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[Subject]

[Date]

Living Without Principle

“Living Without Principle” is a classic work that is based on the notion that life is meant to be experienced, relished and enjoyed, not to be spent merely earning money for the sake of feeding oneself. This theme resonates throughout the work of Henry David Thoreau, who gives examples to demonstrate his point and convince the reader. He argues that people are focused so much on earning wages that they forget to enjoy their lives. He lambasts the American wage system and how it exploits the majority of the people by robbing them of their most precious resource: time.

Thoreau sets out the examples of people he knows and witnesses such as laborers, his neighbors and others whose activities and styles of living he considers mundane and commonplace. He argues that laborers deprive themselves when they work solely for receiving sufficient wages to get by. This denies them the pleasures of life such as poetry and philosophy, without which one cannot truly experience the felicities of life in Thoreau’s view. He opines that binding one’s self-worth for the sake of wages in everyday work is akin to slavery. This notion has been repeated in various examples such as Thoreau’s neighbor who mows his lawn every morning without any satisfaction and enjoyment.

Thoreau’s views are explicitly anti-capitalist and he views the world with a different lens than most people. His argument that people should strive for joy and bliss in life in the form of poetry and philosophy rather than for the mundane, everyday activity of labor for the sake of earning money is powerful and thought-provoking. Thoreau shows the reality of this world: a materialistic place with no liveliness. His view of the world being a place of gloom because of excessive material lust is an eye opener, especially in the contemporary world.