

4. HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH OUR WORK? – PART 3

While waiting to begin please discuss how to relate Biblically with co-workers (see over the page)

1. WORK IS GOOD!

What? We are made to...

- **cultivate** (Gen 1:26-2:3),
- **serve** (Eph 6:7),
- **show love** (Mark 12:31) and **competence**

Why? Because...

- **God works** (Genesis 2:1-3, John 5:17)
- **we are commanded to: eat, provide for one's family, share with the needy, avoid idleness** (2 Thess 3:6-13, 1 Timothy 5:8, Eph 4:28, 1 Thess 4:11, Eph 6:7)

2. WORK IS GRIM!

What?

- **pain, frustration, meaninglessness / vanity...**

Why?

- **suffering which is imposed by God**
- **suffering which is experienced directly because of our sin (our own and others')**

3. JESUS IS LORD OF WORK!

The problem:

- **work reveals our idols** (cf. Romans 1:21-23): e.g. ambition and reputation, materialism, comfort and ease

The Gospel solution: Jesus provides...

- **forgiveness for idolatry;**
- **a new power to love God and neighbour;**
- **a claim to total Lordship: the whole of life is lived under the Lordship of Christ, including our work** (Mark 12:28-31, Romans 12:1, Colossians 3:17)

4. ENGAGING AT WORK IN AN UNBELIEVING WORLD

Common grace:

- unbelievers can accomplish much (e.g. Job 28:1-11)...
- the Christian can join with them in much (e.g. Joseph or Daniel)...
- but there are limits to common grace (e.g. Job 28:12-28)...
- which means the Christian will sometimes have to say "No"

Being distinctive at work: different because of our...

- Biblical virtues: (e.g. Romans 12:17-21, Colossians 3:1-14)
- attitude to people: dignity and worth of all (Genesis 1:27, Colossians 4:1)
- source of guidance: God's Word
- primary audience: the Lord (Eph 6:5-9)

A specific issue: relating 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?

A specific issue: how should a Christian *woman* engage distinctively with the world of work? What about...

A woman's attitude to career and progression

What difference does it make if single or married?

How to relate to men at work (especially if in a position of authority)

Significance and value of motherhood

What does it mean to be "busy at home" (Titus 2:5)

Are there specific opportunities and temptations that face women?

What Bible texts and principles are particularly relevant?

How can we (i.e. the church) help and not hinder?

Specific issue: verbal witness and evangelism (next week)

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>