

3. HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH OUR WORK?

While waiting to begin please discuss the following questions

What do job ads promise/offer people these days? What do you look for/hope for in a job?

Think about your colleagues at work. What drives them? What are they afraid of? What is their solution to their fears?

Think about you when you're at work. What drives you? What are you afraid of? What is your solution to your fears?

RECAP: 1. WORK IS GOOD!

Defining work

How the church has thought about work: Reformation rediscovery... now

Genesis 1:26-2:3

Humans are made to work: cultivation, service, love and competence

God works

Work, not idleness is commended

Implications:

The pursuit of permanent leisure is out!

No asceticism: get involved (e.g. Joseph, Daniel, Jesus the carpenter)

No elitism

RECAP: 2. WORK IS GRIM!

Genesis 3

Pain, frustration, meaninglessness / vanity

Imposed by God

Implications:

* don't look to your work for ultimate satisfaction and personal value *

1. WORK REVEALS OUR IDOLS

^{ESV} Romans 1:21-23, For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

- **Idolatry**
Personal idolatry
Modern idolatry and post-modern idolatry
- **Jesus is the answer to idolatry**
Forgiveness
New power to love God and neighbour

2. THE CHRISTIAN'S APPROACH: MY WORK CAN BE DRIVEN BY THE GOSPEL

(a) Jesus is Lord of my work

- **A compartmentalised view of life...**
- **The whole of life: glorifying... worshipping... and loving Christ**

^{ESV} Mark 12:28-31, And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

^{ESV} Romans 12:1, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

^{ESV} Colossians 3:17, And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(b) The Bible's worldview

- **“worldview”** = a way of fitting everything together & making sense of life

What the world should be like
What's gone wrong
What can be done to make it right

- **The Bible worldview**

We were made to know God – and the world was made good
Sin has destroyed our relationship with God
Redemption: through Jesus we can be brought to know him again

- **Do your work “out of a gospel worldview”**

Work is good. *Therefore...*

Work is grim. *Therefore...*

Jesus is Lord of work. There's grace, meaning and hope. *Therefore...*

“The gospel is the true story that God made a good world that was marred by sin and evil, but through Jesus Christ he redeemed it at infinite cost to himself, so that someday he will return to renew all creation; end all suffering and death; and restore absolute peace, justice, and joy in the world forever. The vast implications of this gospel worldview – about the character of God, the goodness of the material creation, the fallenness of people and all things, the primacy of love and grace, the importance of justice and truth, the hope of redemption – affect everything, and especially our work.”

(Tim Keller, *Every good endeavour*, p163)

Think about how the gospel worldview applies to your situation

Think about those around you (e.g. colleagues/company/ wider culture). Where do you see values and practices that fit with the Bible?

What idolatries grip those around you? What are the hopes and the fears of co-workers?

Does your “work culture” have an idea of “salvation”? What is it?

What opportunities do you have to serve?

- individual people?
- your field of work?
- society at large?

(c) Engaging at work: common grace and competence

(d) Bible ethics and wisdom

(e) Relating with co-workers

(f) Witness at work

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Every good endeavour, Tim Keller

Thank God it's Monday, Mark Greene

Jesus@work: being a disciple for Christ in the workplace, Graham Beynon

<http://www.gospelatwork.org.uk/> - Lunchtime meetings for workers in central London (at Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, Blackfriars, Canary Wharf, Covent Garden, Ealing, Euston, Farringdon, Fleet Street, Hammersmith, Kings Cross, London Bridge, Mayfair, Moorgate, Oxford Circus, Westminster)

God@work: 6 sessions on the theology of work (Covent Garden Talks)

<http://www.coventgardentalks.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/M@W-Manual-I-Work.pdf>