



Your Work Matters to God:

A Guide to Being a Christian Witness at the Workplace

Online Course xxxxxxxx
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Introduction: The Realities of the Christian and Their Workplace

Think about these numbers...

40 hours a week x 4.2 weeks in a month = 172 hours of work in a month.

172 hours a month x 12 months – 2 weeks of vacation = 1,984 hours in a year.

2,000 hours a year x 40-year career = roughly 80,000 hours in a lifetime we will be at work!

Studies have said that we spend about 40% of our waking hours at work. And, this does not include how much time we spend *thinking* about work when we are not at work!

Whether you have been working for one year or thirty, have you asked these questions: Does my work hours matter to God or just my “church” hours? If they do matter, what purpose does God have for me in these thousands of hours other than doing what I have to do to bring home a paycheck? What answers do Christians have to these questions? How many Christians even have answers yet?

Os Hillman, an expert in the issue of faith in the workplace, says, “after traveling to 25 nations speaking to Christians on the subject, and some 10 books later, I have learned one overwhelming fact: Christians do not have a theology of work.”¹ Tom Nelson, pastor and author of the book *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* says, “Many who are Christians complain of a “Sunday-Monday gap”, where their Sunday worship hours bear little relevance to the issues in their Monday workplaces.”²

The workplace is an obvious place for Christians to live out their Christian beliefs for many reasons. These include that our work should be done with excellence, Christians should want to bring glory to God through their work, the workplace is a place Christians can minister to one another in appropriate ways, and finally, the workplace is a place where Christians can develop relationships with non-believers, and show them what being a Christian should look like. By living as an example of Christian belief, God may open doors for the Christian to share the greatest gift in the world with people – the gospel. A Christian does not have to go to Africa or be a pastor to serve the Lord. Biblical verses such as Ephesians 4:12 support this statement. Christians have a ready-made place to serve God each week with the people they work with. This is exciting, and it is also a little intimidating as well. We hope that the rest of this short book will alleviate at least some of this intimidation factor for its readers.

¹ <http://www.marketplaceleaders.org/faith-and-work-movement/>

² Tom Nelson, *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work*, Crossway Books, 2011. p. 15.

After such an introduction, how should the author approach writing the rest of this book? The author believes that the best way he can do this is through the context of the overall message³ of the Bible itself. He will do this by showing the reader that God meant the Bible to be read as an *epic story*. As the reader understands this epic story, it should give the reader a fuller, and clearer, understanding of the purpose of being a Christian witness in the workplace. Therefore, this short book will weave together components of this epic story and specifics about Christian witness in the workplace. The author hopes that this will prove both helpful and inspiring.

Miroslov Volf

**“WORK CONDITIONS PEOPLES
INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY. AS
SUCH, IT IS THE BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL
HUMAN LIFE AND ALL HUMAN HISTORY.”**

WORK IN THE SPIRIT, 27

³ The technical term for this is metanarrative. The Oxford Dictionary defines metanarrative as *an overarching account or interpretation of events and circumstances that provides a pattern or structure for people’s beliefs and gives meaning to their experiences.*

Chapter 1:

Gods Design for the World - A Foundation for the Workplace

Most of us love stories. I am particularly thinking of stories that are epic. Think of one of your favorite epic movies for instance. We love epic stories because of the drama, the struggle, the character development, the battle of evil and good, the victory of good over evil and the mark the story may have made in history.

We should think about the Bible as an EPIC STORY⁴. Why? Because it answers the ultimate questions every human seeks – where did I come from? Why am I here? What went wrong in the world? How is the wrong fixed? Where am I and all of history going? Any religion or philosophy that is worth following must answer these questions and give us reasonable answers⁵.

Referencing the epic story *Lord of the Rings*, Ralph Wood, in his book *The Gospel According to Tolkien*, says, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ is more than a fairy-story because it is not a human discovery or invention: it is an actuality that occurred in space and time. Christ was born, and He lived and died and resurrected (1 Cor. 15:1-20). Here is God’s own story wherein the Teller of the tale becomes its chief Actor. Rather than cancelling all other stories, however, this is the one that they all have been stumbling on and pointing to. The Gospel is the completion and fulfillment of all other stories.”⁶ Do not all humans hunger for some ultimate, epic story and to find our place in it? Most people find this desire within them. If the Bible gives us a reasonably reliable answers to these ultimate questions, then we are on our way to saying that the Bible is still relevant for all humans today and applicable to the workplace too.

The Overarching Plotline of the Epic Story

All epic stories have an overarching plotline. In brief, the graphic below is the overarching plotline of the Bible. In the rest of this short book, we will examine each stage of this essential, basic plotline of the Bible and make connections to being a Christian witness in the workplace today.

⁴ This image fails in that movies and stories are made up by man. I am not claiming that the Bible is simply a human construct. It is different. Christians believe its source is the eternal, personal God who lives outside of time and culture.

⁵ In other words, it furnishes us with a “worldview” – A worldview can be described as *the way a person interprets himself and the world which, in turn, affects how he lives with himself and lives in the world.*

⁶ Ralph Wood, *The Gospel According to Tolkien*, Philadelphia, PA: WJK Press, 25.



When you think of the words “order” and “peace” what images come to mind? It is likely that the images you think of are accurate descriptions how the world was originally meant to be when God created it. In the world creation account of Genesis chapters one and two, we see the words “good” and “very good” used many times. The world was designed to work well - God with humans, humans with God, humans with other humans, and humans with the earth. These first two chapters of Genesis tell us some very good and fundamental things. The Bible says a good God created humans. It tells us that humans were created in the image of God, with personhood and dignity. Humans are to relate with God and with one another in a loving, purposeful and fulfilling way. God also gave humans purpose; a basic job description to live their lives by. Here are a couple, sample verses from Genesis chapter one.

Genesis 1:1: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28: Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Here is some further explanation of these foundational verses.

First, Moses was the author of the book of Genesis. His purpose for writing the creation account was not just to give human history a sufficient, scientific explanation of the creation of the world, though it does that.⁷ Genesis chapter one and two were also written to give an accurate account of that the one true God created the world and *why* He created it in comparison to all the other ancient, Middle Eastern myth stories at the time of Moses (1500 B.C). Many of these myth stories were very complex and contradictory, with a mixture of many gods fighting for control,

⁷ See further creation.com for many great articles on the topic. Of course, Moses was not there and we have no video camera footage. We believe God revealed this “first part of the epic story” to Moses supernaturally.

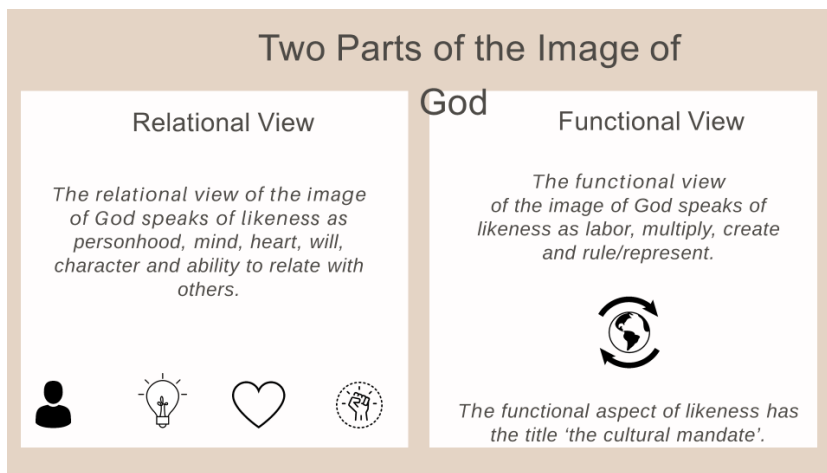
no regard for human life as valuable and with very little information about why we are here – a reason to give humans and human history meaning.

Second, in Hebrew the word “God” often means *Yahweh* – His Covenantal name. God reveals Himself to mankind in the Old Testament as a God who is lovingly committed to the well-being of His creation, in particular mankind. Genesis also teaches humans that God is to be understood as self-existing (I AM), that He is the only God, not one of many gods. God is eternal, all good and is all sovereign.

Third, In Hebrew the word “created” means that the world comes from a singular cause, and that this cause is *a personal being*, not a force. This personal being created the world with a design or overall purpose built into it. The Bible says that God created the world “*ex nihilo*.” This is a Latin translation of the original Hebrew meaning that God spoke the world into existence out of nothing.

Fourth, in Hebrew the word “dominion” means rule, order, or a stewardship. Mankind was given responsibility to care for the future of the world and humanity. Humans were to do so as servants, or representatives, of God on earth – they are image-bearers of their Creator.

Fifth, Moses introduces human history to a very important term that reappears multiple times throughout the whole epic story of the Bible in various forms. It is the term “image of God.” A good, short definition of this important term is “that which is referring to the immaterial part of humanity made after God’s likeness. It sets human beings apart from the animal world, fits them for the dominion-stewardship God intended them to have over the earth, gives mankind meaning, value and enables them to commune with their Maker. It is a likeness mentally, morally, and socially.⁸”



⁸ <https://www.gotquestions.org/image-of-God.html>. Note: Though we are made in God’s image (having personhood), there are some attributes of God we do not have. These are called “incommunicable attributes” and includes that God is all knowing, all present, all eternal and all powerful.

A Basic Definition

"To be in God's image means to be like God and to represent God on the earth."

(Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, p. 442)

Sixth, connected to the important term "image of God", is the command from God to Adam and Eve to "Be fruitful and multiple and subdue the earth." In seminal form, this is mankind's job description. Besides worshipping God, God gave humans a role to play in establishing His kingdom on earth. What an honor. Theologians call this the "cultural mandate".

The Image of God Lived Out The Cultural Mandate



Humans are designed by God to get married, have families, labor, govern, play, influence others for God, establish orderly societies, build homes and churches, gardens, hospitals, etc. Over time, the cultural mandate creates actual cultures.

**A large part of
any culture is the
workplace.**

A Basic Definition

"The cultural mandate means to spread the will of God throughout the earth."



Order and Peace. These words are excellent, one-word summaries of the purpose of the Genesis account. God created things to have order and to function under His Sovereign, good rule. Also, when people live according to this order, they will have peace with God and one another from generation to generation.

But our foundation for this short book does not stop here. Jesus continues this kind of thinking about the image of God and the cultural mandate in giving us the Great Commission. We should think of the Great Commission as a New Testament extension of the creation mandate.

New Mission

*"¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in [a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV



New Mission

Christopher Wright, in his book *The Mission of God*, argues that the doctrine of election is not just soteriological but missional. Wright argues there is a “so that” purpose to our election and our salvation. God saves so that Christians would be God's agents of redeeming grace in the world through the gospel.

This has implications for the workplace of each Christian.

New Mission

Wright goes on to argue the Great Commission is an expansion of the Abrahamic Covenant. Not only that, but both the Abrahamic Covenant and the New Covenant (great commission) are expansions of the Cultural Mandate in Genesis 1 and 2.



Interesting. We will talk more about the Great Commission in chapter three.

Reflection and Application:

1. Do you see how this first part of the epic story sets a foundation for God's purpose of work in the world? Is this a new, or a different, way of thinking for you?
2. Write down one or two ways you think this chapter can apply to you and your workplace experience today?

Chapter 2: Mankind Rejects Gods Design and its Effects On the Workplace

Most of us would agree that the world, and sadly many of our workplaces, is not working very well today. What happened? The Bible gives us a very plausible answer to the next of our ultimate questions – what is wrong with the world? The answers the Bible gives to this fundamental question have obvious outworking effects on the workplace for the rest of history.

Here are two sample passages from the Bible. One is written by Moses right after chapters one and two of Genesis and one written many years later by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. The Bible assumes both accounts to be reasonable intellectually and accurate historically.

Genesis 3:1-7: Now the serpent was craftier than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Romans 1:18-25: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made so they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Wow, some good things were said, and yes, some hard things were said. Here is some explanation of Genesis 3:1-7 to consider:

First, Satan questions God and tries to get humans to doubt God. This produced the original form of confusion over what is truth. It turns into an authority issue. It begs the question, who rules my life – me or God? Who should Adam and Eve listen to? Second, Satan tried to tempt humans to be able to have the same authority as God, and thus, thinking they can be their own god – dismissing the real God, their Maker. Third, after disobeying their Maker, their conscience’s were struck causing guilt and shame. They knew they not only disobeyed and distrusted God, but that they were dismantling the order God gave to the world. They sensed this would have consequences both vertically and horizontally now, thus affecting peace with one another and with God. History bears this out.

Here is some explanation of Romans 1:18-25 to consider:

First, God’s righteous judgement must fairly fall on disobedience and rebellion. Just like we would desire a good quality justice system to do faithfully. It is an order and rulership issue.

Second, this text does an amazingly detailed job of describing the characteristics of Adam and Eve's disobedience which affects all humans since.⁹ The text says humans...

1. "Suppress the truth": like trying to hold a beach ball under the water. Sinful, selfish humans now want to push down God's definition of truth and how life is supposed to be. In the words of Frank Sinatra, humans now want to "do it my way."
2. "Exchange the truth": humans have traded God's way for their own way. They feel that their way is "worth more" or is more valuable to them than God's way.
3. Because humans choose to suppress and exchange God's truth for their own opinions on truth, the text says that "their minds become futile." In Greek, this literally means "wandering off." The text also says their "hearts become darkened." In Greek, this literally means "cold and resistant to God".
4. This causes an interesting juxtaposition – "claiming to be wise, they become fools".
5. They begin to value, and give glory to, themselves and other man-centered things, instead of the Being that has the highest value and worthy of the most glory in the world – God.
6. They exchange the truth about God for a lie. Created humanity tries to become god-like and self-sufficient – a lie from Satan himself.
7. They not only exchanged truth for a lie, but that exchange caused them to go all the way down the road to turning human-centered things into objects of worship. Today this can include ourselves, our jobs, sex, cars, politics, etc. These are things we value and put our hope in. The Bible calls this "idols of the heart".
8. God then "gave them over" – God let them go down the self-destructive path and see where it leads. The failed "social experiment" going on in the city of Portland Oregon is a clear example of this.

Second, all of what the Apostle Paul is describing here may be described using one word used over 400 times in the Bible - SIN. Sin is anything we think, say, feel or do that disobeys God and His right and good rule over us. In Greek, it literally means "missing the mark" like an archer missing his target. The target to hit is God's righteous standards of living the way God commands humans to. God's standards apply to our thoughts, words and behavior. Sin causes the discord we see now among all people in history and separates us from our relationship with God (Rom. 3:23). Sadly, it destroys order and peace, both horizontally and vertically.

The reader might be wondering how this account of mankind's rejection God's design for the world relates to the workplace today? Here are five examples of fallout effects on the workplace today.

⁹ We call this original sin. Sadly, because of it, by nature now, everyone is a sinner. See Romans 5:12-14.

Pride: St. Augustine, speaking around 400ad, famously said that pride is the mother of all sins. Pride is the ultimate manifestation of self-centeredness. Pride in our workplaces can make people think too highly of ourselves, wrestle to elevate ourselves above others, abuse others and do whatever it takes to get success no matter who gets hurt. Pride goes even further. Mankind's rejection of God's design for the world enables people to think they can elevate themselves even above God (Rom. 1:18-32). The chief engineer of the *Titanic* is an example of this when he famously stated that, "even God couldn't sink this ship."

Group Negativity: Peer pressure, gossip, back-biting, lying, manipulating and complaining are all examples of falling into group negativity in the workplace. This not only damages our own personal spiritual life and well-being; it seriously damages our witness as ambassadors of our Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 5:20). Group negativity is a clear example of how the fall of mankind in Genesis chapter three operates on a weekly basis at the workplace.

Ethical Breaches: Ethics are a hot topic today. How are they defined? Where are the lines? What are company policies on ethical breaches and how forcefully are they monitored? No one is perfect, and we all fail to live as ethically as we could, both Christians and non-Christian alike. However, all ethical breaches should affect our personal consciences and they will affect our reputation as Christians at the workplace. We need to guard ourselves not only from committing ethical breaches but assuming we will never be tempted to commit them.

Making an "idol" of our work: In our culture, productivity and accomplishment are put on a pedestal. These things are, in and of themselves, not bad, in fact they are good and connected to the cultural mandate mentioned earlier. But, when we wrap our identities around them, see our self-worth in them and put our hope on them, they become dangerous idols. This is particularly true at any workplace. And yes, it can happen to Christians. *An idol is something or someone we value as much as or more than God.* John Calvin famously said that our hearts are idol factories. That may seem overstated to you, but one of the most prevalent themes in the Bible is idolatry. Whether it be the religious idolatry of the pagan nations that Israel fell into or idols within our own hearts (see Matthew 6:21, Luke 18:18-29 and Colossians 3:5), idols are something that we mistakenly value, look to for ultimate hope, identity and meaning other than God. Here is the balance: goal setting, hard work, accomplishment and enjoyment in work are good when kept in proper perspective and portions with the Word of God.

Some of the most common ways we idolize our jobs include:

- Workaholism – "there's always more to do."
- Materialism – "I work to get more toys."
- Push for power – "I work to get things done."
- Overly seeking identity in your work – "work will make me happy and people will like me."
- Favoritism – "I will get my way."

Now, you may be saying, "Easier said than done. My work just demands a lot out of me". Understood. Your job may demand a lot out of you, but that does not mean your heart has to make an idol out of it! See the difference. Paul saw this tendency toward idolatry in his own

heart and warned us as Christians to find our identity in Christ, not in our resumes (Philippians 3:4-8).

Being idle at work: The other side of the proverbial coin is being idle at work. This is just as much a threat to our own spiritual health and our witness at work as idolatry. We waste company time; we are habitually late to work and clock out too early. We put in the minimum amount of effort because we do not think our pay deserves any more than that. Do you find it easy to complain or cut corners and have found that you can generally get away with it? Idleness is a habit we can easily fall into. If your job offers you too much time for idleness, think of some ways you could turn that around. Maybe seek to help fellow employees or let your boss know you have some extra time to get onto another project or task for example.

Please see Appendix C for more common struggles Christians share in the workplace and suggestions for how to approach them. These struggles are the result of personal interviews and expert analysis.

This is a good place to give a reminder. God's goal in the gospel is not to change your personality but your character. God is not going to turn you into the opposite type of person of who you are. However, if you tend to be an idolizer of work, Jesus does want you to repent of your idolatry. If you tend to be overly idle at work, Jesus does want you to repent of being idle at work.

Reflection and Application:

1. Reflect on the effects of mankind's rejection of God design and sovereign rule on the workplace worldwide.
2. Write down one or two ways in which you see the effects of this rejection in your workplace. What are you yourself guilty of?

Chapter 3: The Rescuer Comes for People (and our workplaces)

When you think of the word "rescue" what comes to mind? By now you might be wondering whether mankind is able to fix ourselves. The Bible argues that, sadly, we cannot. What, therefore, is the Bible's answer to our next ultimate question – how will the wrong be fixed?

Fortunately, God is a loving and powerful God, as well as a just God. The Bible says that God himself, the one offended by our sin and rebellion toward him, mercifully came up with a

rescue plan that would both save mankind from ourselves and from God’s judgement on our sin and rebellion¹⁰. If this is true, it sounds like “good news.”

Here are a couple sample passages from the Bible that talk about this rescue plan; which is good news if it is true. These samples come from the pen of the Apostle Paul who experienced these things first hand¹¹. Give Paul the benefit of the doubt when reading these sentences.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4: For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

1 Corinthians 15:12-20: Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Ephesians 2:1-10: And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Let me add some explanation here as well:

First, 1 Cor. 15:3-4 is the earliest, fundamental creed of Christianity. It is what all of Christianity was built on and continues to stand on today. The Old Testament predicted it, and these things came true historically. 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 says verses three through four were witnessed by many people. Paul says that verses three through four are of first importance. Also,

¹⁰ God came up with this plan before stage 1 even happened (Eph. 1:3-5). He implemented it in stage 3.

¹¹ After many years of studying the Bible personally, academically and professionally, I believe there are many reasons why we can trust that Paul is being truthful with us in these passages.

this text says that Jesus gave this truth to Paul; he did not make it up. This is the “rescue plan” in short form.

Second, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 is a rhetorical argument that turns out to be true. Paul understands that the resurrection sounds mythical and he once persecuted Christians for their beliefs. But now he cannot deny that the resurrection happened and had a purpose behind it. If it is not true or did not happen, then we are still “in our sins” (not saved from God’s judgement) and our faith is useless belief. The resurrection of Christ is not only the centerpiece of Christianity, it is the centerpiece or “pivot” of the whole epic story itself.

Third, Ephesians 2:1-10 is a good, brief explanation of this rescue plan. In this passage, the Bible says our sin produced, and produces, spiritual death. Because of it, we can no longer live in loving order and peace with God and others as we were originally designed to. But, God, the offended party and righteous Judge, took the *initiative* to reconcile us to himself and rescue us from His judgement on us! Our condition was so bad, there was nothing we could invent or do good enough to fix it or reconcile us to God. God did this by sending Jesus to live and die in our place, as our *substitute*. To God, it was the only way to fix the situation.¹² But, the greatest news of all is that there is nothing we must do to contribute to this rescue plan. The text says it is a “gift of God.” What is the nature of a gift? It is something of value lovingly given from someone to someone else with no expectation of payment in return. *In other words, for us to be rescued, all we must do is two things: (a) admit that we need rescuing (this can be the hardest part) and (b) believe (trust in) that Jesus lived a perfect life in my place and died on the cross in my place in order that I might receive forgiveness for my sin and rebellion toward God.* Note: verse ten does tell us that “good works” are a part of our salvation – but they flow from, and are a result of, our salvation. They are not something that will earn our salvation.

In other words, Christians believe that this rescue (salvation) happens by FAITH alone, in CHRIST alone, by the GRACE of God alone. That is good news!

1. Faith alone is understanding, assent and trust in an object worthy enough to fully rescue you.
2. Christ alone is the object of our faith. He alone could live a perfect, holy life in our place and he alone could take on the rightful punishment for our sins in our place. It is very judicial in nature. It is not how much faith that rescues us, its faith in the rescuer to save us.
3. Grace Alone is that all this rescue plan is based solely on the unmerited favor of God alone. Nothing we can add to or subtract from His goodness toward us to rescue us.

C.S. Lewis, the famous British novelist and writer, who once was an atheist and then became a Christian, has famously said of Jesus’ claims, “*‘I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him [that is, Christ]: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one*

¹² See also Romans 5:1.

thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.... You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”¹³

That is a great quote. Lewis is right. As in the last chapter, you might be wondering, how does this chapter relate our workplaces? Here is an answer.

First, as Christians, saved from Gods wrath through faith in the rescuer Jesus, we come to work each day with a new, core identity.

New Identity

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. [a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

The term “In Christ” is used over 130 times in the New Testament!

This term “in Christ” is an important term in the New Testament. In Greek, it has a dual meaning. First, it is connected to our justification – that we are legally declared innocent of a guilty charge against our sin in God’s law-court due to our faith in Christ dying as our substitute on the cross. Second, it is connected to the idea of adoption. In adoption, a child is warmly welcomed into the love, identity and security of a family forever. When we are “in Christ” we become brothers and sisters with Christ, we become children of God. This is how God views Christians. Therefore, it is how Christians are to view ourselves.

Second, Christians come to work with a new sense of mission. We understand that the workplace is not just about getting work done for our boss and customers, but also as a place where we can be witnesses of our Lord Jesus to various degrees, and in various ways.

Below are the biblical ways Christians should understand the title “disciple” and the act of being a Christian witness.

¹³ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 55-56.

New Mission

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in [a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

DEFINATION OF DISCIPLE:

Greek: *Mathetes*, meaning follower or learner. Used 270x in the New Testament.

"a devoted allegiance to the teachings of one chosen as a master." — Webster's Dictionary

A disciple of Jesus: someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.

DEFINATION OF DISCIPLE:

Lord Jesus Christ (Greek - Kyrios):

Discipleship is connected to Jesus title of Lord (used 173x in the NT). Lord means *king, master*. The Bible claims that Jesus is Lord over salvation, his church, reality, nature, and history. This means He's Lord over workplaces too.

Christian Witness

In the New Testament, this term
μάρτυρας - **martyras**
most frequently means *to bear witness or to attest for someone in the court of law.*

(Strong's #3140)

The follower of Jesus intentionally brings their identity in Christ, knowledge of the Bible and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit to the practice of Christian witness in thought, word and deed by the grace of God each day.

Christian Witness

In the New Testament, this term
μάρτυρας - **martyras**
most frequently means *to bear witness or to attest for someone in the court of law.*

(Strong's #3140)

Simple Version:

The things Christians think, say and do at work that honor God and REPRESENT Jesus to those watching and listening – both Christians and non-Christians alike.



New Mission

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that [a] they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16 ESV

Third and finally, Christians come to work with new motivations based on our new identity and mission.

New Motivations

²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Colossians 3:23-24 ESV

New Motivations

“You have a great Boss - King Jesus. You get to work for the most successful, innovative, and employee-loyal CEO you could ever meet – King Jesus. His “company’s” vision and work is global, supremely important and has eternal profits. He will never fire you and his “company” will never close its doors. Understandably, this is not always easy to remember or to live out in a world of messed up workplaces. This is a true statement. But, if you keep in mind that you work for King Jesus, we think it will change the way you think about your work. How? Because when glorifying Jesus is our primary motivation, our work – regardless of what that work is in its particulars- becomes an act of worship.”

Seth Stiles, Bringing Your Faith to the Workplace: A Pocket Guide, p.21

Do you remember the foundation we laid speaking of the image of God and the cultural mandate as God’s design for the world? The biblical texts and terms used above now enable this design to be redeemed - doable again. Christians are the recipients of this ability to now affect the world for God’s kingdom and, slowly but surely, establishing it again (Matt. 3:2). However, the kingdom of God will never be completely right on earth until Jesus comes back and the eternal kingdom be established in its perfection forever. It is an honor to be used by God to be a part of His redeeming mission in the world, even in the humdrum of our weekly workplaces.

Reflection and Application:

1. Reflect on the quote made above in *Bringing Your Faith to the Workplace: A Pocket Guide*. Write down your thoughts.
2. Write down one or two reasons why you are excited to be a Christian?

Chapter 4: Being a Christian Witness in the Workplace

Lists can be dangerous. They too often act as some quick checklist putting you and God in a box. However, the six attributes and actions listed below are on the shortlist of essentials of being a Christian witness in the workplace. With God's help, these six suggestions are doable. It is recommended that the reader take time to look up the biblical passages cited.

Character and Attitude (Galatians 5:16-23 and Colossians 3:23-24):

This is the most important thing you can bring to your workplace as a Christian! Character and attitude are the most important things a Christian can bring to work. Being a person of integrity is important. Being thankful for your job is important. Having a "Colossians 3:24 attitude" is equally powerful and important. Exhibiting Christian character and attitude at work will be both personally beneficial to the Christian and it will surely be a light of the Gospel to those critically watching. There are times when the Christian will feel the pressure to compromise character and/or attitude. However, in the end, it is likely that (a) having the right attitude and being committed to integrity will be rewarded by God, (b) having the right attitude and being committed to integrity will give peace to our consciences and (c) will be rewarded by the work world itself at some time and in some way. May these two simple words (character and attitude) be the screensaver on the Christian's mind each day.

Service (Philippians 2:3-7 and Matthew 5:16):

Ever seen an overflowing trash can in the break room if you work in an office setting? Could you offer to empty it when everyone else ignores it? This is just one example of serving in

the workplace. There are opportunities to serve co-workers, bosses or clients outside of work too. Helping a co-worker with a home project may be an appropriate example.

One of the cardinal precepts of living for King Jesus in this world is self-sacrificing love of others. Yes, many Christians have much on their workplace plate already and do not have much extra time to think of other's needs. However, there are times when work is slow and you could think about stepping up to help others in a variety of ways. This is the "going the extra mile" principle. Here is an example of this: Your boss has worked very hard on a particular project for a customer. You are doing a lot of grunt work for him. Do what you can to make your boss be successful in this project. This will honor King Jesus as you are serving your boss. Hopefully this will bring you a sense of joy as well.

Being Intentional (Matthew 5:13-16 and 2 Corinthians 5:20):

Like character, bring intentionality to work with you. Be aware of being a Christian in the workplace! This goes two ways: one, is that you act *proactively* as a Christian.

Here are three examples:

1. You know that a meeting is coming up today where you could manipulate information to get your way. Be intentional that you will not do this. Pray before you enter that meeting for yourself.
2. Have a plan to talk with Jim about that personal problem in his life he keeps bringing up. He is searching for help, for hope.
3. This can be as simple as "making a Christian comment" over break time coffee.

Secondly, act *defensively* as a Christian. Christians know people are watching us. Here is an example: avoid the opportunity to join in on workplace gossip. Of course, we fail at times, but even in the failure, respond to failure in a way that is becoming of a Christian - confess and ask forgiveness.

Come to work, not just to get your work done and clock out, but to be a Christian living out your faith. In the words of Paul, "we are the aroma of Christ to those around us" (2 Cor. 2:15).

Prayer (1 Timothy 2:1-3 and 8):

Some things you are asked to do at work are beyond your skill set. You are intimidated to confront someone about unethical behavior. You know your that one of co-worker's marriage is hanging on by a thread. You cannot stand your boss on Mondays. Your industry is an important part of the local economy and it has fallen on hard times. You struggle with laziness at work. These are all good examples of times when the Christian should bring it to the Lord in prayer. The Bible tells Christians to pray continually (1 Thes. 5:17). This does not mean Christians should do nothing else in our day, our course. However, it does mean that Christians can be

communicating little messages of need, request and praise to God at work¹⁴. This can be done privately on one's way to work, at work and on one's way home from work. Also, God may open doors for the Christian to pray with people at work personally. Additionally, if the Christian is a manager or owner, they may have the authority to pray at staff meetings or other events like the annual Christmas party. Prayer shows the Christian's dependence on God and it forms a Christian's will to be in line with His. Prayer matters in this world.

Your Personal Salvation Testimony and Stories (Acts 9:1-18, Romans 1:16-17):

God has done things in you and through you that are just undeniable, right? People are looking for help, for hope, for purpose. The Christian's story can be a powerful tool at their workplace. This story includes how the Christian came to faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Non-believers need to hear how that the historical Jesus and the pre-modern Bible really are true for today. The Bible, though old, has shown itself repeatedly to be trustworthy and reliable. The Christian's salvation testimony and personal story modernizes and personalizes the old Gospel story. St. Augustine, in the 5th century, said, "We were created for thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." This restlessness of heart may describe someone(s) in your workplace.

The Christian's story also includes all the other things God has sovereignly brought into their life. There may be parts to *your story* that will fit wonderfully in ministering to others at the workplace; fellow Christians and non-Christians alike. This Christian's personal story can be used as means of encouragement, correction, warning, hope and purpose. Maybe you have had motivation difficulties at work and can shed some light on a co-worker's struggle with overcoming it. Maybe you are having trouble talking with your kids about tough issues but recently have found some things from the Bible to be helpful. You could share those with people at work who may be struggling as well. Christians are the gospel "enfleshed" in unique ways. Christians can effectively connect with people at work through our personal salvation testimony and personal story. However, it is important to always communicate in a way that is humble and with grace.


When Asked (1 Peter 3:15-16):

There are times when Christian's do not need to initiate an offensive for King Jesus in the war at work. There are times when people will come to us. Like those "teachable moments" with our kids, take advantage of these moments when people have questions for about Jesus, the Bible, how to have a happier marriage, anything. Admittedly, this can put the Christian on the spot and many do not like being put on the spot. Yet, remember, God can do great through the Christian's imperfect "on the spot" performance. In these times of imperfection, sometimes it is a good idea to respond to questions with, "I don't know, let me get back with you on that." This should motivate the Christian to seek better answers to give in the future. Christians are not expected to be theology professors at work, but God does give Christians a brain that can retain and explain God's message to others.

¹⁴ These are called "breath prayers". These are prayers that can be said in one or two breaths.

For example, there are probably a few people at work that have the most questions about spiritual things. There are a few people who like to play Devil's advocate the most. What are their common comments and questions? Try to formulate some answers for them. Answers can be given face to face (when appropriate) or via e-mail (when appropriate). Be careful not to be taking too much company time though; this would not honor God. Also remember that in our post-modern culture, how the Christian interacts with others is just as powerful as the actual answers given. Be gracious and humble.

Here are a few more practical skills to engage in as a Christian witness in the workplace. Some of these may be more relevant for you and your workplace than others. Included are thoughts on how to approach the hot topic of religious expression in the workplace.



LISTENING TO OTHERS

- a. Look eye to eye and don't think
- b. Repeat what they say
- c. Data Gathering – listening for trends and ques
- d. Respect even in disagreement
- e. Listening builds trust
- f. Make time to listen

* Any of these particularly pop out at you?

15

¹⁵ Here is a little more explanation of a few of these points: (point A.) In other words, be engaged and care about what the person is saying not just what you want to say next.



SPEAKING TO OTHERS

- a. Question asking!
- b. Think before you talk
- c. Seeking peace
- d. Get to the meat sometime
 - Spiritual conversations, sharing the Gospel
- e. Make time to speak

* Any of these particularly pop out at you?

16



DOING TO OTHERS

- a. No regrets allowed
- b. Think team good not just your good
- c. Sew – Reap Principle
- d. Go the Extra Mile (ex. outside of work assistance)
- e. Small things can make a big difference
- f. God sees (positive and negative)

* Any of these particularly pop out at you?

17

¹⁶ Here is a little more explanation of a few of these points: (point A.) It is always a good idea to ask questions. This enables you to understand people more and shows that you care about them. (point B.) Words matter and how we say them matter. Take time to think about what you want to say and how you should say it first. (point C.) Christians are to be peaceful with our fellow man as much as we can. We can disagree, but take the high road when you do. (point D.) At some point, you will need to get to spiritual meat in your communications with people. This is vital.

¹⁷ Here is a little more explanation of a few of these points: (point A.) When doing things for others, try to keep in mind a clear conscience. Try to prevent words or actions that you will regret later. (point B.) As a Christian, it is good to think about the fact that you are working at a workplace as a team and are there for the overall goals of the team, department or company. You are not at work mainly to accomplish your own personal good. (point C.) Remember too, we reap what we sow. This is not only is good and bad things but in amount of effort we put into our workplace relationships too. Ministry to people, as well as evangelism, takes time. (point F.) Finally, remember in your doing to others, you ultimately have an audience of One. God sees the things you are doing for the good of others in the name of Jesus even if it goes unrecognized by them.



FOLLOW UP WITH OTHERS

- a. We make time for what we care about
- b. Finish what you've started
- c. Keep a good calendar
- d. Follow up based on conversation points from a previous meeting
- e. Warning! Finding mutually good follow up dates are hard and can take time
- f. A quick text from time to time is an easy, nice touch

* Any of these particularly pop out at you?

18

What about “Religious Expression” in the Workplace?

- 1. Be aware of, and sensitive to, the human resource policies of your workplace. If open to various kinds of religious expression, great. If closed to various kinds of religious expression, then obey and discuss spiritual matters privately. This is not cowardly; it honors your boss and God. It may also open better opportunities for witness due to respect for policies.
- 2. No matter what the policy is at your workplace on religious expression, keep evangelism to non-believers and personal ministry to fellow believers to be primarily at lunch break and before or after work.

What about “Religious Expression” in the Workplace?

- 3. Your Christian attitudes and ethics displayed in the workplace are actually powerful examples of Christian religious expression and Christian witness today.
- 4. In the early church, a sizable portion of evangelistic opportunities came when non-believers “asked for a reason for the hope within” believers in workplaces and marketplaces (1 Pet. 3:15). Let them open the door to the opportunity, not you. I say this as a healthy balancing point to the dominant or assumed method of believer-initiated evangelism today.

¹⁸ This is a reminder that for some people, such things as answers to prayer, theological conversations, personal confessions, interpersonal counsel, etc.

Last but certainly not least, we must remember how much Christians need the power of the Holy Spirit to be effective Christian witnesses in the workplace. Remember, the work we are about is discipleship and witness are ultimately supernatural. Remember that people are sinners. They naturally sin. Christians continue to struggle with sin too. Being a Christian in the workplace both in a private, personal sense and public, relational sense, needs God's divine help through the Holy Spirit. Privately so, in accountability to our personal conscience about work ethic, personal integrity and our thankfulness to God for being able to "make a living" though this job. Publicly so, in our words and actions toward fellow believers and non-believers alike. Remember, *Christian witness in the workplace is essentially a supernatural thing*. Paul understood this when he said, "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:9).

SKILLS: Our Need of the Holy Spirit

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. "

-John 14:15-17 ESV

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Reflection and Application:

1. Reflect on what you know about the nature and work of the Holy Spirit from the Bible. Remind yourself that He wants to work with you and through you in the workplace too.
2. Write down one or two ways that being a Christian witness in the workplace comes naturally to you. Write down one or two ways that you are intimidated to be a Christian witness in the workplace.

Chapter 5: The Epic Story (and our working) Continues Forever

When thinking of the words “restoration” and “victory” what comes to mind? These words are great pictures of how the Bible says the epic story ends. Our final ultimate question is “where am I and all of history going?” Here are a couple of passages from the Bible that describe how the epic story of human history will end. One is from the Apostle Paul again and the other from the famous book titled Revelation, written by the Apostle John around 90ad¹⁹.

Romans 8:22-25 and 30: For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Revelation 21:1-5: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have

¹⁹ As Christians we believe that God is ultimately the author of the Bible and communicated what He wanted us to know through the lives and hands of a few men specially called to such a task. Examples of such men are the Apostles Paul and John. Read for instance 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21. Of course, there are other ways in which we can argue for this belief other than quoting scripture.

passed away.”⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Wow, one day, God will restore everything to be good, maybe even better, than things were originally meant to be back at the beginning of the epic story in Genesis chapters one and two. That is something that gives Christians hope as they go through this tough world now.

Here is what Romans 8:22-25 is telling us:

First, both we, and the created world, yearn for all things to get better again.

Second, the word “hope” in the Bible this does not mean, “Well, I just hope it comes true”. In Greek, hope means “confident assurance of a future occurrence”. Thus, biblical hope is that if Jesus and God promise us eternal life, and full restoration of how things are meant to be, we can confidently rest in, and look forward to, that promise will come true. Christians can look forward to the promise coming true one day soon. Hope keeps us going. Who does not need hope today – especially a hope that pertains to life after death?

Here is what Romans 8:30 is telling us:

First, God is in control of all things and will cause all things to lead to a Christian’s growth, well-being and eternal life. Jesus himself affirms our value and God’s intimate work in our lives in Matthew 10:29-31.

Second, God has a purpose in developing and implementing this rescue plan both globally and for each individually who places their faith in Jesus. Who does not need a sense of peace in life? And this purpose comes from God not from our own dreams or imaginations.

Third, God is the active party in this rescue plan from beginning to end. We are involved, but play a recipient role. He initiated the plan, he fixed the problem through Christ and the cross, He enables us to believe this to be so and He will stay with us and carry us to the end. We only need to receive the gift and trust it.

Here is what Revelation 21:1-5 is telling us:

First, one day heaven and earth will be completely restored, actually made new again. This is a sort of “return to Eden” and the way things were supposed to be.

Second, the text says “I will be their God and they will be my people.” We will dwell with (literally to make home with) one another and with our Maker, perfectly for all eternity. Order and peace perfectly restored again for those who place their faith in Christ as their savior and Lord.

Third, the effects of sin in this life will no longer be experienced vertically and horizontally. All things will be truly new. Order and peace restored and celebrated.



ETERNAL VALUE OF WORK

"But if our daily work, done for the glory of God and the common good of others, in some way carries over to the new heaven and the new earth, then our present work itself is overflowing with immeasurable value and eternal significance."

NELSON, WORK MATTERS, P. 73



WHETHER REFINED OR STARTED OVER- THIS IS TRUE:

"What you do here is not a waste. The skills and abilities you are developing now in your workplace will not be wasted; they will be utilized and further developed in the future work God has for you to do in the new heavens and the new earth."

NELSON, WORK MATTERS, P. 75

One might say that this is a perfect “The End” to the epic story. Do you see how the epic story, the overall plotline of the Bible, clarifies God’s purpose of work and our roles as Christians in our workplaces? We hope these chapters have been a good introduction to helping you as a Christian see your workplace in the context of God’s Epic Story.



Reflection and Application:

1. Reflect on what working will be like in a world with no pain, sorrow or sin.
2. Write down one or two words that might give you hope to keep persevering at being a Christian witness in the workplace until Jesus comes again or you go home to be with the Lord.

Chapter 6: Final Reflections and Worksheets

Final Reflections:

1. What we have just studied from the scriptures, and its application to the workplace, is relevant in every culture and in every century of world history. This is not some interesting idea, or opinion, coming from an educated, suburban, American Christian man. Both human work, and God's Word, have been with us from the beginning of human history and will be a part of our lives forever in the New Earth. This material is applicable for 1st century Israel as well as 21st century China and the USA. That is amazing and humbling.
2. The challenges of being a Christian witness in the workplace are many. And all Christians must admit numerous failures. Do not conclude from this that this mission is impossible and therefore you are justified in giving up. We encourage you to remember that as a child of God, you are always under God's mercy and grace. Fall on His mercy, grace and love for you in your failures. He will carry each Christian into the next day.

3. The opposite side of failures are victories. As Christians fail numerous times, there will be many ways Christians succeed in being effective Christian witnesses in the workplace. The key here is to not have too narrow a definition of success. God uses small things to have significant impact on people's lives as well as big things. When you know you have said or done something that represents Christ in your workplace, one that gets recognized by others or not, take time to celebrate it. Thank God and give Him the glory.
4. We also want to remind you to review your Personal Assessment and Goal Setting Worksheets occasionally. We encourage you to redo them once a year. See appendix B.

Our Ultimate Target in Being Christian Witnesses in the Workplace - The Glory of God:

Here is a final, important stamp on the overall purposes of work: *It is all for God's Glory*. One of the most fundamental principles in the Bible is stated succinctly in 1 Corinthians 10:31 – “whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all to the glory of God.” That is quite a statement. The command “Whatever you do...” is not only intended for your church time or devotional time with God. This means that what we do, say, think and feel *at work* can (and should) be done “for God's glory.” That can be both encouraging and convicting!

It is encouraging because it means even the most mundane of tasks or meetings at work can be done with the mindset that “somehow, I want God to be glorified in this.” This brings our Christian life to life in the mundane of the everyday. On the other hand, it is also convicting because we all know Christians fall short of thinking, acting, speaking and feeling in a way that honors God at work. Praise God for the grace of forgiveness in Christ.

What about this term “the glory of God”? What does that mean in a workplace context? Basically, it means that from our private thoughts and feelings to our public actions and speech, whether in big ways or small ways, Christians should somehow want to *make God look good and give God the ultimate credit*. We want to bring God honor by honoring Him (Matthew 22:37). We want to show people what a valuable treasure He is to us (Matthew 13:44). We want to show People that God is King - not just of our personal life, but of everything on earth, including every place of employment (Psalm 24:1). Christians want to show people that there is something complete in their lives that the world does not have (2 Corinthians 2:15). The Westminster Confession of Faith, written in 1646, asks “What is the chief purpose of man? Its answer - to glorify God and enjoy him forever.”²⁰ The 40+ hours a week the Christian spends at work is a place to fulfill this.

Personal Assessment and Goal Setting Worksheets:

Congratulations! You're almost done. Now comes the most important part of this online series.

²⁰ The Westminster Confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism, question #1.

FIRST, please take time to thoughtfully take the *Personal Assessment Worksheet* in Appendix A below. The instructions are on the top of the worksheet.

SECOND, upon completion of your Personal Assessment Worksheet, please take time to thoughtfully take the *Personal Goal Setting Worksheet* in Appendix A. The instructions are on top of the page.

Don't let these worksheets be a one-time thing! We recommend that you review your answers every so often. We also recommend that you redo these worksheets once or twice a year. Please contact Pastor Seth Stiles if you need blank copies at sethstiles@gmail.com.

**Appendix A:
Personal Assessment
And
Goal Setting Worksheets**

**Christian Witness in the Workplace
Personal Assessment Worksheet²¹**

DATE: _____

Instructions: Considering yourself and your unique workplace, honestly rate yourself on each question below using a simple 1-5 scale, with 1 being “no, not me” or “not good” scaling up to 5 being “yes, that’s me” or “very good”.

Thought/Heart:

_____ 1. Do you consistently think about at least one person at your workplace in a compassionate way?

_____ 2. Do you believe God is doing His work in the world today partly through you at your

²¹ The categories of thought/heart, word and deed below are based on the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39) and the witness-empowering work of the Spirit in Acts 1:8.

workplace?

- _____ 3. Do you think about the gospel or Bible verses during the work week?
- _____ 4. When feeling cynical or unthankful about your job, do you feel convicted and correct yourself?
- _____ 5. Do you occasionally think about how well or poorly you are doing representing Christ in your workplace?

Word:

- _____ 1. Do you avoid gossip, slander and other forms of negative workplace communication?
- _____ 2. Do you take advantage of opportunities for spiritual comments or conversations with co-workers?
- _____ 3. Do you speak with equal integrity toward your boss, co-workers and clients?
- _____ 4. Are you known for positivity in your speech at work?
- _____ 5. Do you think how your speech will affect people before you talk in person and online?

Deed:

- _____ 1. Do you try to serve your workplace in ways that may not get recognition?
- _____ 2. Do you intentionally try to meet with fellow believers and/or non-believers from your workplace with personal ministry to them in mind?
- _____ 3. Do you occasionally offer to help your co-workers outside of the workplace?
- _____ 4. Do you show up for work on time, do quality work while at work and leave work when it's appropriate?
- _____ 5. Do you follow through with deeds you want to do at work such as pray for certain persons by name?
- _____ Finally, on a scale of 1-5, what is your level of interest in being a Christian Witness in your workplace?

MY OVERALL SCORE: (see instructions above)

For me, being a Christian witness in the workplace means²²:

Scoring Interpretation:

- 0 – 20 You need to consider how well you understand and care about living out your Christian life in your workplace.
- 21 – 40 You are off to a pretty good start. Keep seeking God’s help in progressing at living out your Christian life in your workplace.
- 41 – 60 You are doing well; good job. Keep doing the things you are doing well and ask God to help you improve in a couple of your weaker areas.
- 61 – 80 You are doing great in how well you understand and care about living out your Christian life in your workplace. Keep doing what you are doing. Any areas for improvement? Or, consider if you may be overdoing it in any areas?

Christian Witness in the Workplace

Workplace Witness Improvement Worksheet²³

DATE: _____

Instructions: After assessing yourself using the Personal Assessment Worksheet, think and pray about just ONE SPECIFIC way you can improve at being a Christian witness in your workplace in each of the categories below. Because quality is more important than quantity in these things, we ask you to stick with one goal per category only. Your goals do not need to be directly related to the questions in the Personal Assessment Worksheet. Your answers are confidential.

Thought/Heart:

²² Write a personal definition here. This is meant to be a work in progress for you, Return to it from time to time.

²³ Considering yourself and your unique workplace, use a scale of 1-5 to assess how you are doing in achieving these goals quarterly. Re-write goals or write new goals for yourself accordingly. You might ask your spouse or a close Christians co-worker to help in the assessment. Also, it is recommended to fill out the Personal Assessment Worksheet every once in a while as well. The categories of thought/heart, word and deed below are based on the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39) and the witness-empowering work of the Spirit in Acts 1:8.

Goal 1. _____

Notes to self – how I might fulfill this goal:

Word:

Goal 1. _____

Notes to self – how I might fulfill this goal:

Deed:

Goal 1. _____

Notes to self – how I might fulfill this goal:

Motivational Word or Image for Yourself as a Christian Witness in the Workplace²⁴:

Personal Definition of Christian Witness in My Workplace²⁵:

²⁴ Come up with one word or image that is simple and memorable when you think about your overall approach to being a Christian witness in your workplace.

²⁵ Occasionally refine or rework your personal definition of Christian witness in the workplace here.

Other Thoughts and Comments to Self:

**Appendix B:
Common Struggles at Work and
Suggestions for Dealing with Them²⁶**

²⁶ These are common struggles that people have stated about being a Christian witness in the workplace from my personal interview for my Doctoral project. Some of these will be accurate for you and some will not be. I hope that as you read these, you will feel that you are not alone in your efforts to be a Christian witness in the workplace and that doing so is not without consistent challenges.

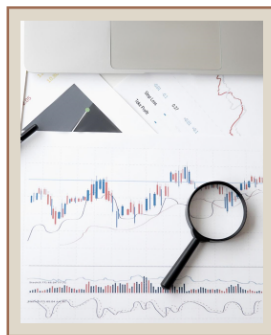
FROM STILES Research

- Faith in the workplace teachings can be overly optimistic
- Group negativity is hard to resist or overcome
- Lack of ability to suffer persecution and ridicule
- Effort to success ratio will be low



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FROM EXPERT Research



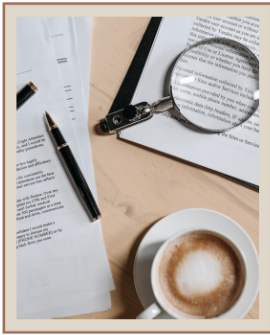
- Complaining
- Submission to (poor) authority
- Remaining humble in success and competition
- Discerning when and when to not talk about spiritual convictions

**Treager/Gilbert, Lutz/Unruh, Gill and Bobo*

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²⁷ 1. In other words, a lot of this material sounds good but easier said than done. 2. Self-explanatory. 3. People consistently doubt that they have the courage to stand up to workplace ostracism and persecution of various forms. 4. People fear, or have experienced, that their efforts to help people see their need for Jesus, the benefits of being a Christian and so forth will be low on the success scale compared to how much effort it takes to try.

²⁸ 1. Christians know they are guilty in getting caught up in complaining at work privately or with others. 2. Self-explanatory. 3. Self-explanatory. 4. Self-explanatory.



FROM EXPERT Research

- How to not bring work home with me
- Speaking up for ethical breaches
- Proper sense of workplace in my personal identity
- Courage to share the Gospel

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SUGGESTIONS FOR SURVIVAL

**Remember the big reason why
God has you at work.**

**Remember people are sinners
(including you).**

**Remember that it's an honor to serve
the Lord Jesus in life and it's worth it.**



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²⁹ 1. Self-explanatory. 2. Self-explanatory. 3. Christians (especially men) can have difficulty clearly defining where the line is drawn for them between caring about and being proud of their work and on the other hand finding too much of their identity wrapped up into it instead of in Christ. 4. Self-explanatory.

³⁰ These should be self-explanatory.



SUGGESTIONS FOR FRUITFULNESS

- Experiment with ways to speak and act as a disciple of Christ that works for you.
- Think: Who's my one (or few)?
- Establish mutual support and counsel with a fellow believer.



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Appendix C

³¹ These should be self-explanatory.

Recommended Resources and About the Author

Books:

Workplace Discipleship 101 by David Gill, 2020.

Work Matters by Tom Nelson, 2011.

God at Work by Gene Veith, 2011.

Websites:

www.madetoflourish.org

www.theologyofwork.org

Studies to do with co-workers:

For a non-Christian co-worker:

Two Ways to Live by Mathias Media. A short evangelistic Bible study based on the two ways to live model – who rules your life, you or God?

www.matthiasmedia.com/collections/outreach/products/two-ways-to-live-bible-study

For a new or young Christian co-worker:

Just for Starters by Mathias Media. Seven simple and short expository Bible studies on the basics of the Christian belief and life, designed to establish a new Christian in the faith. www.matthiasmedia.com/collections/bible-studies/products/just-for-starters-1

God's Epic Story: Does the Bible Answer Mankind's Questions and Needs? by Seth Stiles. A short five session study on the theme of redemption from creation, to fall, to redemption, to mission, to glorification. Produced in Word format. Available by e-mail from the author.

For a seasoned Christian co-worker:

God's Epic Story: Does the Bible Answer Mankind's Questions and Needs? by Seth Stiles. A short five session study on the theme of redemption from creation, to fall, to redemption, to mission, to glorification. Produced in Word format. Available by e-mail from the author.

Making Disciples by Mathias Media. This 8-session study helps the believer understand (a) what a disciple of Jesus is and (b) how to help them make disciples of other people.
www.matthiasmedia.com/collections/training/products/making-disciples

The Bible and Your Work Study Series by Theology of Work, inc. Short, studies on biblical passages that apply to your workplace designed to be done over lunch hour.
<https://www.theologyofwork.org/small-group-studies>

**About The Author:
Dr. Seth R. Stiles**

Seth currently serves as Associate Pastor at Northshore Bible Church in Covington, LA. Seth has 22 years of experience in adult ministry in the local church. He received a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. His dissertation was on Christian witness in the workplace. Seth also has an MA in Biblical Studies and an MA in Christian Education from Dallas Theological Seminary. Seth met his wife Katie married in 2010 and they have been married for twelve years. They have three children, Keelen, Isabelle, and Isaac.