Work, Rest, Worship, technological-driven dispensation, Human happiness

## Introduction
Work is one of the privileges given to humankind before the advent of sin. God found a workplace for Adam Eden, and He spelled out his duties: working and keeping the garden (Gen 2:15). Was Adam created to work without rest? No! The work and service of man is balanced with the allowance to rest and worship the creator (C.f. Gen 2:1-3). Work, rest, and worship are so vital to man's existence that the fall of man does not face out the obligations. After the fall of man in Eden, work serves as part of the redemptive plan. Labour, rest and worship might have impacted the patriarchs and matriarchs' productivity and longevity (Gen 5:1-32; 26:12). However, in this tech-driven dispensation that is characterized by working hard and smart 24/7, how shall mankind balance work with rest? How shall he not work himself to harm at the expense of his health? How shall mankind plan his duties to give priority to rest and worship? This study seeks to address the questions through historical grammatical analysis of work, rest and worship in their canonical context.
The historical-grammatical method of biblical exposition is appropriate because it is an approach that seeks to unravel the original meaning of the biblical text in accordance with authorial intention. The essential features of this method include the analysis of the historical context, the grammatical construction, and the literary genre of a given text. The interpreters thus seek to know what the original authors meant to say and how their audience would have comprehended their message (Andrews, 2024). This method holds that the Bible is a divinely inspired word of God and inerrant in all matters of teaching and doctrine (2 Timothy 3:16). The historical-grammatical approach precludes personal speculation but allows the text to speak for itself (Cole, 2020). Tery commenting on the grammatical-historical interpretation said, “the words and sentences can have but one significance in the same connection" (Tery, 1885).

## Historical Background
Work is of divine origin. God worked and created the heaven and the earth in six days, and after a thorough evaluation of His work, which is very good, He rested and had a fellowship with Adam and Eve (Gen 2:1-3). God, therefore, gives man a good example to follow, balancing work with rest. Consequent upon the disobedience of Adam and Eve in Eden, the obstruction caused by disobedience does not obliterate the observance of work and rest. "To Adam God said, "In the sweat of your face you

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shall eat bread till you return to the ground" (Gen 3:19). This signifies rigorous labour, unlike what they had in the garden of Eden, which seemed to be non-fatigue-inducing work (White, 1993).

## Works and Workers in the Bible

The scriptures give examples of works and workers in the Bible; Adam tended the garden in Eden. God gave him an explicit commission to work, a vocation that could be compared to horticulture in the 21st century (Gen 2:15). This is an indication that man has to utilize his physical and mental faculties to keep and beautify the garden (Nichlol, 1976). Further, the Genesis account reveals that Cain was a farmer, while Abel was a herdsman (Gen 4:1-3). Noah, in the same vein, worked and built a magnificent ark of three layers. A feat that demonstrates innovation, creativity, skills, and diligence that mirrors civil and engineering constructions of high-rise edifices. The examples mentioned show unequivocally the attitude of hard work and diligence that is commended in the *Torah*.

## Textual Analysis of Genesis 2:1-3

The contextual study of Genesis 2:1-15 reveals the interfusion of God's work in creating the universe in six days with resting on the seventh day. The writer of Genesis used different words to portray God's activities in creation, namely, בּרא *bara* (Gen 1:1), עָשָׂה *asah*- (Gen 1:26), and שָׁבַת *shabath* (Gen 2:3). The Hebrew verb בּרא *bara* (Gen 1:1) means "to create, "to shape", "to form." It is always used with God as its subject to describe a divine act of formation. Genesis 1 employs triad terms showing the creation of the world. The foremost reads, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים (Gen 1:1 WTT) "God created". No other person or group of people in the OT is said to "create". Therefore, the formation of the world was exclusively *bara* only by God.

While the Hebrew word בּרא describes the divine act in creating the cosmos, the word עָשָׂה *asah*— "to do," "to fashion," "to accomplish," "to make." The term *asah* portrays the finesse of work done to form man in one's own image. David was therefore on point when he wrote, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and *that* my soul knows very well" (Ps 139:14).

Upon the completion of *bara* (creating) the heaven and the earth and the *asah* (making) of man, Adam and Eve, the next action of God is described with the word שָׁבַת *shabath,* which means "to cease," "to rest," "to desist," (from labour). After the end of the six days' work, God desisted from all works of forming the world. The almighty God, though illimitably gleeful in the delight of himself, yet derived a joy in the work of his own hands. He did not rest, as one tired but as one satisfied with the exhibition of his own goodness and the demonstration of his own glory. The institution and observance of the sabbath, therefore, offers man rest, which affords him worship to enrich his holiness, peace and life (Hery, 2008).

Evidently, Genesis 2:1-15 underpins the significance of rest and worship for man, who was assigned the work of tending (cultivating) the garden of Eden. The correct understanding of the concept of work and rest in the passage (Genesis 2:1-15) offers fresh light into the discussion of holistic well-being in the technological era in a bid to achieve integrating spirituality, mental health and sustainability. God, in His wisdom, worked and made the heavens and earth in six days. David, in referencing the work of God in creation, says, "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all (Ps 104:24). This does not only show that God is the first cause but also indicate that work is of divine origin and it is essential for the foundation of the world, the sustainability of man and its environment (Gen 1:1, 2:1). Fleming ingeniously posits that God is pleased when humans study His handiworks and learn its wonders (Fleming, 2005).

In summing up the creation account, the writer of the book of Genesis gives a concise detail of how God delighted Himself in His work and consequent celebration, Genesis 2:1-3 states,

> Thus, the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made (NKJV).

The text gives rise to inevitable questions. Why would God, the Almighty, rest after six days of work? Was he tired or exhausted? Or was God laying an example that would help mankind in integrating work, spirituality, mental health, and sustainability? Isaiah gives a hint to the above puzzle when he says, "The Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable…He gives power to the weak and to *those who have* no might. He increases strength. (Isa 40:28-29). God in His love made provision for the sustainability of the holistic wellness of mankind from the onset of creation.

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## Resting Time a Restorative Time

Catanese (2024), validates the clinical benefit of rest. A time set aside to rest is crucial for well-being and is capable of enhancing lifespan by enriching overall well-being and lowering the risk of chronic diseases. Sufficient and quality rest reduces the risk of conditions like heart disease, stroke, obesity, and dementia (Catanese, 2024). In a publication released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the report advocates for integrating rest into work, affirming that at times, the hurdles of modern life (tech-driven era) barely offer workers time to stop and rest (National Institutes of Health, 2021). This study is therefore apt for offering fresh insight into the significance of balancing work with rest and worship reminds modern readers of God's plan for human wellness at creation—"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work (Exo 20:8-10). Evidently, the integration of work, worship, and rest is the contextual core message of the text, which re-echoes Genesis 2:1-3.

## Contextual Analysis of Genesis 2:1-15 In Relation to Work, Rest, and Worship

The contextual study of Genesis 2:1-15 reveals the interfusion of God's work in creating the universe in six days with resting on the seventh day. The text reinforces the significance of rest and worship for man who was assigned the work of tending (cultivating) the garden of Eden. The correct understanding of the concept of work and rest in the passage (Genesis 2:1-15) offers fresh light into the discussion of holistic well-being in the technological era in a bid to achieve integrating spirituality, mental health and sustainability.

God, in His wisdom, worked and made the heavens and earth in six days. The Psalmist, in referencing the work of God in creation, says, "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all (Ps 104:24). This does not only show that God is the first cause but also indicate that work is of divine origin and it is essential for the foundation of the world, the sustainability of man and its environment (Gen 1:1, 2:1). Fleming ingeniously posits that God is pleased when humans study His handiworks and learn its wonders (Fleming, 2005).

## Worship and Rest as Catalyst for Productive Work

Worshipping God affords man a fresh, reassuring, and restorative encounter with His creator. Paying homage to God, rendering adoration to Him for who He is and what He has done, brings joy that is comparable to none here below. The observance of worship in the company of others has its own unique blessing of warm fellowship with God and fellow human beings.

The refreshing experience of David in worship makes him declare with ecstasy that in the presence of God, there is fullness of joy (Ps 16:11). A joyful heart invigorates the soul, which promises to catalyze productive work. Solomon seems to agree with his father's perspective of joy found in the presence of God and its relation to vivacity of the soul when he writes, "A merry heart does good, *like* medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones" (Prov 17:22). Worshipping God in praise, in prayer, in the study of the Bible especially in the company of others aids the unburdened the heart. It strengthens faith, which in turn strengthens man's resolve, quickens intellect, stimulates creative thinking and birth of innovative ideas that make working week productive, delightful and fulfilling.

## Effect of Rest on Work Productivity and Life Span

The observance of good rest not only affects work output but also impacts life span. According to recent United Nations data for 2025, Nigeria has the lowest life expectancy in the world at an average of 54.9 years (Nigeria's Life Expectancy, 2025), while Hong Kong has the highest life expectancy—85.29 (Adeoti, 2023). This figure rates Nigeria below the global average and portrays high mortality rates (Nigeria's Life Expectancy, 2025). Conversely, in a report made available by the World of Statistics on 23rd June, 2023, "Nigerian workers ranked second in the world after Mexico in the global hardest-working workers with an average of 2,124 hours per worker annually." (The World of Statistics, 2025). However, the same statistics reveal that "Workers in the world's largest economy, the United States, put in an average of 1,791 hours to place them in the 13th spot, while the world's third-largest economy, Japan, is a distant 30th with their workers putting in 1,607 hours annually." The above statistical report raises unavoidable questions. How has the number of working hours of Nigerians translated to the workers' productivity and economy? What is the effect of working with little or no time to rest on the life span of workers?

## Bedroom Business

The emergence of integrated circuits, micro and nano chips has led to sophisticated and compact high-technology, such as handheld devices such as phones, iPads, MacBooks, iPods, mini sound systems (Apple, 2026). The aforementioned mobile gadgets are capable of turning bedrooms into business or work places. What used to be once upon a time, end of discussion has become a place of discussion that continues. With iPhones and iPads, sleeping time has become chatting time and time for rest has become time returning mail, missed calls, and attending to unfinished business. The modern-day bedroom occupation is thus eroding resting time. The consequent effects are evident insomnia, fatigue, lack of depth in thinking, and preventable road accidents due to drowsiness. God provides a panacea to the modern monsters when He commanded us to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy (Exod 20:8)

## Technology as Work, Rest and Worship Enhancement

Although the distraction caused to work, rest and worship by the inordinate usage of technological devices has been highlighted above, the judicious use of high tech has been found to have a positive impact on rest and worship. Some people have a good rest when they listen to cool music on their mobile phones—it soothes their nerves—thereby precipitating relaxation or a sleeping effect. Others, like drivers, drive well in this technology-driven era when listening to good music. It does not only keep them alert but also serves as an accompaniment when embarking on a long journey or engaging in an onerous task.

## Remember the Sabbath for the Refreshment

The antidote to non-stop business that robs mankind of good rest and sleep in a technology-driven era is found in the counsel of God that says, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy" (Exod 20:8, Gen 2:1-3). The Hebrew word Sabbat means rest or cessation of work (Fausset, 1998). A call to keep holy signifies its sacredness for worship. God in His wisdom knows the constitution and composition of a human being. He assigned labour for man, yet he graciously set apart "one seventh of his time for bodily and mental rest, and for spiritual refreshment in His Maker's worship." (Faussett, 1998). What a loving God! He gave the Sabbath a gift in time for the refreshment of mankind, "Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed" (Exod 23:12).
The Hebrew word rendered "refreshed" is *naphash* in *the Niphal* stem (Bibleworks, 2008). The verb is similar to an English intransitive verb in which action is performed on the noun. The phrase "you may be refreshed," therefore, conveys a deep meaning that shows that the human body is divinely created to refresh her/himself when s/he rests. Amazingly, the language refresh has been fittingly imported into technology. When a computer system is refreshed, it functions better. When mankind rests and worships God after work, s/he is refreshed, renewed and reinvigorated.

## Nothing Good Comes Easy

George (2025), insightfully observed that it is not so easy to find a time and place for worship in this technologically driven dispensation as it was a generation ago. George maintains that sacrifices made by mankind to set a day aside to rest from labour are as the small dust of the balance when compared with the privileges and lasting rewards attached to following the immutable counsel of God and seeking His guide (George, 2025).

## Conclusion

This study through historical grammatical method examined the biblical concept of work and how it is enhanced by rest and worship. God gives exemplary evidence of rest after six days of work. When human beings balance work with rest, it aids vibrant health and productive work. The appraisal of work carried out and the joy of service demand attitude of gratitude demonstrated in worshipping God. The blessing of worship in the presence of God elicits joy with its attendant healing effect. Working without resting wears out strength; the inordinate use of ever-increasing tech applications leads to insomnia and impairs mental health, resulting in a weak immune system and erosion of resilience. Humankind is thereby susceptible to ills such as suicidal ideation and a short lifespan. Conversely, the balancing of work with rest and worship makes mankind healthy and happy which in turn impact a great productivity.
Remarkably, this study reveals the followings (1) Work, as an essential duty of man and as a means of sustaining life, is divinely assigned to human beings. (2) God assigns labour for man, yet he graciously

set apart "one seventh of his time for bodily and mental rest, and for spiritual refreshment in worshipping his creator. (3) The observance of good rest not only affects work output but also impacts life span. (4) Longer hours of work without resting retards productivity. Nigeria is ranked as the hardest-working country in Africa and second in the world with 2,124 hours per worker annually (The World of Statistics, 2025), yet it has the lowest life expectancy in the world at an average of 54.9 years (Nigeria's Life Expectancy, 2025). Whereas, workers in the world's largest economy, the United States, put in an average of 1,791 hours. (5) Bedroom business: the invention of sophisticated and compact high-technology devices such as phones, iPad, MacBook, iPod, mini sound system, are capable of denying man rest in the "rest room"— bedroom (even when not in workplaces). The consequent effects are evident insomnia, fatigue, lack of depth in thinking, and preventable road accidents due to drowsiness. (6) It is not so easy to find a time and place for worship in this technologically driven dispensation as it was a generation ago. Thus, a deliberate plan has to be made as the privileges and lasting rewards of taking a break avert the breakdown of the human system. (7) The Hebrew word *naphash*, rendered "refreshed," has been fittingly imported into technological language—refresh. An operation that aids output, just as weekly *naphash* is clinically and spiritually beneficial to holistic well-being. (8) Worship invigorates the soul, which promises to serve as a catalyst for productive work. It provides a merry heart, which does good, like medicine. Worshipping God in praise, in prayer, in the study of the Bible, especially in the company of others, aids the unburdened of the heart, stimulates intellect, creative thinking, and innovative ideas.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are listed for consideration as they have promising impact on human work, rest and worship in tech-driven era:

1. There is need to create more awareness on the need of workers to have adequate time to rest and worship the creator.
2. The use of sophisticated and high-technology devices such as phones, iPad, MacBook, iPod, mini sound system, are capable of getting in-between man and rest should be discourage except where there are used for lulling and inducing sleep or rest.
3. Worship buildings should be part of a master plan of community, estate and companies to enhance fellowship and bonding among people in the same locality or workplace.
4. The time to rest should be considered as important and indispensable and utilize accordingly just as working hours are not toyed with but devoted to meaningful labour.

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