



# FAITH & WORK

7 Week Study on  
God's Plan For Work

Oak Ridge Community Church

# Faith & Work

## Study Booklet

### Introduction

Most of us will invest years of preparation, study and 40 years of our lives, day in day out, week after week, year after year...working

For most, our career path that may seem very distant and disconnected from a life of faith in Jesus Christ. It seems we walk from our “work” environment to our “church” or “faith” environment as independent, unrelated activities. Disconnected, and unrelated from each other. Most of us will not be paid missionaries, pastors or workers in the gospel, but still our “work” is important to our Lord.

- Where does my life of faith intersect with my work life ?
- What are the biblical principles I need to understand about my work?
- Does work always have to be so difficult and seemingly meaningless?
- How is my faith to be lived out within the workplace ?
- How does a faith in Christ give us a different world view?
- How does that world view empower me to perform my work for His glory?
- Does God “care” about my work ? the Bible tells us, “yes” He does....

**Colossians 3:23-24** sets a high standard

***“Do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;...It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”***

God has no distinction for secular or sacred work. It's all to be done for Him.

Our prayer as pastors and leaders is that this booklet would serve as a resource to engage your thinking and practice of your everyday work life, that your work would be fuller, more meaningful significant, and more fruitful in every way.

**In Christ's love,**

The Pastors & Teaching Team of Oak Ridge Community Church

- Week 1 -

# God's Plan for Work

*The story of our work, God's design for work,  
and how God uses our work for His glory and purposes.*

Notice that God Himself is a Worker, in Genesis 1:27, "He creates", in Genesis 2:2, "He rested from all His work"

In Genesis 2:15 He gives Adam the task to "cultivate" the garden, and "keep it". A dam is reflecting the nature of his Creator. Being made in the image of God means we are "workers".

## **Main Point: Work is God's Idea**

It gives us dignity and honor.

It proves our character, and often provides for our needs.

Work is part of God's design for our lives, building our connection with Him, proving and refining our character and providing for the needs of others. In the Lutheran traditions, people understood their work served as "the fingers of God", meaning that our work accomplishes the good, righteous and noble tasks which promote the health and vitality of a culture.

Let's say, I want to buy a bag of potato chips. Someone has to plant the seed, tend the fields, harvest a crop, drive it to the warehouse, package, distribute, and deliver to the store to be sold. Someone has to stock the shelves, stand at the cash register, keep the store clean, lock the door, and turn out the lights. That's a pretty complex bag of potato chips.

What is the point ? Well, wouldn't we all pray at lunch and "thank God" for this food ? Well, we understand that God sent the rain, and gave the soil the nutrients for the crop to grow. But , God uses people to accomplish His work of providing and caring for people.

Have you ever considered this in your work ?, that I am working “for” and “with” God ? That I am “His fingers” in my workplace ? Providing and caring for people?

Imagine for a moment if we all went “on vacation” at the same time for an extended time period. Grocery stores would sit with empty shelves. Schools would be empty, and law enforcement would be impossible. Gas stations would be closed, and trade in general would grind to a complete stop. Hospitals would close their doors, having no doctors, nurses, electricity or medicines. Chaos and anarchy would quickly appear with an utter disregard for human life, as we each seeked just to protect ourselves and our families. No order, or beauty, or joy or music. No joy or peace, but rather just “survival mode”. Our work preserves and serves a culture, (culture is defined as the product or growth resulting from cultivation). Notice the connection here back to God’s task to Adam in the garden to “cultivate and keep it”.

I am coming to the end of my career, a time in which many of my peers have already retired. Retirement sounds fine, but the trouble is that God created us for work, not for leisure. Without exercise, it seems our creativity dries up. Our mental sharpness fades, and our capacity for work seems to evaporate.

Read through Colossians 3:22-24 again.

If I worked “to serve The Lord” how would it change my work ?

- What biblical principles from the Genesis 2 thought of “cultivating and keeping” a garden can I apply to my workplace? Nurturing others, pulling out the weeds ?
- What are the challenges you face in your workplace ?
- How could a better understand of “Work & Faith” be an encouragement to you?

- Week 2 -

# God's Plan for Work

*Your Design and God's Glory*

The Design of Work

Working as Image-Bearers

Working as Cultivators

Working as Stewards

Designed by God for specific work

Designed by God for his glory

The root word for “Vocation” is the word “Voco” or “to call”. Have you ever considered that God may have a “call” on your life for the work you find yourself engaged in ?

Consider the model of Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 36:1-2 that they “had skill and understanding to know how to perform their work” and that their heart was “stirred”.

- What gifts and talents have you seen at your work as you “partner” with God to be “His Fingers” ?
- Does your work uniquely “stir” your heart ?

## **Points to consider;**

There is no division between the sacred and secular work. It's all sacred work. We are “His hands, feet and fingers”.

God's plan is for work to be integrated, woven together with our faith.

## **Importance of our world view and narrative:**

Everyone has a world view, everyone lives by a greater narrative from which to define their lives and find purpose and meaning

The Biblical world view and narrative touches everything in creation, including our work

If we have a right world view, if we buy in to the right story, it will change how we view work

## **The Story of Our Work**

### **Creation**

work was part of creation before the fall

### **Because of the Fall**

work is now hard and does not produce what we expect

### **Redemption**

Jesus' work gives us new heart and new eyes to see.

This changes how we approach work

### **Restoration**

In the new heaven and new earth, God will make all things new. Meaning there is hope for a perfect work because work was part of God's creation.

- Week 3 -

# The Problem with Work

*Work becomes Fruitless, Work becomes Pointless*

**Main Point:** Work in a fallen creation is cursed. It is harder than designed and produces less than designed. This is a result of our broken relationship with God, our broken relationship with man and a cursed creation. It is important to see work this way, so we can

1. Recognize and understand why work is frustrating,
2. Avoid making work an idol since it will never realize fulfill us completely,
3. Encourage us to pursue what is beyond the sun which can fulfill us

**Key Texts:** Genesis 3:17-19, Ecclesiastes 1,2,3 5:18-20

## **Work becomes fruitless**

“In all our work, we will be able to envision far more than we can accomplish, both because of a lack of ability and because of resistance in the environment around us.”

## **Work becomes pointless**

When work becomes our pursuit, it will inevitably disappoint us, leaving it feeling pointless

## **Ecclesiastes 2:24, 25**

“Who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?”

## **Ecclesiastes 3: 12–13**

“Sees good in all his labor-it is the gift of God”



Only something beyond “the sun” can bring  
meaning and a worthy pursuit

- In what ways is your work fruitless and pointless ?
- What resistance holds you back from being more fruitful?
- Does your work bring you a sense of fulfillment ?

## Notes

- Week 4 -

# The Problem with Work

*Work Reveals Our Idols*

**Idolatry:** “Imagining and trusting anything to deliver the control, security, significance, satisfaction and beauty that only the real God can give.

It means turning a good thing into an ultimate thing.”

We are prone to drift to idolatry because our hearts will worship something. Work is a “safe” idol because it is “good”.

Idol of Self, of replacing God with something we make with our own hands

Read Genesis 11:1-9 the Tower of Babel

Note their goal of “make for ourselves a name”,

Idol of “Bigger barns”, in Luke 12:13-21

A self reliance without Christ

## **Idol of Outcome/Control**

Advancements in our work will answer mankind’s greatest questions: Why are we here? How can we live longer and better?

- What idols are common in your field of work ?
- How can you purposefully guard your heart and mind in pursuing your vocation, in a way that honors Christ?

# Notes

- Week 5 -

# The Gospel and Work

*A New Identity, A New Motivation*

My life is “more” than the product of my work.

**Main Point:** Jesus came to redeem what was broken in the fall. Primarily our relationship with him. As a result of this personal redemption, we are able to see work through gospel lenses, seek the common good of others through our work, and find hope in our work.

- How do we find hope amidst the problems of our Work?
- How can we find meaning in our work?

## **Romans 12:1-3**

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” Salvation gives us eyes to see the mysteries of Christ, one of which is how he has designed work to be a means of his Grace.

- Do I understand how my identity in Christ can give be a much bigger view and purpose in my work ?
- Do I understand that God desires to use me to be a part of His redemption in our world?

## **Consider Ephesians 2:10**

If I have trusted Christ for my salvation, and am seeking to follow Him, I need to understand that my life is His workshop.

“His workmanship”..what a wonderful thought.

He is the craftsman, I am the wood.

He is the Potter, I am the clay.

I need to allow Him to shape and mold me, with a willing heart.

**“Created in Christ Jesus for good works”**

I also need to follow through with the tasks, the opportunities and responsibilities, He has placed in my life.

- How can I find my identity more in Christ ?

## Notes

- Week 6 -

# The Gospel and Work

*A New Power and A New Perspective*

Salvation gives us eyes to see the Main Point: Jesus came to redeem what was broken in the fall- our relationship with him.

As a result of this personal redemption, we are able to see work through gospel lenses, seek the common good of others through our work and find hope in our work.

Salvation gives us eyes to see the mysteries of Christ, one of which is how he has designed work to be a means of his Grace. mysteries of Christ, one of which is how he has designed work to be a means of his Grace.

Understanding of common grace drives our interaction with non-Christians and furthers the common good, which is God's providence for all mankind.

## **The importance of Christians in work**

Seek shalom, peace of your world

A New Power

Wisdom

Holy Spirit

Christian Virtue

Sabbath, Exodus 20:8

Consider Philippians 2:1-4

- How could these principles of humility, service and love be applied to your workplace ?

Consider James 3:13-18

- How can we bring God's wisdom into our work?
- What key elements show the character of a Christ follower?

## Notes

- Week 7 -

# The Hope of Our Work

*Wrap up and Panel Discussion*

Hope in our eternal work

The end of toil and frustration, the beginning of our dream jobs

Motivation for now, importance of Christians in work  
(seeking good of neighbor)

Work and Missions

Interview Panel

## **Consider John 3:19-21**

Are we willing to “practice the truth, come to the light ?” that our deeds may be shown, manifested, as having been “worked out in God” ?

## **Consider Ephesians 6:5-9**

“Doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service as to the Lord, and not to men.”


**What a challenge, as we seek to serve God...**



# Notes

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# Notes



As followers of Jesus, we believe our faith impacts every aspect of our lives. This includes our work, where we spend a significant portion of our lives. Our work is not separate from our faith, but rather they are woven together. Join us as we seek to discover God's design for work and the hope the gospel brings to our work.

Oak Ridge Community Church