



Spring 2024 Equip Night #1
January 17th, 2024
The Gospel & Vocation: Foundations

Introduction: *Integrating Faith & Work | Finding Beauty in the Ordinary*

I. Creation & The Design of Work

Genesis 1-2 teaches us:

- God is a working God (Gen. 2:2-3; John 5:17)
- Humans are commissioned by God to “image” & partner with him (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15)
- Work is good & dignifying
- We are designed for the rhythm of work & rest (Gen. 2:1-3)

II. Fall & The Distortion of Work

Because sin has entered the world, our work and vocational lives are now marked by:

- Strife and Exhaustion (Gen. 3:16-19)
- “Toil” and disillusionment (Ecc. 2:18-26, 4:4-8)

“Toil is excessive, endless, fruitless labor – the kind that leaves us exhausted, with nothing valuable to show for our effort.”¹ ~ Andy Crouch

- Selfishness (Gen. 11), expressed either in ‘workaholic’ or in *sluggard* behavior.

“One of the reasons work is both fruitless and pointless is the powerful inclination of the human heart to make work, and its attendant benefits, the main basis of one’s meaning and identity... [Work] becomes a way to distinguish myself from my neighbor, to show the world and prove to myself that I’m special. It is a way to accumulate power and security, and to exercise control over my destiny.”² ~ Tim Keller

- ‘Disintegration’

“While God has made us to work, our work is now distorted. We face the triple challenge of our own sinful hearts, the sinfulness of others with whom we work, and the curse on the created order itself”³
~ David Jones

III. Redemption & Distinctive Work

¹ Andy Crouch, *The Tech-Wise Family*

² Tim Keller w/ Katherine Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor*, pg. 108.

³ David Jones, *Every Good Thing*, pg. 36.

“The Roman Gods were divine rulers, the Greek gods were philosopher-kings, and the Judeo-Christian God was a carpenter”⁴ ~ David Jones

- The gospel gives our work a renewed *story, calling, & identity*

IV. Restoration & The Destination of Work

The Bible’s story of the future New Heavens & New Earth is a *physical* and *material* city, a restoration of the ways things are supposed to be - including our work.

- Isaiah 65:17-18, 21-23, Rev 21:1-5, 22-25

Conclusion:

- 1 Corinthians 15:58: *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

Discussion Questions

1. Share what you spend your days doing vocationally, and a brief background on how you ended up in this place.
2. What is your general posture toward “work” and “vocational” life? Is it mainly enjoyment, neutrality/indifference, or frustration? Why?
3. How does the Biblical storyline of work encourage or challenge you?
4. How do you uniquely feel the effects of the fall & sin in your vocational life?
5. How can you “image God” and rightly love him and love your neighbor in your vocation?
6. Do you tend more toward overworking or more toward being a “sluggard?” Why?
7. How does the redemptive work of Christ & the Bible’s vision of the New Heavens and the New Earth help motivate you for your vocational life in the here & now?
8. What further questions does this discussion stir up for you?

Prayer Time

After working through the questions above (*or if there are less than 5 minutes remaining*), end your time praying together with your group. Pray through anything that was a particular emphasis in the discussion and for each of us to be faithful wherever God has called us to vocationally, using our gifts to love him and love others.

⁴ David Jones, *Every Good Thing*, pg. 31

