

4. HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH OUR WORK? – PART 2

While waiting to begin please discuss the following questions about how a gospel worldview applies to your working 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 are the hopes and the fears of co-workers? What idolatries grip those around you? (i.e. in practice what “gods” motivate them?)

Does your “work culture” have an idea of “salvation” or of “the good life”?
What is it?

Through your work what opportunities do you have to serve?

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

RECAP: 1. WORK IS GOOD!

Genesis 1:26-2:3

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

God works

Work, not idleness is commended

RECAP: 2. WORK IS GRIM!

Genesis 3

Pain, frustration, meaninglessness / vanity

Imposed by God

RECAP: 3. JESUS IS LORD OF WORK!

Work reveals our idols (cf. Romans 1:21-23)

Jesus is the answer to idolatry:

forgiveness;

a new power to love God and neighbour;

a claim to total Lordship

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

1. Working out and living out the implications of a gospel worldview i.e. work is good... work is grim... Jesus is Lord of work, THEREFORE...

Thankfulness

Do it! The pursuit of permanent leisure is out!

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

No elitism

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

Don't be surprised by thorns and thistles

Trust the Lord with work... and pray for help / wisdom / perspective / energy

A different attitude to money / career / career progression

Competence and service

Ethical quandaries: sometimes "yes"... sometimes "no"

Witness

2. Pursue Biblical motivations for work

What reasons does the Bible give for why we should work and how we should choose what work we do? Read the following Bible texts and discuss.

^{ESV} 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13, Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ¹³ As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

^{ESV} 1 Timothy 5:8, But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

^{ESV} Ephesians 4:28, Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

^{ESV} 1 Thessalonians 4:11, ... and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you,

^{ESV} Ephesians 6:7, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,

3. Engaging at work: common grace

What is common grace?

Extent and limitations of common grace – see Job 28

Implications and importance of common grace

4. Bible ethics and wisdom

What do you do when...

A different set of virtues... view of people... source of guidance... and a different audience

“... not be known to be ruthless... known to be generous... calm and poised in the face of difficulty or failure... not sectarian, though distinctive in word and deed”

5. Relate with co-workers Biblically

How does the Bible command the Christian to treat his/her boss? And for what reasons? Read 1 Timothy 6:1, 1 Peter 2:18, Titus 2:9

What can this look like in practice?

What outward pressures does the Christian face as they relate to their boss?

What inward temptations and personal idolatries does the Christian face as they relate to their boss?

How does the Christian make progress in relating with his/her boss?

How does the Bible command the Christian to treat his/her employees? And for what reasons? Read Colossians 4:1, Ephesians 6:9

What can this look like in practice?

What outward pressures does the Christian face as they relate to their employees?

What inward temptations and personal idolatries does the Christian face as they relate to their employees?

How does the Christian make progress in relating with his/her employees?

6. Unanswered questions

Witness and evangelism at work

Gender: being a Christian woman at work

How do we encourage our children and young people to have a Biblical perspective on 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>