

▶▶▶ Group Study Guide

YOUR WORK, YOUR PURPOSE, AND GOD'S GLORY:

A Bible Study on Work Based on the Book of Genesis

By Mark D. Roberts ◀◀◀



LIFE FOR LEADERS

INTRODUCTION TO LIFE FOR LEADERS GUIDE SERIES

The *Life for Leaders* Guide Series helps you discover the difference that God makes in your life and leadership. Whether you lead in business, education, arts, government, media, volunteer work, church, or family, *Life for Leaders* will guide you into deeper biblical understanding and more faithful living. It will help you integrate your faith with all you do. It will encourage you to communicate with God, both as a listener and as a prayer, so that you might engage with God in every part of life.

The Guide Series is based on the *Life for Leaders* daily devotions (lifeforleaders.depree.org/devotionals/) produced by the Max De Pree Center for Leadership (depree.org) at Fuller Seminary. Devotions that address a particular theme have been collected, edited, and reformatted for in-depth biblical reflection and prayer related to that theme. If you're looking for study guides, check out the *Life for Leaders* Guide Series at store.depree.org/.

The *Life for Leaders* Personal Devotional Series and the Group Study Guide Series can be valuable resources for churches that are seeking to encourage and equip their members for living their faith in the marketplace.

Life for Leaders, in all of its forms, assumes that God speaks to us authoritatively through Scripture. It also assumes that God's Word speaks to the real, pressing issues of our lives, including our work as leaders. The team that has written and produced this devotional guide and the rest of the *Life for Leaders* materials hopes we can help you grow in your relationship with God, so that you might know God more deeply and live out your faith in him more significantly.

May God bless you in your faith, work, leadership, and growth in Christ.

Mark D. Roberts

Principal Writer and Executive Editor of Life for Leaders



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide has been written for use in a small group, perhaps at church or during lunch with some colleagues at work. If you're using this guide for personal study or for a larger class setting, you can adapt it as you see fit.

The study has ten sessions, each one meant to take a little less than an hour to complete. Of course, conversation about the theme of a session could take longer if you have the time.

I should mention that many of the sessions focus on passages of Scripture that you will have already studied in this guide. I am not trying to cover a broad expanse of Scripture in this guide, but rather to help you go deeper in your understanding and experience of God in relationship to your work.

If you are using this study guide in a group, I'd recommend that you develop the practice of reading the assigned Scripture passage out loud in the group, even if you have read and studied it in advance. When

we hear the Bible read aloud, we discover things we would otherwise have missed.

The guide does not build in time for personal sharing and prayer during each session. These could surely be added to the end of the session. But, I would strongly encourage you to spend some time in prayer responding specifically to the biblical text and theme for the session. Model prayers at the end of each session will help you do this.

The agenda and questions for each session are suggestions, not requirements. If a group session goes in other fruitful directions, I'd encourage you to move with the wind of the Spirit



INTRODUCTION TO YOUR WORK, YOUR PURPOSE, AND GOD'S GLORY

Does my work really matter? Does it matter to me?
Does it matter to the world? Does my work matter to
God?

For many years of my life, I have been involved in what has been called the “faith at work” movement (now, more often, “faith and work”). Mostly, the faith and work movement thrived on the periphery of Christian life. Churches offered little to support members in relationship to their daily work. Most pastors never preached on work, except perhaps to warn listeners about the dangers of materialism or other temptations of the workplace.

But, in the last decade or so, interest in the relationship of faith and work has skyrocketed among Christians. Faith and work organizations have flourished. Dozens of books have been published on the subject. A [recent survey](#) found that a substantial majority of Protestant pastors preached at least one sermon on work within the last year.

But, I wonder, is this recent interest in faith and work just the latest fad? Will its popularity be eclipsed when then next trend comes down the pike? Or is the centrality of work to life and faith really an essential truth, one that we should emphasize year in and year out, no matter how popular or unpopular it may be?

At the center of the faith and work movement is the conviction that work is essential to our lives, our calling, and our purpose for being. “Work matters to God” is a mantra among my colleagues in so-called marketplace ministries. It’s not just work in general that matters to God, but specific work done by specific people. *Your work matters to God*, according to those who are deeply invested in faith and work integration.

Does our work really matter to God, such that this message deserves to be preached, taught, discussed, digested, and embodied in Christian lives and communities throughout the world? Does our work *really* matter to God? Is this true even if your work is



“secular,” not obviously related to the church or mission causes?

If God really cares about work, including your daily work, then you’ll want to discover what difference this makes and how your faith can transform your work. I am convinced, as you might guess, that God does indeed care deeply about work, including your work. My conviction of this truth has grown as I have studied and meditated upon Genesis 1-2. I believe that the opening chapters of Genesis make the centrality of work abundantly clear. They help us to see not only that our work matters to God, but also how we might work so as to honor God and find greater meaning in our daily work.



SESSION 1: GOD THE WORKER

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE

After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:1-2. If you have time, read all of Genesis 1.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- *Do you think of God as a worker? Why or why not?*
- *If God is a worker, what difference might this make to us?*

REFLECTIONS

Given the familiarity of the creation story in Genesis 1-2, we might find it hard to step back and see it with fresh eyes. But if we use our imaginations, we might gain some perspective. I can imagine, for example, how else God might have been introduced to us. We could glimpse a vision like that of Revelation, with God seated on the throne and myriads of heavenly beings worshipping before him. Or we could meet God as the Good Shepherd caring for his sheep. There are many other possibilities. (If you want a theologically wild ride, check out the [Enuma Elish](#), the ancient Babylonian creation account. You'll see just how different Genesis might have been.)

In the very first chapter of the Bible, God is revealed as a *worker*. Yes, in Genesis 1, God works. Now, to be sure, God's work has a unique character. God works by speaking all things into existence. This isn't quite the same as our work. Yet God's work is real work. This truth is clarified in the last part of the first creation



story where it says, “And on the seventh day God finished the *work* that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the *work* he had done” (Genesis 2:2, emphasis added). If the notion of God as a worker seems strange to you, remember what Jesus said in John 5:17: “My Father is still working, and I also am working.”

Do you ever think of God as a worker? If you do, what difference does this make? If this is a new idea for you, what difference might it make? Or course, God doesn’t get up in the morning and drive to the office or hike out into the fields or nurse a newborn child or strategize about his company’s future. But God is a worker, the first worker, the one who shows us the essential value of work.

If God is a worker—indeed, the Worker—then we have the opportunity to be like God as we work. What we do today may be less glorious than speaking creation into existence, but nevertheless, our work can be a conscious and worshipful imitation of God’s own work. Through our work, we can live into our identity and calling as God’s people, sharing with God in the good work of helping creation to be all that God intends it to be.



QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *What difference might it make in our lives and in our churches if we talked about God as a worker?*
- *In what ways is your work like God’s work?*
- *In what ways is your work different from God’s work?*
- *How might you consciously imitate and honor God through your work today?*

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TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will take away from today's study? It could be a new thought or a tangible action step.*
- *A possibility: Thank God in your prayers for being the first worker and ask him to help you work today for his glory.*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

As you conclude today's study, take a few moments to pray. I would encourage you to pray in two segments. First, pray specifically in response to your encounter with God's Word. Second, after you have done this, group members can share concerns and pray for each other.

Let the following prayer be a model for you:

Gracious God, today we remember that you are a worker. In fact, you first revealed yourself through the good work of creation. You want us to think of you as a worker. Help us to do so, to see you more truly and fully. As we do, may our lives and work be shaped by the fact that you are a worker. Even today, as we do the tasks before us, may we work at them in conscious imitation of you, offering all we do to you in service and love. Amen.





SOMETHING EXTRA

The meaning and purpose of work is something of concern to many in our world, not just to Christians in the faith and work movement. See, for example, the fascinating study of work by Barry Schwartz, [Why We Work](#) (Simon & Schuster/TED, 2015). Schwartz is a professor of psychology at Swarthmore College and a widely published author. Here are some fascinating excerpts from *Why We Work*:

Satisfied people do their work because they feel that they are in charge. Their workday offers them a measure of autonomy and discretion. And they use that autonomy and discretion to achieve a level of mastery or expertise. They learn new things, developing both as workers and as people.

These people do their work because it's an opportunity for social engagement. They do many of their tasks as part of teams, and even when they're working alone, there are plenty of opportunities for social interaction during work's quiet moments.

Finally, these people are satisfied with their work because they find what they do meaningful.

Potentially, their work makes a difference to the world. It makes other people's lives better. And it may even make other people's lives better in ways that are significant. (pp. 1-2)

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SESSION 2: WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE



After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:26-28. If you have time, read all of Genesis 1.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED



- *What stands out to you in these verses?*
- *What questions do you have about what you have just read?*

REFLECTIONS



What is our purpose as human beings? Why did God make us? Why are we here on earth? These defining questions provoke philosophers and theologians to probe the depths of human significance. But they also stir within each of us in a personal way. What is my purpose as a human being? Why did God make me? Why am I here on earth?

Scripture provides us with a variety of answers to these questions. Our purpose is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). We were made to love God and our neighbor (Mark 8:28-31). God has created us anew in Christ to do the good works he has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). We are to offer our bodies to God as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2). We are to make disciples from all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). You might add to this collection of verses from Scripture that guide your life in a special way.

Genesis 1:28 gives us the very first biblical answers



to our defining questions of life. We learn that human beings were created in God’s image to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion.” Theologians sometimes refer to this collection of imperatives as the “cultural mandate” (or the “creation mandate”). God created human beings so that we might make, shape, and steward culture.

This language can be a little confusing because we tend to use the word “culture” to refer to fine arts and literature, to classics and late night TV—everything from Bach to the Beatles. Yet, the phrase “cultural mandate” envisions culture in a broader sense. As Andy Crouch writes in his outstanding book *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, “[c]ulture is what we make of the world. Culture is, first of all, the name for our relentless, restless human effort to take the world as it’s given to us and make something else” (Kindle locations 191-192).

This effort is not something we human beings invented. It was built into our original DNA and affirmed by God’s first instruction to us. Why are we here on earth? What is our purpose? God answers this question in the beginning by giving us the earth and our bodies and telling us to make people and culture.

We are to take the world and make something more of it.

This cultural mandate in Genesis 1:28 reminds us that everything we do matters to God. In particular, our daily work matters because it is (or can be, at any rate) a way of obeying the first imperative of Scripture. When we take the world as it is given to us and help to make something more of it, and when this “more” is consistent with God’s purposes, then we are doing exactly what God intended for us from the beginning.



QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *Do you think of yourself as someone who makes or influences culture? Why or why not?*
- *In your life, how do you take the world as it is given to you and make more of it?*
- *How are you living out the cultural mandate in your daily work? What about in your volunteer work? In your family life? In your city?*





TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will take away from today's study, a new idea or a practical action?*
- *A possibility: Think about your work today as a response to the cultural mandate. Try to see how your work contributes to this world and its culture.*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Let the following prayer be a model for your prayer today. After praying in response to Scripture, take time to pray for each other.

Thank you, gracious God, for creating us with such potential. Thank you for making us in your image. Thank you for giving us the “cultural mandate.” Thank you for entrusting your world to us.

Help us, Lord, to live out the cultural mandate faithfully in every part of our lives. May we see our work as a way of honoring you and contributing to your work in the world. Be glorified today in all we do. Amen.





SOMETHING EXTRA

If you have not read Andy Crouch's influential book [*Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*](#) (IVP, 2013), I would encourage you to do so. Andy is a delightful and insightful writer, whose writing on culture has made a difference in the lives of thousands upon thousands of people. Here's a brief excerpt:

I hope that most people who read this book will read it together with someone else. One of the most mysterious and beautiful things about culture is that it has to be shared. I can walk out alone into the wilderness, and from time to time I should. But I am never alone in culture. I am always accompanied by those who created it before me and share it with me; I can never really escape my responsibility to those who come after me, whose horizons of possibility I will move in some way, for better or worse. (Kindle Locations 103-106)



SESSION 3: THE SURPRISING TRUTH OF GOD'S INCOMPLETE CREATION

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE

After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:26-28. If you have time, read all of Genesis 1.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- *You are reading Genesis 1:26-28 for the second time, since these verses were the focus of the last session. As you read them again, do you see anything new?*
- *What questions does this passage raise for you?*

REFLECTIONS

“God’s incomplete creation.” That phrase sounds like heresy, doesn’t it? It sounds like I’m saying that God

messed up or that God’s creation wasn’t exactly right. Actually, I’m not suggesting either thing. Genesis reveals that God’s creation was good and even very good. What God made was perfect, without any flaw or blemish. God finished the job he intended to do, without question.

But God did not intend to create a finished product when he made the earth, according to Genesis 1. He did not fill it up with living creatures, including human beings. Surely God could have created billions of animals and people. But he chose otherwise. In the case of humanity, the narrative of Genesis shows that God created only two people at first. It would be their job, and that of their heirs, to fill the world and govern it. Human beings would be God’s co-workers, even God’s co-creators in a sense. We are charged with finishing the job that God began.

This is an extraordinary responsibility and opportunity, to say the least. It’s an honor and privilege to be given such authority over something so precious to God.



I'm reminded of an experience I had early in my tenure in church ministry. I was working as the college director for Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, the senior pastor of Hollywood Presbyterian Church. In addition to his leadership of the church, Lloyd had teamed up with a publisher to create what was then called The Communicator's Commentary, a multi-volume series on the whole Bible. He had carefully overseen the editing of the New Testament volumes. But, with so many responsibilities on his shoulders, Lloyd did not believe he had the time to edit the Old Testament volumes in a way that met his high standards. So he asked me take on this project. He offered to hire me as a private contractor, since the work was not part of my job description at church. Of course I was pleased at the prospect of making a little extra money. But more than anything, I was astounded that someone for whom I had so much respect would entrust to me something he cared so much about. I was deeply honored by Lloyd's invitation and took on the project with delight and zeal. (The series is still in print, by the way, now as The Preacher's Commentary, published by Thomas Nelson.)

Here's some life-changing good news: *You have been asked by the Creator of the universe to help finish the work he began.* God has the capacity, of course,

to complete the job without you. But in his grace and providence, God has chosen to delegate to you a significant aspect of his creative and sustaining work. Your work, therefore, is essential in God's plan for the world.

Let me urge you to think about this as you go about your day today. In all you do, may you see your labor as helping to complete what God began in Genesis, and may you be honored by the privilege of sharing in this grand work.



QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *Have you ever thought about the fact that God created the world perfect but unfinished? How does this truth strike you?*
- *How might the truth of "God's incomplete creation" change the way you think and act each day?*
- *In what ways are you contributing to the completeness of creation?*





TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing—either thought or deed—that you will take away from today’s study?*
- *A possibility: As you work this week, think about what you do as completing God’s creation. Ask the Lord for a fresh perspective on your work.*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Use this prayer as a model for your prayerful response to Scripture:

Gracious God, what an amazing choice you made when you created the earth. You could have made it both perfect and complete. You could have bypassed the risk of entrusting the world to human beings. But in your providence and grace, you made human beings as your partners. You gave us the opportunity to share in your work, to finish what

you began. Thank you for this amazing honor and responsibility.

Of course we didn’t do so well with this task, Lord. But, today, we want to focus on the wonder of being invited to share in your work. When we think of the fact that you want our participation, we are floored. We are amazed. We are humbled. We find that we want to steward well what you have entrusted to us, to do all that we do with excellence for you. May it be so, by your grace and power. Amen



SOMETHING EXTRA


Please pardon a bit of gratuitous self-promotion. Because of my work with Lloyd Ogilvie on the Communicator’s Commentary, I was able to write one of the volumes: *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. It is still available in [paperback or Kindle edition](#), in the Preacher’s Commentary series from Thomas Nelson. There is quite a bit in this commentary about leadership, given the examples of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

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SESSION 4: WORK AS SERVING, LABORING, AND WORSHIPPING

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE




After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:28 and 2:15. If you have time, read also 2:4-15.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

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- *What stands out to you in these verses?*
 - *What questions do you have about what you have just read?*
 - *In what ways are human beings related to the world through work?*

REFLECTIONS



The first chapters of Genesis envision our work in relationship to the earth. In Genesis 1, we are to “fill the earth” and exercise dominion over it (1:28). In Genesis 2, we are to “serve” the earth (2:15, translating the Hebrew verb *‘avad* more literally than the NRSV’s “till” or the NIV’s “take care of”). Literally, this verse reads, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to serve [*‘avad*] and to keep it.”

There are fascinating implications of the use of *‘avad* here. I don’t mean to suggest that the original writer consciously anticipated all of these. But as we reflect upon the nuances of *‘avad*, we discover truths about our work that are quite striking.

Genesis 2:15 says that the first man and, by implication, all human beings, are to “serve” the garden in which God placed us. Though humans have authority over the earth, we are not to exercise this authority in a tyrannical way. Rather, there is a sense



in which our work in the world is service to this world. (Perhaps it's not accidental that literal gardening requires so much literal kneeling! I kneel more when I'm working in my yard than at any other time.)

The verb *'avad* in Hebrew is related to the noun *'eved*, which is the basic word for “slave” or “servant.” This word group suggests not only humble service to a master but also hard work. This is not the hard work that comes after sin, with thorns and thistles; rather, it is the hard work intended by God when he created the world. It is labor that uses well our capabilities and leaves us feeling valuable and fulfilled. God made us for this purpose. Work, even demanding labor, is not a result of sin and the Fall. Rather, it is at the center of God's intentions for us.

The verb *'avad* has another sense in the Hebrew Bible. It is often used in reference to service to God, that which we call worship. Take Psalm 100:2, for example. The NRSV reads, “[w]orship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.” The Hebrew verb translated here as “worship” is *'avad*. The use of this verb in Genesis 2:15 does not imply that we are to worship the earth, of course. But it does enable us to catch a glimpse of something we find in many

passages of Scripture, namely, that our daily work can be a primary expression of worship to God.

Thus, Genesis 2:15 suggests that there are elements in our work of servanthood, laboring, and worship. Work is so much more than simply “bringing home a paycheck” or “getting the job done.” It's a way to find personal fulfillment, to make a difference in the world, and to honor the God who created us to work.

Though you might not be working the soil today, may you do your work in light of God's intentions for you. May your work be service, labor, and worship.



QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION



- *How do you relate to the various nuances of the verb ‘avad?’*
- *In what ways is your work a kind of service?*
- *In what ways does your work demand real effort?*
- *In what ways might your work be an act of worship to God?*

TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO



- *What is one thing you will take away from today’s study? It could be a new thought or an action step.*
- *A possibility: Set a timer that goes off each hour you’re at work. When it goes off, stop your work for a moment. Consciously think of your*

work as worship. Offer a brief prayer to God, dedicating your work to him.



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Here’s a model prayer in response to this session’s Scripture reading:

Gracious God, thank you for the privilege and calling to work in your world. Thank you for times when we work hard, using well the capabilities and opportunities you have given us. Thank you for the joy of seeing the fruits of our labors.

Thank you also that our work can be a way of worshipping you. May we offer you our work today, every bit of it. No matter what we do, may we seek to honor you in it. May our work contribute to your greater work in this world. Amen.



SESSION 5: WHY WORK?

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE



After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:28 and 2:15. If you have time, read also 2:4-15.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED



- *Why do we work?*
- *Why should we work? Is this answer different than why we do work? Is there any tension or discrepancy for you here?*
- *What helps you to do your work with excellence and energy?*

REFLECTIONS



Why work? Most of us ask this question at points. Some of us might ask this every day, especially if our labors are burdensome or unfulfilling. We wonder: Why should I work? What's the point? If we're Christians, we might ask how our work has anything to do with our relationship with God. How might God respond to the question, why work?

Genesis 2:15 helps to answer this question by showing us God's intentions in creating humankind and placing us on earth: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." To put it bluntly, we were made for work. That's why God created us, according to this verse. Genesis 2:15 reiterates from a different perspective the insight of Genesis 1:27-28, where human beings are created in God's image and told to "[b]e fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Why work? In part, we work in obedience to God's command. But, more profoundly, we work because we were made for

SESSION 5



this purpose. Through work, we fulfill God’s creative intentions for us.

The “why work?” question was once answered in a striking manner by Dorothy Sayers, the influential twentieth-century English writer. In 1942, she gave a lecture that was later published with the simple title, “Why Work?” Sayers’s answer to this question was a reaction, in part, to those in the church who devalued work, seeing it as second-class service to God, or seeing its value only in how it helps the community. Sayers contended that the work itself matters, that it can be a means for people to honor God.

To make this point, Sayers talks in terms of “serving the work.” “The worker’s first duty,” she writes, “is to serve the work.” This is an odd expression. We usually talk about serving people through our work or serving God by our work. But Sayers insists that we should also serve the work itself in the sense of doing it with excellence, effort, and intentionality. The first duty of the Christian carpenter, for example, is to “make good tables.”

As I reflected on Genesis 2:15, I was reminded of Sayers’s article “Why Work?” because Genesis uses a phrase that is rather like “serve the work.” The NRSV

translation says we are to “till” the garden. But, more literally, the text says we are to “serve” the garden. Yes, in doing our work we will be serving God and others. But there is a sense in which our work is also about serving the work itself, as Sayers would say.

The closing sentence of “Why Work?” puts the matter squarely before those of us who belong to Jesus Christ: “If work is to find its right place in the world, it is the duty of the Church to see to it that the work serves God, and that the worker serves the work.”



QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *In light of Genesis 1-2, how would you answer the question, “Why work?”*
- *Does the notion of “serving the work” or “serving the garden” make sense to you?*
- *How could you serve your work today?*





TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will think or do in response to today’s study?*
- *A possibility: Be more intentional today about doing your work with excellence, thus “serving the work.”*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Let the following prayer be a model for prayer in response to Scripture:

Gracious God, thank you for creating us for work. Thank you for entrusting your creation to us. Thank you for giving us capabilities and strengths. Thank you for our brains, muscles, bones, and all that enables us to work in this world.



SOMETHING EXTRA

You can find Dorothy Sayers’s influential essay, “Why Work?” along with many other fine resources at the [website of the Center for Faith & Work of LeTourneau University](#).

LeTourneau University, in Longview, Texas, is a school deeply devoted to the integration of faith and work. The founder of the university, R.G. LeTourneau, was a Christian businessman who expressed his faith through his daily work. He was also an extraordinary inventor whose creativity had significant impact on World War II. You can learn more about this fascinating man here. And if that inspires you, you can buy his biography, [Mover of Men and Mountains](#).

Help us, Lord, to understand why we work. By your Spirit, teach us to do our work with excellence, to “serve the work.” May we do this so that we might fulfill our created purpose and so that you might be glorified in all we do. Amen.

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SESSION 6: SEEING YOUR WORK IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE



After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:28 and 2:15. If you have time, read also 2:4-15.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED



- *How does Genesis 1-2 help you to see your work differently? Does it challenge any assumptions you have?*
- *Has this study in Genesis made any difference so far in your daily work? If so, how?*

REFLECTIONS



Many of us work without thinking much about it. We were raised to be workers. We were schooled to be workers. We know that work is necessary to pay for food and shelter. Many people in our lives count on us to work. So we work. We work without taking much time to reflect on the nature of our work or how our work relates to God and his intentions for us.

But, increasingly, this unexamined life of work fails to satisfy. Many in my generation (Baby Boomers) are looking for greater significance in life and are wondering how work may or may not be a part of this picture. Some even think that significance comes only when leaving ordinary work behind, moving from “success to significance.” Folk from generations younger than mine often assume that their work should have value beyond professional success and financial gain. They want work to be personally meaningful and socially beneficial. Thus, people from various generations are thinking about work, what it is, why it is, and how we should do it.

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Genesis 2:15 helps us see our work in a whole new light. This verse says that God put the man in the garden of Eden “to till it and keep it.” As we have seen, the Hebrew verb translated as “till” literally means “serve.” It suggests hard work, the kind of work done by a servant. Also, it is used elsewhere in Scripture for serving God. The verb translated as “keep” could also be rendered “guard, protect, preserve, or care for.” So, we might say that, in Genesis 2:15, work is a matter of productivity (tilling) and responsibility (keeping). By tilling, we help the garden to produce fruit. By keeping, we make sure the garden is not hurt but is preserved so it can be sustainably fruitful.

Our work can also be seen in terms of tilling and keeping. There is a *tilling* feature of our work, whereby we labor so that good things will be produced (valuable products, social benefits, educated students, livelihood for employees, etc.). We work in order to be productive. There is also a *keeping* aspect to our work, in that we are responsible in varying degrees for the organizations, systems, locations, tools, and communities in which we work. I am not suggesting that tilling and keeping cover all aspects of our work. But these two verbs, considered metaphorically, may help us think about our work in new ways. They may

show us things we have not seen about our work, both encouraging and challenging us to work in new ways or with new intentions.

As I ponder my own work, I am struck by the fact that God has made me a tiller and a keeper. God has called me to be both productive and responsible. The Max De Pree Center for Leadership, of which I am the executive director, needs to produce valuable resources and events so as to serve leaders in diverse realms. My job, in part, is to see that this happens. This is my tilling function. Yet, I am also charged with caring for the organization, including its people and core values. I am primarily responsible for the financial health of the center, for its long-term sustainability. Plus, I am also in charge of preserving the legacy of Max De Pree, so that his wisdom may be passed on to others for generations to come. These are keeping aspects of my leadership.

If you think about your work, whatever it may be, from the perspectives of tilling and keeping, I expect you may discover something you haven’t seen before. May God empower you today to be a tiller and a keeper in your work, for his purposes and glory.

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QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *Does the tiller-keeper perspective on work make sense for what you do? How?*
- *What does this perspective highlight about your work that you might otherwise have missed?*
- *Is your work, in general, more about tilling or keeping? Why?*
- *How might you be a tiller and keeper today?*



TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will take away from today's study?*
- *A possibility: Being very intentional about what you do and why, do something at work that is tilling (productive) and something that is keeping (preserving).*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

May the following prayer be a model for you:

Gracious God, thank you for placing us on earth and giving us such a key role in your plans. Thank you for making us tillers and keepers. Help us to work hard and faithfully, so that we might be productive in our labors. Help us also to be responsible for what has been entrusted to us, guarding it as needed and caring for it in a faithful way.

May we honor you in our work today, in all that we do as tillers and keepers. Amen.

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SOMETHING EXTRA

When it comes to business success and business as a context for tilling and keeping, I think of Don Flow. Flow Automotive, based in North Carolina, currently has 37 franchises. The company employs over 1,200 people. Flow Automotive is defined by three basic principles:

1. A covenant with their customers to be a place that keeps its promises and is worthy of their trust.
2. A community of people who work together towards a common vision.
3. A commitment to work towards the common good of every city where they do business.

You can learn more about Don Flow and his leadership, ethics, and theology at the [Faith and Leadership](#) and [Ethix websites](#).



SESSION 7: DOES WORK REALLY MATTER TO GOD?

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE



After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:28, 2:15; and Exodus 20:8-11.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED



- *As you read the verses from Genesis, do you see anything new?*
- *What strikes you in the passage from Exodus?*

REFLECTIONS



In the introduction to this study guide, I asked the question, “Does work really matter to God? Or is recent Christian interest in faith and work just a fad?” One way to answer this question is to see if work is truly central to biblical revelation. Does work figure prominently in Scripture, in God’s story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration? Or is it just a minor theme, something relatively inessential?

As we have seen, Genesis 1-2 puts work in the center of creation as well as God’s intentions for human life. First of all, God is revealed to be a worker. God does not just sit back while his heavenly servants form the universe. Rather, God makes all things in a systematic, intentional way. God has a plan and works his plan. Of course, God works by speaking all things into existence. But this is truly work. Genesis 2:2 makes this clear: “And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.” Though the focus

SESSION 7: DOES WORK REALLY MATTER TO GOD?



of this verse is on God’s seventh-day rest, it refers to his creative efforts of the first six days as “all the work that he had done.” If the Bible’s opening act reveals God to be a worker, surely this suggests that work matters greatly to God.

This suggestion is strongly and plainly affirmed in what is said about the creation of human beings. In Genesis 1, God creates humankind as male and female, in God’s own image (1:27). Immediately thereafter, God tells the first humans to “[b]e fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion” (1:28). God creates human beings in his image so that they might work, even as God works. Genesis 2 adds to our understanding of human work. In v. 15, God “took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it,” or, more literally, “to serve it and take care of it.” Then God created woman as a partner for the man in this work. Summing up what we find in Genesis 1-2, God creates human beings in God’s own image so that they might work. Their work includes being fruitful, multiplying, filling the earth and subduing it, having dominion over the earth and its creatures, serving the earth, and caring for it.

As the biblical story unfolds throughout the pages of Scripture, God has many more things for human

beings to do. Our daily work isn’t everything. In fact, God sets apart one full day of the week in which we are *not* to work. But, as you may recall, even in the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath imperative is set up to say, “[s]ix days you shall labor and do all your work” (Exodus 20:9; “labor” translates *‘avad*, the same verb found in Genesis 2:15 as “till” or “serve”). Exodus 20:9, though focusing on rest, makes it clear that work does indeed matter to God. Why else would God tell us to spend 85% of our days working?

Given how central work is to God’s intentions for humanity as revealed in Genesis 1-2, it is stunning to me (and distressing) that many Christians have for so long devalued “ordinary” work, stressing instead the things we count as “spiritual,” such as preaching sermons, leading Bible studies, having daily devotions, sharing our faith with others, and so on. I’m not saying that these actions have no value. Indeed, they are essential to our lives as Christians. They surely count as good work. But their importance does not erase God’s first plan for humanity, and that plan placed “ordinary work” in the very center of our divinely sanctioned activity. From Genesis 1-2 there can be no question that God made us to work. Therefore, work does indeed matter to God.





QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *Do you think my interpretation of Genesis 1-2 is correct? Is work really as central to human existence as I am claiming? (Be sure to read “Something Extra” below.)*
- *Considering the whole biblical story, what else in addition to Genesis is relevant to work?*
- *How might underscoring the importance of work be a good thing in our lives, and how might it be not so good?*



TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will take away from today’s study?*
- *A possibility: Take Exodus 20:8-11 seriously, by working for six days and resting from work on one day a week. If you’re not used to setting aside a day for Sabbath, you will probably find this takeaway to be quite challenging.*





WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Let the following prayer be a model for the first segment of prayer:

Gracious God, thank you for making yourself and your ways known to us in the biblical story. Thank you, once again, for Genesis 1-2. Thank you for revealing yourself as a worker. Thank you for creating us in your image, so that we might work even as you work. Thank you for the work you have assigned to us. Thank you for giving us such opportunity, authority, and responsibility in this world. Thank you that our work does indeed matter to you.

Help us, Lord, to think rightly about work. Help us to work in a way that honors you and is faithful to your intentions for us. Keep us, Lord, from devaluing our work. Keep us from making our work an idol. Help us to work well and hard, but also to rest as you have taught us. May our work be a way for us to glorify you in all we do. Amen.



SOMETHING EXTRA

In the first Question for Conversation above, I referred to “my interpretation of Genesis 1-2.” I want to be clear that this interpretation is not mine alone. In fact, I have learned from many others to see the centrality of work in Scripture. Most of all, I learned this from Howard E. Butt, Jr., with and for whom I worked at Laity Lodge and the H.E. Butt Family Foundation. Howard was a persuasive proponent of “the high calling of our daily work.” If you’d like to learn more about Howard, [check out this video](#) of a short tribute to him I did at the Faith@Work Summit in 2014.

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SESSION 8: YOUR WORK AND GOD'S GLORY

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE



After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:28, 2:15; and Ephesians 1:11-14.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED



- *When you think of God's glory, what comes to mind?*
- *How might your work be relevant to God's glory, and vice versa?*

REFLECTIONS



As we saw in the last session of this devotional guide, Genesis 1-2 reveals God's intentions for human life. God created us to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, to have dominion, to till/serve and to keep/care for the garden. In a nutshell, we were made to work. Genesis 2:1-3 implies but does not state that we are also to rest one day a week. That leaves six other days for work.

If Genesis 1-2 were all the Scripture we had, we would rightly conclude that work is our chief purpose in life (if you include raising children as part of work, by the way). The other 1,187 chapters of the Bible give us a wider perspective on what we're to do as human beings. But these chapters also underscore the value of work. It is not only an essential and central element of human existence, but also God's design.

Yet, what about the classic Christian claim that our main purpose in life is to glorify God? The seventeenth-



century Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it this way: “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” This doesn’t say anything about work. Am I suggesting that Genesis 1-2 invalidates this classic formulation of our purpose as human beings? Are we not to glorify God and enjoy him forever?

Many passages of Scripture show us that glorifying God is our central calling. According to Ephesians 1:11-14, we are to live “for the praise of God’s glory.” The original Greek actually says we “exist” for “the praise of God’s glory” (using the verb “to be”). So, there is no question that glorifying God is essential.

But what does this mean? How do we glorify God? I used to believe that this meant doing only the sorts of things we Christians do in a worship service. We glorify God through singing, praying, listening to sermons, and the like. In this setting, we are also able to enjoy God’s presence as we worship. So, to put matters simply, I understood that the “chief end of man” was doing what we do in church, only with deeper meaning and more expansive joy. This was how we glorify and enjoy God.

I still believe that we can glorify and enjoy God in what we call worship services. Absolutely. But I now believe, partly on the basis of Genesis 1-2, that my former perspective on glory and joy was far too limited. If God created us for work, if work is truly central to our divine purpose, then one of the main ways (if not the main way) we glorify God is by doing what he made us to do. Dorothy Sayers writes in “Why Work?” that work is “not a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but . . . a way of life in which the nature of man should find its proper exercise and delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God.” [John Piper, in an article on his Desiring God website, agrees:](#) “Work is a glorious thing. . . . God made us to work. He formed our minds to think and our hands to make. . . . Become what you were made to be. Work.”

In Session 9, I’d like to us think a little deeper about the connection between work and glorifying God. For now, though, let’s consider the following questions.





QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *How do you understand your chief end or purpose in life?*
- *In what ways does your life glorify God?*
- *In what ways do you enjoy God?*
- *How might your work become even more a context for you to glorify and enjoy God?*



TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one new idea or action step you will take away from today's study?*
- *A possibility: When you work today, no matter what you're doing, see if you can be intentional about doing it for God's glory.*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Here is a start for your prayers, as you allow this session's passage to guide you:

Gracious God, what a great gift it is to be able to glorify you and enjoy you. Thank you for allowing us to participate in such marvelous activities.

Thank you also, Lord, for making us to work. Teach us, we pray, how we can glorify and enjoy you in our work. Open our eyes to new understanding. Form our hearts and transform our lives, so that we might glorify and enjoy you in all we do, including our work.

To you be all the glory, indeed! Amen.





SOMETHING EXTRA

If you are interested in making connections between your faith and your work, I highly recommend one of the finest organizations I know: The Theology of Work Project. Here's how TOW [describes itself on its website](#): “The Theology of Work Project answers the question ‘What does the Bible say about work?’ by producing Bible commentary, topical articles, and audio/video resources that examine faith and work from a Christian perspective. The Bible and work are meticulously analyzed in our commentary, and lessons are driven home through case studies and videos.”

The resources on the [Theology of Work Project website](#) are vast. I encourage you to devote at least a half hour to perusing the site. One of the things you might find is an article called “[Can You Do This Job to the Glory of God?](#)” Author Ann Kroeker considers whether or not there are some jobs that should be off limits for faithful Christians.

As I'm boosting the Theology of Work Project, I should mention that I am a member of the organizational steering committee. This committee comprises

business leaders, pastors, professors, and other faith/work experts who seek to faithfully discover and pass along biblical teaching on work.



SESSION 9: GLORIFYING GOD THROUGH DOING GOOD WORK

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE

After opening with prayer read Genesis 1:26-28. If you have time, read all of Genesis 1.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- *Now that you've been considering Genesis 1 and 2 for several sessions, what stands out to you in this chapter?*
- *How might this chapter be relevant to the issue of work and God's glory?*

REFLECTIONS

In the previous session in this study guide, I considered how the centrality of work in Genesis 1-2 is consistent with the traditional affirmation that the “chief end of man” is “to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” Work is one way, perhaps even the main way, we can glorify God in this life.

This may sound confusing if you tend to think of glorifying God as what we do in church when we sing praises to God. No question, that counts as glorifying God. But there is so much more to glorifying God than singing hymns or songs, no matter how essential and wonderful it might be.

Let me use a personal illustration to explain this point. I love it when my adult children want to spend time with me. (This very moment, in fact, I'm sitting next to my twenty-three-year-old son, Nathan. We're in the library, as both of us are working away on our computers.) I am doubly happy when my children tell

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me how much they love me. These are, indeed, some of the sweetest moments of my life. But I wouldn't want Nathan and Kara to spend their whole lives being with me and telling me that they love me. My wife and I have raised them not just to be with us and to express their love to us, but also and mainly to be responsible citizens, influential leaders, and faithful disciples of Jesus. My children honor me when they work hard in school, when they mentor high school kids, produce plays (as my daughter is doing these days), contribute to academic conversations, or write pieces that inform and inspire others. To use language I would not ordinarily use, I am glorified when Nathan and Kara work, when they work hard, when they use their gifts faithfully, when they excel at the tasks for which they are well suited.

So it is, I believe, with God, when it comes to the question of how we might glorify him. Genesis 1-2 reveals that God made us for work. Thus, we can glorify God when we do that for which we were made, as long as our work isn't contradictory to God's will. Moreover, when we work for God's glory, when we steward well all that God has given us for his purposes, we can enjoy God, sensing the joy he feels in us as we work.

To be sure, there are times when we ought not to work. God is clear about his desire for us to rest one day out of the week. Furthermore, there will certainly be times when we glorify God through the praise of our lips and the love of our hearts. Gathering with the people of God for weekly worship is essential. But, God has created work as a chief means for us to glorify and enjoy him. This truth can change our lives, our workplaces, our churches, and even our cultures.



QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *Do you think God is glorified in your work? Why or why not?*
- *What about your work glorifies God?*
- *Can you think of ways your work might become more glorifying to God?*
- *Have you ever enjoyed God in the midst of working?*

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TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will take away from today's study?*
- *A possibility: At some point during your next day or work, stop in the middle of some project and say to the Lord (either out loud or silently), "God, this is for you. I'm doing this for your glory." Then get back to work.*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Let the following prayer be a model for the first segment of prayer:

Gracious God, help us to discover how we can glorify you through our work. Teach us more about what this means. Transform our speaking and our acting, so that we might offer our work to you as a sweet, acceptable offering. As we honor you through our work, may we also enjoy your presence and pleasure. Amen.



SOMETHING EXTRA

I mentioned above feeling honored when my kids “write pieces that inform and inspire others.” I have recently experienced this very thing and I thought I might share it with you. I do run the risk of bragging here, but I expect you’ll understand.

My son, Nathan, published his first book this past summer (2016). It’s called [*Surface Tensions: Searching for Connection in a Media-saturated World*](#) (Hendrickson, 2016). This book is a memoir of growing up as a Christian (pastor’s) kid in an increasingly digital world. It includes quite a few philosophical and theological reflections, based on Nathan’s graduate study in film and visual studies as well as his years learning from Tim Keller’s preaching.

As you can imagine, I am proud of Nathan’s accomplishments as a writer. The fact that he uses his literary gifts well gives me joy as a parent. This joy has been augmented by the fact that he dedicated the book to my wife and me. So, beyond gratuitous bragging, what is the point? I believe this personal story illustrates how we can honor God, mainly by working well in this world, but also by giving God credit.



SESSION 10: YES, YOU CAN GLORIFY GOD THROUGH YOUR WORK

BEGIN WITH THE BIBLE



After opening with prayer dedicating the time to the Lord, read Genesis 1:26-28 and Mark 12:41-44.

QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED



- *Do you see any connections between the passages from Genesis and Mark?*
- *Do you want to glorify God through your work?*

REFLECTIONS



Today I'd like to wrap up my reflections on work and God's glory. In the last two sessions, I've been suggesting that one of the main ways we are able to glorify God is through our work. I didn't make this up out of whole cloth. I found it in Genesis 1-2, where God creates human beings so they might work in the world. If God made us for work, then we can honor and glorify God through working. (Also, as I have mentioned before, I learned to see the centrality of work in Scripture through many wise Christians who have taught me and modeled faith and work integration for me.)

I believe the connection between work and God's glory can transform our experience of work. For example, it can humble and redirect us if we tend to think that our work is mainly for our own glory. If you've been working primarily so that people will think highly of you, then your choosing to work so people will think highly of God is a major shift. It may very well change

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not just your motivation for work, but also your patterns and practices of work.

Perhaps, however, you are not tempted to work for anybody's glory because you believe your work is not especially glorious. Maybe your work is tedious or menial. Maybe you really don't like your work at all. Maybe it's not the sort of thing that would bring glory to you, even if you did a spectacular job. Perhaps you wonder how what you do could ever glorify God. But, if you see your work as a way of being faithful to God's intentions for your life, if you seek to "serve the work" by doing it with excellence, if you offer your labors to God as worship, then God will be glorified in your work even if it might not seem as impressive as other kinds of work.

We find an apt analogy in the Gospel story known as "The Widow's Mite." In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus observes people donating money to the temple treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. But then a poor widow comes along and puts in two small coins that are worth about a penny. Jesus observes, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her

poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on" (Mark 12:43-44). Analogously, there are some people whose work seems to be the sort of thing God would care about most of all. It would be easy to think that their work matters more than yours. Yet, they may be like the rich donors in Mark 12, who appear to give a lot, but do not give all they have to the Lord. In contrast, even if your work seems small in value, if you give all of yourself to the Lord as you work, if you seek his glory in everything you do, I believe that God will be glorified in your work, perhaps even more than by work that seems to be more obviously glorious but is done with mixed motives.

I freely admit that there are many times when I forget whose glory I am seeking in my work. I can fall into the trap of seeking my own glory (or at least trying to avoid looking foolish). Yet, when I remember why I am on this earth and why I work, when I commit myself once again to working for God's glory most of all, I find new freedom, motivation, and joy in my work. Perhaps you will too.

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QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- *As you do your work, do you think of it as being for God’s glory? If so, how does this affect you? If not, why not?*
- *If you were to begin to think of your work as for God and his glory, how might this make a difference in your attitude, energy, and behavior at work?*



TAKEAWAYS: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT, SOMETHING TO DO

- *What is one thing you will take away from today’s study?*
- *A possibility: Find someone in your workplace who is doing “widow’s mite” kind of work. Express your gratitude to this person and affirm the value of his or her work.*



WRAPPING UP WITH PRAYER

Let the following prayer be a model for the first segment of prayer:

Gracious God, I would love to live my whole life for the praise of your glory. I realize that I will never achieve this ideal in this life. But, still, I want to learn to live for your glory in all things, including my work. Help me, Lord, to discover anew the joy of working for you and your glory. No matter what I’m doing, may I offer it to you as worship. Be glorified in me, Lord, in everything. Amen.

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SOMETHING EXTRA

I put myself through college by cleaning dorm bathrooms. Not exactly glorious work! Yet, I did take pride in making sure my bathrooms were always very clean. I did not, however, make a connection between my work and my faith. I worked because I had to do so to put myself through college. Period.

Jump ahead thirty years. In 2008, I was the senior director of Laity Lodge in the Texas hill country. We put on retreats for hundreds of people each year. On my team retreats, I had several women who worked as housecleaners. As part of their regular labor, they cleaned bathrooms, dozens per week.

One of our best housekeepers was a woman named Michelle. She did an outstanding job with all the rooms, including the bathrooms. I once asked Michelle what kept her going in such humble work. She answered quickly, “That’s easy. I want to serve the guests well. But mostly I think, I’m cleaning this bathroom for God.”

What a great response! “I’m cleaning this bathroom for God.” She may well have said, “I’m cleaning this bathroom for God’s glory.” God was glorified in Michelle’s work, in her commitment to excellence, in

her desire to honor the Lord in all she did. God was also glorified as our guests felt welcomed and comfortable in their rooms.

I learn a lot from Scripture. I also learn a lot from people who work and who do so for God’s glory.

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Some Helpful Resources for Faith and Work Integration

If you are looking for additional resources to help you think wisely and act biblical when it comes to faith and work integration, I would suggest the following:

Theology of Work Project - theologyofwork.org

TOW describes itself this way: “The Theology of Work Project answers the question ‘What does the Bible say about work?’ by producing Bible commentary, topical articles, and audio/video resources that examine faith and work from a Christian perspective. The Bible and work are meticulously analyzed in our commentary, and lessons are driven home through case studies and videos.” The resources on the Theology of Work Project website are vast.

Made to Flourish – madetoflourish.org

A network of pastors who are leading their churches “to connect Sunday faith to Monday work.” Lots of resources on this site for pastors, churches, and marketplace leaders.

Oikonomia Network – oikonomianetwork.org

Though intended primarily for seminary professors, ON has resources of value for marketplace leaders as well. See, in particular, their Economic Wisdom Project (oikonomianetwork.org/resources/economic-wisdom-project/).

Denver Institute for Faith & Work – denverinstitute.org

Lots of great resources here, plus opportunities to participate in excellent events.

The Washington Institute – washingtoninst.org

The Washington Institute helps people with faith and work integration by seeing life in terms of vocation, the call of God to each of us. Thoughtful blog posts and dozens of resources.

Center for Faith and Work – faithandwork.com

Sponsored by Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York, the Center sponsors outstanding events and publishes valuable resources.





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