

GRACE BIBLE INSTITUTE PRESENTS

# A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF WORK



**Sunday, January 22, 2017**

Grace Church of Orange  
2201 E. Fairhaven Ave.  
Orange, CA 92869  
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# SCHEDULE

- 4:30 Dinner
- 5:30 Welcome
- 5:40 Session One - Mike Sciarra: Rediscovering the Doctrine of Vocation
- 6:20 Break
- 6:30 Session Two - Mark Holbrook: Becoming TGIM Christ Followers:  
Working with Thankful Hearts
- 7:10 Break
- 7:20 Session Three - Matthew Holbrook: Work as Worship
- 8:00 Q & A

# SESSION ONE: Rediscovering the Doctrine of Vocation

## 1. Leading Ideas

- a. Man's chief aim in work is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Work is not a result of \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Because God is sovereign, our particular vocations are \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. Work is the \_\_\_\_\_ for Gospel witness
- e. Our witness is effective to the extent our lives are \_\_\_\_\_ with our \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. The world and the marketplace are primary environments for believers where \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. Learning a Forgotten Doctrine

Vocation is...

“Vocation has become just another common term for job. As in ‘vocational training’ or ‘vocational education.’ The term, though, is a theological word, reflecting a rich body of biblical teaching about work, family, society, and the Christian life. The term vocation comes from the Latin word for ‘calling.’ The doctrine of vocation is thoroughly biblical, as shall be seen; but as with other scriptural teachings, it surfaced and was developed with its greater rigor during the Reformation.” Gene Veith, Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*

”This idea of vocation ‘the calling’ has no more than the name in common with that which is called so today. The idea of the Calling has been degraded, so disgracefully, into something quite trivial, it has been denuded of its daring and liberating religious meaning to such an extent, and has been made so ordinary and commonplace that we might even ask whether it would not be better to renounce it altogether.” W.R. Forrester, Professor St. Andrews University, *Christian Vocation: Studies in Faith and Work*

“In the Bible, vocation has two primary meanings. The first, and by far more prevalent meaning is the call to become a member of the people of God and to take up the duties that pertain to membership. The Puritans referred to this as God's ‘general calling’; Luther referred to it as God's ‘spiritual calling’ (vocatio spiritualis). This calling is a heavenly calling, a holy calling (II Timothy 2:9). It is the call all Christians have in common, a call to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).”

Douglas Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning our Callings in Life*

## I Corinthians 7:17-24

Here Paul uses "call" [*klesis*] in two different ways. One is the call to fellowship with Christ, a call that meets people in diverse circumstances of life - as married or unmarried, slave or free, circumcised or uncircumcised. The other identifies these circumstances as callings, the constitutive features of a life that the Lord has assigned.

"The Reformers' notion of "the priesthood of all believers" by no means denigrated the pastoral office, as is often assumed, . . . rather it taught that the pastoral office is a vocation, a calling from God with its own responsibilities, authority, and blessings. But it also taught that laypeople as well have vocations, callings of their own that entail holy responsibilities, authorities, and blessings of their own.

Gordon T. Smith, *Courage & Calling: Embracing Your God Given Potential*

"The priesthood of all believers did not make everyone into church workers; rather it turned every kind of work into a sacred calling . . . Every kind of work, including what had heretofore been looked down upon - the work of peasants and craftsmen - is an occasion for priesthood, for exercising a holy service to God and to one's neighbor."

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Calvin College and Theological Seminary  
*Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living*

"If a vocation represents a call of God to serve him in the world, then that vocation is sacred because it comes from God. It therefore makes no sense to speak of a secular vocation; such a phrase is a contradiction in terms. A vocation, because it comes from God, is sacred."

Gordon T. Smith, *Courage & Calling: Embracing Your God Given Potential*

## 3. Listening to Others

The careful researcher will find that all the major fields of law, medicine, education, politics, and the arts were advanced most significantly by Christians who understood that knowing Christ had compelling and practical implications for their life's work. Alvin Schmidt, reveals in his book *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*, how the radical nature of the Christian faith as a shaping force has knit the moral fabric and inspired the highest achievements of Western civilization, with untold benefits to the entire world.

Schmidt observes,

"On the basis of historical evidence, I am fully persuaded that had Jesus Christ never walked the dusty paths of ancient Palestine, suffered, died, and risen from the dead, and never assembled around him a small group of disciples who spread out into a pagan world, the West would not have attained its high level of civilization, giving it the many human benefits it enjoys today."

"God uses other institutions and groups to do some of the business of the kingdom, and Christians play their role in all of them. For instance, God uses industries to generate goods and services, hospitals to care for the hurt and sick, schools to educate intellectual seekers . . . When we open our eyes, we'll find faithful Christians seeking

to extend God's sovereignty in every country, in every precinct of life, including such tough precincts as advertising, journalism, university education, and the military."

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Calvin College and Theological Seminary

"On the other hand, it is a concept which in its Scriptural sense is so full of force and so pregnant in meaning, it gathers up so clearly the final meaning of God's act of grace - the Calling - and the concrete character of the Divine Command in view of the world in which man has to act, that to renounce this expression would mean losing a central part of the Christian message. We must not throw it away, but we must regain its original meaning."

W.R. Forrester, Professor St. Andrews University, *Christian Vocation: Studies in Faith and Work*

"The second meaning is God's diverse and particular callings - special tasks, offices, or places of responsibility within the covenant community and in the broader society. Luther referred to this as God's 'external calling' (vocatio externa); the Puritans referred to it as God's 'particular calling'."

Douglas Schuurman, *Vocation: Discerning our Callings in Life*

## 4. Living in view of these truths

"The priesthood of all believers did not make everyone into church workers; rather it turned every kind of work into a sacred calling . . . Every kind of work, including what had heretofore been looked down upon - the work of peasants and craftsmen - is an occasion for priesthood, for exercising a holy service to God and to one's neighbor."

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Calvin College and Theological Seminary, *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living*

"The chief aim of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

*The Westminster Catechism*

". . . whatever you do, do all for the glory of God."

*I Corinthians 10:31*

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify [worship] your Father who is in Heaven."

*Matthew 5:16*

"So that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God, above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the World, holding fast the Word of life . . ."

*Philippians 2:15-16*

The Anabaptists used the German term *Nachfolge Christi*, “Following Christ,” or “discipleship,” which was central to their understanding of the Christian life and to their theology.”

John R. Martin, *Ventures in Discipleship*, pg 13-14

“In essence the discipleship which the Anabaptists proclaimed was simply the bringing of the whole life under the Lordship of Christ, and the transformation of this life, both personal and social, after His image. From this point of view they subjected not only the church but the whole social and cultural order **to criticism**, rejected what they found to be contrary to Christ, and attempted to put into actual practice His teachings as they understood them both ethically and sociologically.”

Harold S. Bender, *The Anabaptist Theology of Discipleship*, pg 31

# **SESSION TWO: Becoming TGIM Christ Followers: Working with Thankful Hearts**

## **1. WORK: God's Gift**

TGIM: Thank God It's Monday

Work: God's Curse or God's Gift?

**The Curse:** Genesis 3:17-19; Ecclesiastes 2:17

**The Gift:** Made in God's Image (Genesis 2:1-3; 15)

Ecclesiastes 3:9-15; 5:18-20

1. The gift of
2. The gift of
3. The gift of
4. The gift of
5. The gift of

## 2. WORK: For God's Glory

What (almost) everyone really wants out of their work:

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*“If lay-people cannot find any spiritual meaning in their work, they are condemned to living a certain dual life; not connecting what they do on Sunday morning with what they do the rest of the week. They need to discover that the very actions of daily life are spiritual...”*

--- William Diehl

Ten Commandments of Work:

1. Be the best that you can be at what you do.

The myth of \_\_\_\_\_

Life-long learners?

2. Be on time

3. Be diligent

4. Be faithful (in small things)



5. Be trustworthy

6. Be dependable

7. Be forbearing

8. Be generous

9. Be loyal

10. Be thankful.

Above all:

### 3. WORK: For God's Gospel. You really can share your faith at work.

There will always be \_\_\_\_\_

#### Title VII:

Sincerely held religious beliefs:

*“Moral or ethical beliefs as to what is right and wrong which are sincerely held with the strength of traditional religious views.”*

What you must do to protect your religious rights at work:

“Can I share the gospel at work?”

“Can I bring my bible to work?”

“Can I be required to work on Sundays?”

“Can my company require me to do work that violates my Christian convictions?”

More information: <https://aclj.org/free-speech-2/christian-rights-in-the-workplace>

# SESSION Three: Work as Worship

Work that \_\_\_\_\_ God is worship - not a \_\_\_\_\_ to worship but is worship itself.

When the end purpose of work is worship...

1) We \_\_\_\_\_ (Phil 1)

a. Our \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 8)

b. Our \_\_\_\_\_ (Phil 2:14, Col. 3:13-17, Phil. 2:1-11)

c. Our \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (Phil 4:4, Phil 4:6-7)

d. Our \_\_\_\_\_ (Prov. 3:5-6)

2) We see work as the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Ps. 137:14, Matthew 6)  
Romans 1:20; Ps. 19:1

Affects how we see \_\_\_\_\_ .

a. Affects how we \_\_\_\_\_.

i. \_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17

3) Our work is \_\_\_\_\_ by God's \_\_\_\_\_