



God at Work:

Connecting Your Calling to the
Mission of God

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MVBC Coffee House
September 10, 2017

Series Schedule

The Doctrine of Vocation

- 9/10 God's Gift: The Origin and Purpose of Work
- 9/17 God's Glory: How Our Work Images God in the World
- 9/24 God's Call: What Does He Want Me to Do?

Living our Vocation

- 10/1 God's Selection: Which Job is the Right One?
- 10/8 God's Direction: Changing Careers and Other Life Transitions
- 10/15 God's Time: Balancing Work/Family/Church
- 10/22 God's Steward: Saving/Investing/Giving

Leveraging our Vocation

- 11/5 God's Mission: Agents of Reconciliation
- 11/12 God's Heart: Ministering at Work
- 11/19 *Ask Anything* Sunday

Today: The Origin and Purpose of Work

- Fact: we spend most of our waking hours working at *something*
 - School assignments (Coursework; Homework)
 - Around the home (Housework; Yardwork)
 - At the gym (Working out)
 - At our job(s) (“Work”)
 - At church and/or other volunteer organizations
- Have you ever wondered:
 - Why is there such a thing as “work?”
 - Is it a good thing or a bad thing? A blessing? A curse? Both?
 - Just a necessity of life?

Our View of Work is Tied to Our View of God

- “In Greek society, labor was viewed as an inescapable fate imposed by the gods. To be like the gods meant to live free from work. In the world of the ancient Orient, labor was viewed as a burden, as slave labor for the gods. The goal was to withdraw this service, from this labor as far as possible. Labor was a burden without dignity.”
- Heiner Ruschhaupt, *Building and Preserving*

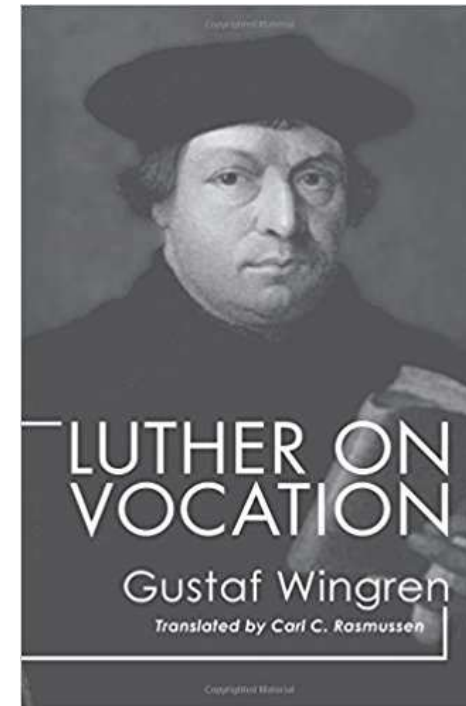


Our View of Work is Tied to Our View of God

- “The American view of work and pleasure is deeply rooted in Puritanism—in the notions that our bodies are disgusting fonts of sin, that the world is a festering swamp of temptation, and that the purpose of our lives is to do God’s work in this repulsive world and get our sinful a--es to heaven.”
– Greta Christina, *The Humanist*, Nov-Dec. 2015
- “When we give our skills, expertise and knowledge in exchange for pay, we contribute to the betterment of the society in which we live. Hence the purpose of work is that work gives us purpose.”
– Kelly Mitchell, Employment Counselor, *MyJobAdvice Blog*

Our View of Work is Tied to Our View of God

- “The Reformers, Luther and Calvin, were the first to use the terms *calling* and *vocation* for the daily tasks and position in life of men. It is important to note that they did this in protest against the use of language in the Middle Ages which was restricted to the call to a monastic life. ***They wanted to destroy the double standard of ethics and to show that God can be glorified in the world of workdays also.***”
– Alan Richardson, *Biblical Doctrine*



The Origin of Work

- Work originated with God Himself
- The triune God is a God who works
 - Creator (Gen. 1:31-2:3)
 - Craftsman (Gen. 2:5,22; Prov. 8:30; Ps. 104:24)
 - Collaborator (Gen. 1:26)
- Essential elements of work are part of the image of the Triune God
 - Communication
 - Cooperation
 - Obedience
 - Love

Relationships in the Trinity

- “So Jesus replied, ‘Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself, unless He sees the Father doing it. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does. The Father loves the Son and shows Him all He does. And to your amazement, He will show Him even greater works than these.’” Jn. 5:19-20
- “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” Jn. 16:13-15

The Origin of Man's Work

- Work predates the Fall (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15,19)
 - Part of God's "very good" world (Gen. 1:31)
 - A blessing (Gen. 1:28), not a curse (Gen. 3:17-19)
 - Not out of pure necessity (cf. Gen. 2:9)
- God gave work to Man in the created order as a gift
 - For purpose (Gen. 1:27-28)
 - For dignity (Gen. 2:19)
 - For relationship (Gen. 1:28)
 - For worship (Gen. 2:15)

The Relationship of Work and Worship

- Why did God place Man in the Garden of Eden?
 - “To work it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15, ESV)
 - Work [“abad”: Heb. עָבַד] = serve, work, till, cultivate
 - Keep [“shamar”: Heb. שָׁמַר] = guard, keep, watch
 - Abad/Shamar appear together 3 other times in OT
 - Numbers 3:6-10; Numbers 8:24-26; Numbers 18:3-7
 - All describe the Levites’ duties at the tabernacle!
- Conclusion
 - Man’s first responsibility was to work the Garden
 - Working the Garden was an act of worship to God
 - Man’s first responsibility was to worship God (cf. Rom. 12:1-2)

The Relationship of Work and Worship

- *“I do not think we should ever work until we learn to worship. A worshiper can work with eternal quality in his work, but a worker who does not worship is only piling up wood, hay and stubble for the time when God sets the world on fire.*

God wants worshipers before He wants workers. He calls us back to that for which we were created – to worship the Lord God and to enjoy Him forever. And then out of our deep worship flows our work for Him. Our work is only acceptable to God if our worship is acceptable.”

– A.W. Tozer

Given the Origins and Purpose of Work...

- Everyone has a calling
 - Since God works, none of us are “above” working
 - Since we bear God’s image, each of us is capable of working
 - Since God is our Creator, He has a claim on us every moment of our life
 - Since God is relational, He calls us to Himself and to His purposes
- There is worth and dignity in any rightly-ordered work
 - Because it images God (cf. Ex. 31:1-6)
 - Because it provides an outlet for us to fulfill God’s commands
 - Creation mandate (Gen. 1:26-28)
 - Great Commandment (Mk. 12:30-31)
 - Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20)