

TAKING THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES INTO THE WORKPLACE

Some centering texts: Col. 3:17 & 22-24, Eph. 6:5-10, 1 Peter 2:13-20, Rom. 5:17

1. We *will* take a **theology** into the workplace, it is just a question of *which* one.
Even the atheist takes his negative theology into the workplace.
As does the Deist. Or the most devout disciple.
 2. God is non-dependent personal reality (Ex. 3:14 and John 4:23-24)—Creator of the physical cosmos out of love, His basic nature is love infinitely empowered.
Love is **will to good**. (Note how often “good” shows up in Gen. 1.)
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3. And we will take an **anthropology** into the workplace: An understanding of who we are and what we are to do, as well as of what our resources are.
Limited will, intellect and energy—meant to function *under* larger powers.
Made for vast dominion under God. Gen. 1:26, Ps. 8:3-8, Heb. 2:5-9, Rev. 22:5.
 4. Human “kingdoms” are God’s gift in creation, and a requirement of God’s purposes in creating humans. “Dominion.” Persons have “kingdoms”—the range of their effectual will:
Human “work” is intended to be an extension of God’s loving creativity.
Division of labor and loving community.
The “professions” and the common good.
But “sin enters” and “death reigns.” (Rom. 5:13-14)
Kingdoms *of humans* then in conflict. From the family on.
Jacob: “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” (Gen. 28:16)
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5. And we will take our **soteriology** into the workplace: our understanding of *salvation* or *deliverance*.
God’s “problem,” as it were, is: How to restore the human kingdoms under God. Not just blot them out.
How to preserve human freedom and personality and yet bring humans back into conformity with God’s kingdom and purposes.
“It was for freedom that Christ set us free.” (Gal. 5:1)
 6. The choice of *a family* to mediate human deliverance. Abraham. (Gen. 18:18-19)
The promise to bless all nations through him is fulfilled in Christ and his “Great Commission.” (Matt. 28:19-20) “Make disciples of all kinds of people.”
 7. The gospel invitation is to **life now in the kingdom of God with Jesus** as Teacher and Lord. “Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is available.” (Matt 4:17)
What “faith in Christ means.”—He is the one totally in charge. *Maestro!*
This is the basis of becoming his disciple.

8. As his disciple I am learning from him how to live my life in the kingdom of God as he would live my life if he were I. “Spiritual formation” in Christ results.
9. Problems caused by the idea of “full time Christian service.”
The view that “ordinary” occupations are not full time Christian service.
The distinction long-standing in Christian history. Eusebius’ statement.
But Luther and “the priesthood of the believer”:
As just doing what he or she does in “ordinary” life. Ploughboy/milkmaid.
10. Disciplines are for disciples: They are activities in my power that enable me to do things that I cannot do by direct effort, or by just “trying.” That is the *concept*.
11. They are given to us by God so that we can (with help) determine what kind of person we become. Both in areas of normal human ability and in the domain of grace.
“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for what your life amounts to comes from it.” (Prov. 4:23)
“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:1-2)
12. Some tried and true disciplines for living in the kingdom with Jesus:
Disciplines of abstinence:
Solitude, Silence, Fasting, Frugality, Chastity, Secrecy, Sacrifice, etc.
Disciplines of engagement:
Study, Worship, Celebration, Service, Prayer, Fellowship, Confession, etc.
13. They do not *earn* righteousness, but help us *live* righteously in God’s power and under His direction. “Means of grace.” We approach them experimentally to learn what helps and what does not.
14. We do not enter them “heroically,” but gently and persistently, preferably in community with others doing the same.
15. Two examples: Solitude and Scripture memorization. How they work and what they do to transform us by the renewing of our minds.
16. Spiritual disciplines enable us *to weave the presence of God throughout the texture of our lives and carry out our work and our play “in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”* (Col. 3:17)
17. The church is for discipleship, but discipleship is for “the world” under God. Our world will not work without disciples.
18. “Salvation” is participating in the life Jesus is now living on earth. (Col. 3:1-4)