



Leisure: The Basis of Culture

By Josef Pieper

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One of the most important philosophy titles published in the twentieth century, Josef Pieper's *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* is more significant, even more crucial, today than it was when it first appeared more than fifty years ago. This edition also includes his work *The Philosophical Act*. Leisure is an attitude of the mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to perceive the reality of the world. Pieper shows that the Greeks and medieval Europeans, understood the great value and importance of leisure. He also points out that religion can be born only in leisure -- a leisure that allows time for the contemplation of the nature of God. Leisure has been, and always will be, the first foundation of any culture. Pieper maintains that our bourgeois world of total labor has vanquished leisure, and issues a startling warning: Unless we regain the art of silence and insight, the ability for non-activity, unless we substitute true leisure for our hectic amusements, we will destroy our culture -- and ourselves.

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Review

Pieper has subjects involved in everyone's life; he has theses that are so counter to prevailing trends as to be sensational; and he has a style that is memorably clear and direct. --*Chicago Tribune*

Pieper's message for us is plain.... The idolatry of the machine, the worship of mindless know-how, the infantile cult of youth and the common mind-all this points to our peculiar leadership in the drift toward the slave society.... Pieper's profound insights are impressive and even formidable. --*New York Times Book Review*

These two short essays by a contemporary German philosopher go a long way towards a lucid explanation of the present crisis in civilisation.... The first essay... should be read by anyone-and young people in particular-anxious to come to some conclusions about the nature of society." --*The Spectator, London*

About the Author

Josef Pieper (1904-1997) was an influential German Catholic philosopher, scholar, and author.

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