

Faith and Work/Vocation

How does our faith relate to what we do from 9-5? Do our vocations matter? How does my faith in Jesus affect my work?

"Is the spiritual life merely interior? Modernity has stripped God from every aspect of life – so much so that even Christians relegate God to only Sunday mornings."

The Foundation of Work

The physical world is good.

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, **it was very good.**
(Genesis 1:31)

God worked and he continues to work

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day **God finished his work** that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (Genesis 2:1-3)

But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." (John 5:17)

God's Design for Work

God uses means to an end

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and **multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.
(Genesis 2:15)

God works through all people

*"...he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything... that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for **'In him we live and move and have our being'**; as even some of your own poets have said, **'For we are indeed his offspring.'**" (Acts 17:25-28)*

[Example of Government - Romans 13:1-6]

The believer's call to work

I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. (1 Corinthians 7:7)

"The doctrine of vocation undermines conformity, recognizes the unique value of every person, and celebrates human differences, but it sets these individuals into a community with other individuals, avoiding the privatizing, self-centered narcissism of secular individualism."

The beginning of the Protestant Work Ethic

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1Peter 2:9)

"The priesthood of all believers did not make everyone into church workers; rather, it turned every kind of work into a sacred calling."

The distortion of Work

¹⁶ To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; **in pain you shall bring forth children**. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." ¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' **cursed is the ground because of you**; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ **thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you**; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ **By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread**, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Gen 3:16-19)

For the **creation was subjected to futility**, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope (Rom 8:20)

¹⁸ **I hated all my toil** in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹ and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰ So I turned about and **gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors** under the sun, ²¹ because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? ²³ For all his days are full of sorrow, and his **work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest**. This also is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 2:18-23)

¹ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and **let us make a name for ourselves**, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let **us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech**."

(Genesis 11:1-7)