

# Work and Worship

## I. BIBLICAL DESIGN

- A. God created mankind in his image and then placed him in a garden sanctuary filled with all manner of trees, animals, fruits and vegetables
- B. God dwelt in that Garden. He walked in it, talked with mankind.
  - 1. It was where the heavenlies met the earth, a divine place, holy
  - 2. Man's job in that place? To work it and to keep it (Genesis 2:15)
  - 3. To till the soil, care for the plants and animals, and, therefore, serve God
- C. This phrase, work and keep, is crucial to our understanding of the Garden of Eden as a sort of sanctuary, a divine temple
- D. Elsewhere, those two infinitives used together reference the way the priests of Israel were to function within the Tabernacle and the Temple.
  - 1. They were to work there, and to keep it
  - 2. Care for it, guard it, exercise their duties there
- E. The point: In the beginning, **God created mankind to be priests, serving God**
  - 1. There was a priesthood of all humans (as there was a kingship last week)
  - 2. God's created design was that humanity would reign as kings and priests — they would be a kingdom under YHWH; priests to serve their God.
  - 3. There was no secular and sacred divide (king / priest). All was one.
  - 4. And all was well in the world.
- F. Until it wasn't. The Fall resulted in separation.
  - 1. Exiled from Garden, denied access to the sanctuary & God's presence
  - 2. Now the way was guarded by angelic flaming swords, and the only way to draw near was through the shedding of sacrificial blood
  - 3. In the Law, whereas once all were priests, now God redeemed and set aside a particular group of people, called the Levites, to be his priests
  - 4. Instead of them coming into his Garden, they would have to settle for a shadow of his dwelling in the Tabernacle
- G. The priests would work in the tabernacle and keep it.
  - 1. They made sure the bread was fresh, the lamps were lit, incense was burning, the unclean were kept out, the people were educated, all was in order, and - of course, sacrifices were made... blood spilled
  - 2. But the blood of bulls and goats could never take away the sin of a nation, let alone the sin of the world. It couldn't reconcile the separation
  - 3. The days of the priesthood of all people was long gone, and now it resided only in promises, prophecies and dreams
- H. In Christ, this all changed
  - 1. Jesus came as a prophet, a priest, and a king
  - 2. He came as a prophet like Moses, to lead his people as the mouthpiece of God on an exodus greater than Egypt
  - 3. He came as a king, fulfilling the promises given to King David and his kin, that an eternal dynasty would be established

4. He came as a priest, not a Levite, but a priest who was of the ancient (pre-Israelite) order of Melchizedek, The King of Righteousness, King of Salem (which means peace)
5. What did Jesus accomplish in these roles?

*I. Revelation 5:9–10, And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” (ESV)*

1. This high priest, this king, was executed on a cross although innocent
2. But with his blood he ransomed, purchased, people for God, just as the Prophet Moses had watched God ransom the Levites many years ago and establish a priesthood
3. The end result of Jesus' sacrifice was that he purchased people from every tribe (not just the Levites... not just the Israelites...)
  - a) To be a kingdom... blessed to have dominion
  - b) To be a priest... working and keeping the Garden
  - c) To reign... as co-heirs with Christ
4. Sound familiar? It's Genesis 1 & 2 all over again
  - a) To have dominion - KING
  - b) To work and to keep - PRIEST
5. Jesus' work was amazing, and the result is that, in Christ, you were purchased with his blood for a remarkable calling → priesthood

**J. Do you want to know your purpose and calling? It's to be a king and priest.**

K. No secular and sacred divide. King and priest. All of us!

L. That's right. God's original design has been restored. So, what do you do now?

## II. A CULTURAL HURDLE

A. You are living in a culture that has been 100% tarnished by an unhealthy theology of vocation.

1. We naturally separate the secular and the sacred
2. We think only certain people can perform spiritual duties
3. But is this right? What does the Bible teach about our vocation?

B. I say vocation b/c vocation is basically Latin for calling or assignment

1. God calls us to faith and spiritual life
2. God calls us to areas of service (work, family, life)
3. God assigns us a role, a family, a country in which to be born, etc
4. All of this is, technically, “our vocational footprint”

C. Paul explains it this way, *“Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him” (1 Cor. 7:17).*

1. God has assigned a life to you that you would walk in it.

*D. Ephesians 2:10 parallels, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*

1. God has created work for you to do, prepared it in advance
2. How do we figure out our calling? How do we know what to do?

- E. Our vocational footprint is made up of three areas: Household, Church, the State
1. Household. This is your family, your job, your personality, etc
    - a) Marriage, parenting, being a son or daughter, even gender - these are all considered to be vocations... assigned to you by God
    - b) The very word “economy,” comes from the Greek words for “house” (oikos) and “management” (nomia) - *oikonomia*
    - c) This is our most important vocation. Caring for our family... spiritually leading our family.. providing for our family
  2. The Church. All Christians are called and assigned by name in the gospel to be adopted into God’s family, the Church.
    - a) Within the church, God also calls pastors, elders, deacons, and other church workers to have particular responsibilities
    - b) Beyond that, all members of God’s family have a vocational responsibility (love, encourage, exhort, build up, etc)
    - c) Remember: there is a priesthood of all believers
  3. The State. We live in Cape May County... in NJ... in the USA...
    - a) We are Americans, and within our congregation we find various cultures to which we belong.
    - b) This too is part of our vocation - our calling, our assignment
    - c) This means that Christians can and should function within the “state,” bettering our communities and our nation as salt and light
    - d) E.G. You cannot separate yourself from the world around you
- F. Do you view the above things as your callings? Probably not... or maybe just with parts. Instead, we view them - often begrudgingly - as responsibilities
1. Too many parents view their children as a burden
  2. Too many people view their jobs as a hassle
  3. Too many children forget that being a child is a vocational assignment
    - a) Ex: “The new job’s a hassle and the kids got the flu, but it was sure nice talking to you, Dad. It was sure nice talking to you.”
  4. In the church, people think ministry is “the pastor’s job” and they think evangelism is “for the missionary”
  5. Often Christians do not want to be involved in the state b/c they view it as less, secular, and somehow beneath what we should be doing
  6. We have a twisted view of vocation, calling, and assignment
- G. These FALSE beliefs exist b/c we have created a secular and sacred divide which isn’t in the Bible. It actually is a false teaching established by the RCC
1. RCC taught that only the sacred is a calling and if you want to have meaning and purpose then you need to pursue the clergy
  2. Historically, this created a tiered system of value where the RCC priests left the secular world and entered into the spiritual world
    - a) The result? Many falsely believe that they cannot find purpose and meaning in life b/c their vocational footprint is somehow “less”

3. Admit it - do you think that Christian and Alenna's lives have more purpose than your own b/c they are missionaries? Do you think God takes more pleasure in their work than in yours?
    - a) Then you have been corrupted by this RC teaching!
  4. The RCC historically taught that to truly pursue the spiritual, to please God, serve him well, and honor him, a person must exchange the secular for the sacred
    - a) Family for celibacy || work for poverty || state for church
    - b) They taught that the people who do that are the REAL priests, but everyone else? They're just normal
  5. The Protestant Reformation rejected all these ideas
    - a) It rightly saw them as "works righteousness" where people tried to earn favor with God by joining the priestly order as a "work"
    - b) It emphasized that we are saved by grace FOR work, not by work
- H. Go back to our biblical explanation
1. The Bible doesn't say that SOME are priests, but that ALL believers are
  2. This does not mean that every person is a pastor or an elder
  3. It also does not mean that we don't need elders b/c we are all priests
  - 4. It means that you do not need to be a pastor in order to be a priest!**
  5. According to the Bible, scallopers, artists, carpenters, lawyers, motel owners, waitresses, Coasties, husbands, moms, and kids (in Christ) are ALL priests to serve our God
  6. How do we serve God? Through every day, ordinary working and keeping! Changing diapers for the glory of God.
  - 7. Colossians 3:23, Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men...*
- I. This is why you don't call me Father Bill or priest. You call me pastor, or even just Bill is fine (TBH)
1. What do pastors do? Pastors raise, care for, and protect sheep (my job)
  2. What do priests do? Priests offer sacrifices to God (all of our job)
  3. Ex: I am a priest, but my vocation, my job, is to be a shepherd/pastor. I aim to raise sheep well so that they can be healthy priests
  4. What again was the primary job of the priest? Sacrifice
  5. And what is the primary role of the shepherd? Care for sheep
  6. And what do we sacrifice? Sheep... hmmm.
- J. *Romans 12:1-5, [1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
1. In light of the gospel... in light of the fact that you have been purchased by the blood of Christ... in light of the fact that you are now a kingdom and priests to serve your God...

2. Sacrifice the sheep... sacrifice yourself... but make sure it is a healthy sacrifice, one that is seeking to hear and obey King Jesus
  3. What does this look like practically?
- K. *[3] For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. [4] For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, [5] so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*
1. What does this look like practically? It looks different for every person
  2. Because every person has been **ASSIGNED** a different calling
  3. Each of us has a **different vocational footprint**
    - a) Different families, different talents, different gifts, different culture
  4. We are one body, the Church, but we are quite diverse
  5. You don't become more spiritual by being a missionary - that's just what God has assigned to some, and not all
  6. You don't become more spiritual by being an elder, as if it's a ladder to climb - that's just what God has assigned to some
  7. And to others he has assigned many other things!
- L. Do you want to find purpose and meaning? Do you want to feel spiritually fulfilled? Well **you don't have to be a pastor in order to be a priest.**
1. You don't have to abandon the secular to pursue the sacred
  2. That distinction doesn't exist

### III. IMPLICATION:

- A. You are called to live for something remarkable → priesthood
- B. Stop demeaning your daily lives as “less” than important b/c it's not “spiritual”
- C. Do you want to honor God? Do you want to work for God? Here is how:
  1. Be a godly husband... a man who washes his wife clean with the Word of God and prayer, not a husband who ignores his wife while he plays Xbox
  2. Be a godly dad... a dad who leads his family well spiritually and is present for them, even if it means making less money
  3. Be a godly son... a son who honors his mom and dad well
  4. Be a godly worker... someone who works hard, without complaint, without a sour attitude, doing their best as if they were laboring for God
  5. Care for your community (the Church) and your neighborhood (the State)
    - a) Use your gifts, talents, and abilities to love people well
  6. Abiding intimately with Jesus in the Word and Prayer, grow in your faith, share the love of God and the truth of the gospel
  7. As you do these things, you are pouring out your life, O priest, as a sacrifice to our God — and the aroma is pleasing to him
- D. Some of us are called to be shepherds, elders, or the like
- E. Others are called to be teachers, sanitation workers, plumbers, or bankers
- F. Some are assigned to have a lot of wealth, others very little
- G. But if you are in Christ, you are a king.. and you are a priest.

1. You don't need to be a pastor to be a priest.
- H. All of life is sacred, so work well at it, and guard your own unique vocational footprint
- I. Grab a "calling" sheet on the way out and start faithfully living the life that God has assigned to you! Start at HOME...JOB...CHURCH...WORLD