

Work as Worship

Glorifying God in the Workplace

July 2020

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.” Colossians 3:23

When you start your workday, do you hang your faith in the closet as you change into your “work clothes?” Or do you put on your spiritual armor of prayer, scripture, and constant communication with God as you set out for your own mission field?

We are called to bear the image of God, to reflect his character wherever we are, including our workplace. For Christ-followers, this means there should be no division between the sacred and the secular. No separation between Sunday and Monday. No faith stored in the closet.

Our faith should be part of our work as we consider it a way to honor God and bring him pleasure. In fact, the word vocation means “calling,” a calling that goes beyond a title or set of responsibilities—or the “what”—but goes farther to the “why,” using the gifts he has given us at a much deeper level. When we are living according to God’s calling for our lives, there is a joy in knowing that we are pleasing him first, above all else.

How are we to view our work with a Kingdom perspective?

We work to glorify God.

Work is a part of God’s original plan, given to mankind as a gift, to manage, cultivate and enjoy his creation. In its original sense, work was a way to fellowship with the Creator, to glorify him in a place of peace, abundance, and love. It wasn’t until the first sin committed by Adam and Eve that work became “toil.” By focusing on its original intent, your work is a way to bring delight to God as he watches you use your gifts, talents, and passions for his purpose, helping the universe to flourish.

Have you ever thought of Jesus’ life as a workplace ministry? Of his 132 public appearances, 122 were in the marketplace. Of 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context. Of the 40 miracles in the book of Acts, 39 were in the marketplace. He didn’t stay in the temple to preach the gospel. He taught, fellowshiped, and prayed with people who were living their everyday, working lives, sharing kingdom principles to draw them to his Father. As Christ glorified God through his ministry, we, too, can glorify him as we follow our mandate to go make disciples of all nations. What better place to do that than the marketplace, just as Jesus, our ultimate role model, did?

We work to serve others.

Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.” Matt 28:18-20 MSG

You fulfill the Great Commission through your work, following the Golden Rule by treating your co-workers with respect and care just as you want to be treated. Displaying the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—even in challenging times, sets you apart and others will want to know what makes you different. Your response to stress, uncertainty or being passed over for a promotion speaks volumes about your faith. Doors will open to share what keeps you grounded when people see your Christlike attitude day in and day out.

Seeing your co-workers and customers as children of God is another act of worship. You were commanded to love your neighbor, demonstrating the deep love God has for you. As hard as it may be on some days, serving your boss, your team, or your employees with humility, as the hands and feet of Christ, elevates you to a place of joy instead of judgment, and peace instead of anger. As we are reminded by Paul, “Don’t act out of selfish ambition or be conceited. Instead, humbly think of others as being better than yourselves.” (Phil 2:3 GW) We have a myriad of opportunities to live this out every day as women in the workplace.

How might this fresh perspective impact your workday? Consider these steps for starters.

- Start your morning in thanksgiving to God for giving you a part to play in managing his creation. Ask for wisdom and guidance as you navigate the day to be a good steward of what he has entrusted you with.
- Throughout the day, remember your work as a gift from God, a way to worship him by doing your best with the gifts he has given you. Just being obedient to your calling brings him pleasure.
- Include God in every decision you make. Hit the pause button and pray before hitting the send button.
- Be present with the people you are with, living out the Golden Rule. Listen, care, ask how you can support them. Then serve them as the hands and feet of Christ, whether they are grateful or not.
- Focus first on what has eternal value, not profits and titles that can be taken away in a heartbeat.

Worship through work is your gift back to God for the role He has given you as part of his divine plan. Enjoy it, knowing that he takes great pleasure in your obedience to his calling for your life.

Discussion Questions

1. How does your faith influence the way you approach work? How do you view it in light of co-creating with God?
2. Do you leave your faith in the closet every day? What makes it difficult to be bold about your faith in the workplace?
3. How do you model your faith as you deal with customers, employees, or your team? What do you do in serving them that sets you apart from others?
4. How do you deal with difficult people? Do you treat them with the Golden Rule, displaying the fruit of the spirit?
5. Share about someone you know who lives out their faith at work well. How do they do it, and what eternal impact are they making?

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16, The Message

Growth Opportunity

What can you do to worship God through your work in the coming month? What changes do you need to make in your daily routine to become more visible as a Christ-follower? Set a goal to be more intentional in displaying the fruit of the spirit as you serve others as the hands and feet of Christ. See how your attitude about work changes and report back to your group next month.

"I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast! And when I run I feel his pleasure." Eric Liddell, Christian Missionary and Olympic Runner, profiled in "Chariots of Fire"