

## Week 3 Vocational Stewards

### Introduction

Over the last two weeks, we have looked at how work is a part of our design as image bearers of God, but that because of the fall, our work is also under a curse. This tension calls us, as believers, to live in a hopeful realism regarding our work.

This week, we discover that the scriptures teach believers that our work is a sacred activity and that, in and through it, we have an opportunity to worship God.

- i. The Old Testament Witness - Throughout scripture, we see God using people in all sorts of jobs to accomplish his will. Although some were priests and prophets, most were just in ordinary careers: ranging from kings and government officials to shepherds and farmers, both rich and poor, God used them all.
- ii. The Story of Christ's Work - Jesus worked as a carpenter, which would have been a regular job that paid the bills. It had no "spiritual" significance, and yet it was where Jesus spent most of his life.
- iii. The Instructions to the Church - Regardless of their station in life, the people of the church were urged to live their lives to the glory of God, no matter what job they found themselves doing. Their jobs had significance because they were called to work for God, and to serve him faithfully, and were promised an eternal reward for their faithfulness.

### 1. Our Work Matters To God

- Read Colossians 3:22-24

Paul never told the church what jobs they should get. Instead, he taught them about the impact that their faith in Christ should have on the way they worked, whatever positions they found themselves in. The instruction is the same for us.

This takes a huge amount of pressure off our shoulders as we realise that:

- i. We can embrace where we are - we do not have to leave our jobs to go into the ministry. Our work is valuable exactly where God has placed us.
  - ii. We don't have to be defined by what we do - it's tempting to compare ourselves with other people, but we shouldn't. Our jobs do not define us or anyone else in our community. Christ's love and sacrifice defines us.
  - iii. We can be certain of future reward - we do not need to obsess over our financial remuneration because we know that God will reward us when we are in heaven.
- ❖ Q: How much do people's jobs affect your perception/value of them? (Think about meeting a new person. Do you respond differently to the person who tells you they are a surgeon than to the person who tells you that they are a barman? Why do you think this is?)
  - ❖ Q: Do you value yourself more-or-less according to the types of careers the people around you have? Or have you ever experienced a sense of insecurity around people with "important" jobs?
  - ❖ Q: Up until this point, have you always believed that your job and how well you work is important to God? Explain.
  - ❖ Q: Why is it so liberating to realize that we can and should embrace whatever job we find ourselves in at the moment?

## 2. God Matters To Our Work

- Read Ephesians 6:6-8

Our faith should change the way we view our work and how we work.

- i. We can work to show love for God
  - ii. We can work to show love for others
  - iii. We can work to reflect God's character:
    - We can show God's creativity by designing things that didn't exist before.
    - We can show God's compassion and mercy by leading and serving in ways that the world doesn't normally see.
    - We can show God's redemptive power and trajectory for the world by fixing systems and places that are broken.
    - We can show God's sense of justice by standing up for the oppressed and the overlooked, not just out there in society but on our payrolls.
  - iv. We can work for enjoyment
  - v. We can work for money in a new way
- ❖ Q: In what way can the way you work show love for others?
  - ❖ Q: In what way can your attitude at work reveal your love for God and others? (Do you show love for others by caring for them, working really hard, supporting those who need help, staying to clean up after a function, taking concern for those in lower positions, making time to eat with people etc.)
  - ❖ Q: Why is a job well done, no matter what job it is, a reflection of God's character?

## 3. We Are Stewards Of Our Vocations

We need to start looking at our jobs differently. Regardless of the nature of our work, we are all called by God into those positions in order to serve him at work. Our jobs are the avenues through which we steward the opportunities, resources and talents that God has given us.

- ❖ Q: Why it is true that an accountant's job is just as much a 'calling' as the pastor or nurse's job?
- ❖ Q: What response is God asking you to make in your heart and in your life as you are confronted by the fact that your job is a calling? (What will repentance and faith look like for you in this area of your life?)

