

Work Vocation & the Gospel

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[0 : 00] All right. Well, thanks for coming this morning. This is the last session of our class on integrating work and faith.

! So we hope this has been an edifying class for you.! It certainly has been for me and for Kunle as well.

The plan for today is really discussion-based. So I'll take a couple minutes just to review the arc of the course.

And Kunle and I have been marinating on questions that have come up in our minds over the course of the last few weeks and maybe some things that we've heard bubbling up in our discussion here.

So we have a few things that we've been considering and are ready to discuss, but I'll do the review. And we'll maybe start with one question to get the juices flowing.

[1 : 03] But then really the hope today is that we can apply everything that we've been talking about for the last few weeks and that we can apply it together as we interact with the concepts.

So let me just open us up in prayer real quick and then we'll get started. Father, we just thank you for the truth and the joy that your word brings to our lives.

And we thank you that in your word you've shown us the goodness of work, Lord, that you worked and that it was good and that you call us to participate in the work of cultivating your creation.

Lord, we pray that as we engage with these concepts together today, that it would be a time of learning, a time of joy. Lord, in just a time of togetherness as we embrace the truth and love that we see reflected in your word for us.

Father, we just thank you for Jesus and it's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right. So we had five weeks of discussion and broadly the first couple of weeks covered the goodness of work.

[2 : 22] The second couple of weeks covered the brokenness of work. And then last week was putting it all together. So in the first couple of weeks, we talked about God's good design for work, that he worked in the beginning, that it was good, and that he calls us to participate in that work in a number of different ways.

So he calls us to work with our minds, with our hands. He calls us to spiritual work and material work. He calls us to cultural work, unpaid work, paid work.

And one of the things that we uncovered in that was that none of these types of work is better than another because our primary calling in work is in relationship with the Lord.

And the work of being justified before the Lord has been completed already. And because that work is done and there's nothing that we can do to better justify ourselves before the Lord, that all of our labor for the kingdom is viewed as equally valuable to the Lord.

We also saw that there are God-given limits in that, that it's important to rest from our work, and that all of this was part of God's good design for us to engage as sub-creators in the work that he is doing in the world.

[3 : 53] In the second couple of weeks, we talked about the brokenness of work when things go awry. Week number three was sort of the brokenness out there, right?

There is fruitlessness and meaninglessness that can crop up in our work because of the way that sin has introduced brokenness into the world. This idea of fruitlessness was that despite our best efforts, we might envision an end product of our work that we're not able to achieve, either because of our own limitations or because of limitations that we see systemically and structurally, or in other individuals in the world.

But the brokenness of work doesn't just exist out there in the world. Sin affects our own hearts, and it affects the way that we view and interact with our work.

So work can become selfish. We can be working for our own end and for our own gain, for our own glory. And work can reveal our idols in that.

We can see many ways that we're distorting the point of work to help us achieve financial security, to help us achieve the kind of relationships that we want to have, and a number of different ways that we might be elevating good things to ultimate things as idols in our work.

[5 : 21] So there's a good design for work, but there's brokenness in the midst of work. And then last week, Kunle helped us sort of put that all together in what I think was called the new conception of work.

And we talked a lot about the narrative, right? Redefining the narrative. In any good narrative, there's a beginning where things are good, and then there's a problem, and then there's a resolution.

And we have a goal of just redefining the narrative or better understanding the narrative that we live in in our work that helps us bring joy and meaning and direction for the work that we're doing, right? So the creation in the beginning was good. Sin entering the world is the problem. And the rest of the story is the resolution of God through Jesus, redeeming the brokenness of the world and ushering in the new creation in anticipation of that final day when there's no more sin, no more death, no more tears, no more suffering.

And we're all part of that story. And so understanding where we are in our work, in our little sphere of creation, as part of that broader narrative can help us find meaning and direction and purpose in our work.

[6 : 51] So Kunle, anything I missed in the review? No, I think we had maybe the only thing to remember is the work under the work, that it is sort of tied to the point around idolatry, but sometimes it is not just about the work.

As an example, I always laugh at that. You know, they only pay, they pay the president of the United States what they pay mid-level executives in technology companies, but nobody wants to be president for the salary, right?

Like, it is just like the work underneath the work. There are multiple motivations and that, in our case, often there is an identity that is beyond the back of the work that is very subtle.

I think sometimes it's only through circumstances that God brings our way that we kind of realize, like, why exactly am I working? Sometimes it is the anxieties that we have that reveal the work underneath the work, but through the power of the gospel.

Like, when the gospel frees us, if we can do nothing to earn God's favor, how much more do we, it's nothing else of that significance in any case, or in any earthly significance, and then we are set free to work as God designed.

[8 : 10] So, let's just do it. Great. So, again, the hope is that we could take some time together to interact with this in some specific and helpful ways.

You know, that's a great summary, but in a lot of ways it's still pretty abstract, and there are probably some very specific questions that we all have because everybody works, right? And we all encounter questions about how we think and feel about our work, how we should be reacting in certain situations in our work, and the possibilities of things that we could address are sort of endless.

And so, we, as I said, have a few things that we can discuss. I'll start off with one, but we would welcome additional questions after this.

And also, as you have been thinking about this and interacting with these concepts, we would just love for this to be a helpful discussion that can benefit everybody.

So, it doesn't just have to be sort of a one-way Q&A.; So, I'll just start. The first, one of the first questions that I got was around ambition.

[9 : 26] How do we think about professional ambition? Is that an okay thing? Is it purely sinful? Or should we all be always thinking about how we're going to get better and grow in our jobs?

Yeah, Ivor. It depends on how far they take it. Okay, say more about that. Yeah, okay. If the person is driven, and let's other things slide in their life, like family or, you know, church or whatever, in order to impress their bosses so they can move up.

Yeah, I think that's a great response, that there's a balance that we need to be maintaining in the work that we pursue. Yeah, Susan. So, the question I was going to ask that actually overlaps. Okay. Because now, there's just boundaries at work. Okay. Because as a Christian, you desire us to serve. Oh, yeah. But we've all been in situations where they will gladly let you serve until you are hanging on by your fingernails.

So, how to communicate, how to get the right runway. Okay. How to get on the right trajectory. Yeah.

[10:47] Okay. So, for the sake of the recording, I'm going to try to repeat your question, which is essentially, how do we work well for the Lord while also implementing good and healthy boundaries in the work that we do?

More than one. Ivor. I'd like to add something. Okay. I was a union member once in my working life. And often, I got caught between management and the union.

And, you know, I'll give you for instance. According to the union, you should work as hard as the slowest or weakest member of your team.

And according to management, they want you to give your best all the time. So, what do you do as a Christian? Yes.

I have an episode of working. My boss is a Christian. I just recently retired. But she would talk to us about being culture carriers, social work, going in and trying to change the culture.

[11:57] And I think that at work, not only did I identify as being a social worker and being a helper, but also as a Christian.

So, there would be discussions in my office about, in a negative way, towards Christianity. And I just continued to identify as what I was.

But also bring something else into it. When someone would say something critical, I don't understand why she said that, why she was also sympathetic towards another group in the Middle East.

Do not say because she has empathy and because everyone is suffering. Because, you know, so kind of trying to change culture also.

I think where I worked, I know what you're talking about. Because even where we didn't have a union, but I think people do get upset when you work hard and you give more.

[12:57] Because then they're afraid they'll be expected of that sometimes. So, as long as you kind of do it in a quiet way, people don't mind. Because then they start giving you the more typical cases.

Which, those are the cases you want, anyway. Those are the cases you want. Even when I worked in special ed. All the kids that were the toughest. Like one day, I came back and one of the behaviorists came out and said, your son, because I consider him like a son.

He wasn't my son. They had to, the squat team had to come take him out. Something, you know.

But I always, for some reason, gravitated towards the children that they thought were more difficult. But that was just my thing. That's great. Yeah, thank you for sharing that. I think that's really helpful. And this is awesome. So, now I think, so I've heard, I think, three or four distinct questions or topics already come up.

Which, this is awesome. This is exactly what we wanted to do. But so, we started off with ambition. We got to boundaries, which is another separate question.

[14:06] I think there's an aspect of what Ivor was saying, which is, how do we think about respecting authority and hierarchy as a Christian in the way that we interact with either our union members or our management?

And then I think there's an aspect of how do we, how do we be salt and light as we engage in the cultural cultivation of creation?

Kind of like we've discussed in the last few weeks. So, let me, my hope is that we can try to take some of these in chunks and tie them back to some of the principles that we've discussed over the last five weeks so that we can try to get our hands around how we might be thinking about these wells.

So, let me start with ambition. And I think one of the things that I wanted to highlight with ambition is it's nuanced. And I think that's going to be an answer to almost everything that is going to come up. And so, it depends. It depends. So, I think that there is a good and right kind of ambition. The nature of ambition is that there's more to do, right?

[15:29] We look around us and we say, there is more to do here. There's more to do here. There's more to do here. And ambition comes in and says, in a good way, I desire to do more and I think I can do more.

And I think that ties back to the first couple of weeks where we recognize that God designed us to work and that he's designed us to work in unique ways in specific spheres of creation, right?

So, I think it's a good thing to look at your work or look around you and say, I would love the opportunity to step in and make a difference over here where I'm not already doing that.

And I think where the dangerous shift comes in is not that I can do more and I desire to do more, but that I deserve to do more or I must do more, right?

And I think that gets into, I think that starts to overlap maybe with some of the boundaries conversation, with the respect for authority conversation, these other kinds of things.

[16:40] Because now, we're not off, our ambition is not in service to the cultivation of God's creation. It's in service primarily to our own ends in our own glory.

And so, I think for me, it's never really binary, right? The idea of sin isn't that it makes everything as bad as possible all of the time, but it does affect everything in some way all of the time, right?

And so, we have to sort of look at our own professional ambition and say, I recognize that I desire to do more in this sphere over here. But when I start to detect in my own heart or maybe other people detect in our behavior that we're trying to sort of control the ends, when we're trying to control the outcome, it becomes a little bit dangerous to say, it has to be this way or else there is some problem that's not being addressed.

So, that's a kind of, Kunle? No, I would add to that. I think that's a pretty good framework if you think about the progression of questions.

I think there's a second element of why. Why do you want to? Like, it's like, so it depends. When I think, Alex, what you said about it depends, I think it's great.

[18:12] It's going to apply. But oftentimes, it always comes to why. One, and then two is, what does this, how does this intersect with other responsibilities that God has given me?

So, I would like to do more, but hey, I'm not doing enough at home. So, like, it gets, if it's like, if you're working outside. But God has also called me to do another thing.

And so, how does it, how does it, how does it balance with that? One example, in, I think it's in Acts chapter 6, when there was a quarrel about the distribution of food.

The apostles were like, we cannot leave preaching to serve tables. Not like it was bad, it was just, they had another responsibility. And so, if they were like, well, we would do this and that, then it would have done neither of them well.

And so, I think, just why are you doing it if it's often for self-glory or the, or are you doing it for the good of, you know, this would be good.

[19:13] Even if nobody saw me doing this, this would be good to do. This would be good because, you know, God would be glorified. This would be beneficial to everyone. Yeah, I think, then do more as long as it doesn't, you know, come against other constraints that God has given us.

So, that would be the only filter I would add there. You feel compelled because it may be showing the love of Christ. Sort of, you know, helping people who feel abandoned.

And you just, I don't know, sometimes. I like that though, the lie. You just feel compelled because hopefully it's God compelling you.

Yeah. You can't really rest if you feel like, you know, I've got this, there's this, and it's compelling. Yeah. I think I saw, yeah, Jack.

I think we tend to be critical of antelope. Mm-hmm. So, where there's a lot of really good things that happen from it. Like, the president of, or the chairman of, Goya is a Christian.

[20:22] And he actually quotes scripture in some of his speeches, which God helps him today. Mm-hmm. So, if he doesn't get stoned. But, I'm sure he would have to be very ambitious.

And I even think he didn't have to do some pretty difficult things to get the chairman. And I'm sure he's a lot better through his employees and stuff than most people.

And another case was my son was in, he's in, was in IT. And he, he worked with a lot of, and he used to talk about the empty suits all the time and everything.

And I said, yeah, but if you work hard and you become an empty suit, you can make it better for others. Mm-hmm. And sure enough, he became, he got out there pretty good. And he did, he did so

many great things for his team.

He even gave his bosses to them. He was, but, you know, so a lot didn't happen. You know, you have to be ambitious to get in a position to help people. I think that's a really helpful point.

[21 : 24] I don't think, and we certainly do not want to demonize ambition because ambition can be a God-given motivation to accomplish the work that he's called us to do.

And I do think that God uses ambition in certain people to bring them to certain positions for the good of his kingdom. Right.

And so I think it's, it's really helpful to, to call that out. And I think there's an element of work to be done. I think if you're in your current position and thinking, I'd love to grow, you know, I envision myself as, as CEO one day.

There is work to be done to do that. Right. And it's okay to put in the effort to build the foundation that you see as in, in wisdom as necessary to get to this place where you feel like God might be leading you.

I think the danger is when you're not trying to build the foundation on the rock, but that you're trying to build the foundation for yourself and make it happen in your own effort at all costs.

[22 : 42] Right. We have to, at some point say, I think that God is leading me in this direction. And I recognize that I could be wrong. And so in my wisdom, I'm going to do everything that I can to pursue this with my whole heart.

Um, but I'm, I'm not going to, if it doesn't happen, then Lord, you, your will be done, not my will be done.

Yeah. And then maybe two, two things, uh, to emphasize something that Alex just said. I think we all have blind spots. So community and doing it to people is helpful because, you know, the Bible says the heart is deceitful.

Yeah. Like, Oh, no, your heart can deceive you. And so community helps us with that. The second thing is like, it is good, but as Christians, ambition is not the only thing that can get us where we need to go.

And I just wanted to give Joseph was an example. He did not, at the time he was, he was not, he wasn't like, Oh man, I'm going to be the best prisoner guard in this prison so that one day I could potentially do that.

[23 : 49] And that is like, he was faithful in the things that he, in the opportunities that he was given. And so sometimes it becomes dangerous when in seeking ambition, we are also not faithful to the things that God has called us to do.

So primarily it's about faithfully serving and then trusting the Lord who sees in secret to reward and open. Like, that's just, and so does it mean that you cannot seek opportunities?

I don't think, I think we've covered some of that, but I just think that like, it can get a little bit stressful thinking, Oh, if I am not ambitious, I am not going to get. And that is, as Christians, that is not true. It is just not true. God is the one who orchestrates our path and he's the one who is able to lift us up and put us wherever he wants to. And I think, and that way, when we get there, we're also not in a, trying to then guard because you then recognize too that I got there because of God's help.

I wanted to quickly touch on the thing around boundaries because I think it is sort of related. I think at the core of boundaries would be, really it is about, we all exist in multiple roles.

[24 : 55] Our job, even in the first class, I think it was Richard who was, who called out that that mandate, it was not only, we talked a lot about the cultural mandate, but there was the fruitfulness mandate.

And I was like, Oh, you know, God called them to be fruitful, to multiply, you know, I mean, fill the earth and to subdue it. There is a fruitfulness aspect that is not necessarily about work. There's like a multiplication of like building families, building communities.

And so even as we exist as workers today, our lives also contain multitudes, but, and so, but all of them have different callings that God has given us.

And so boundaries reflect one is how am I being responsible to all of the things that God has called me in this particular season? One. Um, and so, and then how am I respecting even just the way God made us to work?

So there's the cycles of the rhythms of rest and work we see right from, right from the garden. And I think in the first class, we talked about how that, that rhythm is not because it was a pattern that we see later after God and God doesn't rest because he is tired.

[26 : 04] There is a, it is instituted not just for our physical rest, but because actually, and I think Keller talks about it in his book, those breaks also help us to refocus on the one who called us to work.

Uh, like rest as a form of worship, as a form of reorientation towards God who called us to work. And so, that is how I would bring together all of these elements and then start to shape us with the right constraints.

You can then say, oh, well, actually, I don't know that I can do that because of X. Or, you know, like, I can do that because I would have more capacity or its ability to serve.

So the, it depends, we require, would be the, there is a judgment about the need. There is a judgment about your personal responsibilities as God has given you. Um, and also the way God has made us to work.

And then the final thing is that sometimes there is like an underlying, some people work too hard because they are doing the work under the work. They do not rest because of that.

[27 : 09] Like the work, being busy is a form of an identity. Um, and I think the inability to do that, uh, shows that it's not really just about the work.

And they may need, you know, harder boundaries around the work, um, to manage that. Now, the other, it depends, is, is a season, right? Uh-huh. Medical students and residents have different work boundaries than like, you know, even attendings.

Uh, because there is, you are in a season of preparation. Some seasons are more intense than others. Students pull all-nighters regularly. Not, well, hopefully not too regularly. But, but it's part of it.

It's like, this is a season. And the idea is that if you have to do that for a season, it's got to be, you got to have a sense of how long is this? And what's the final end of this? And what's the goal?

Uh, because we can also tend towards that. Tim Keller gives another example in this book, *Committing of Marriage*. When they started *Redeemer*, they worked a lot. It was a very, it was a lot of work. But he and his wife had had a conversation about, you know, it's only going to take three years.

[28 : 10] It's going to be really intentional. She was on board with it. And after three years, he was still going. And then he has this famous China episode where she's breaking plates. And like, you told me it was three years. And he recognized that even in the work of the ministry, which is good work, he could also run out, I mean, not have the right boundaries.

So I think in a nutshell, those would be the considerations I would talk about in terms of boundaries. What would we say to, you know, not what I know, but hypothetically, someone who maybe lacked ambition to a degree that maybe they're not fulfilling the cultural mandate as well as maybe they could be?

Yeah, that's a great question. So how do we, what would we say to someone on the other side of the coin who is not, who is lacking ambition and maybe just inherent motivation in their work?

I think I would want to know why. It depends. Yeah, it depends. I would want to, yes, sorry, Sarah, do you want to say?

I just, well, I think maybe the question too is like, does God call everyone to ambition? So we may be, yep.

[29 : 36] And so I think we need to be careful about the terminology that we're using, right? So like ambition, the way that we're talking about ambition here is I, in its best form, I, I can do more and I desire to do more.

Um, you may be doing good work and you might be satisfied in the work that you're doing and that can be okay. I think the nature of Joshua's question is that you're not even fulfilling sort of the baseline expectation of the work.

So not only lacking ambition necessarily, but even lacking motivation. Am I understanding the question correctly? I think it's like, no, I think that is a good follow-up question. Okay.

Um, because, yeah, I mean, yeah, defining ambition a little more carefully helps, helps kind of clarify that. Because, yeah, to your point, like, okay, are you, there's a, there's a question of faithfulness.

Like, are you at your current job, are you striking your duties faithfully? If yes, then, well, good, but. Should you feel guilty for not wanting more?

[30 : 46] Or like, I don't know, I'm just, not put words in your mouth. No, no, that's good. Maybe to help. Elizabeth, did you, I'm sorry, did you want to say something? Sorry. Yeah. I know of several instances where people were offered up management which would move them up.

I didn't want anything to do with it. They were happy where they were. Yeah. And my father was offered to be a foreman several times at the railroad. He went good.

And so it would have meant more money and an additional opportunity for advancement, but he didn't want it.

Because he was happy with the amount of money he was making and the amount of responsibility he had. I saw some tentative hands coming up. Yeah.

Just like maybe, I'm not sure if I'm getting it, but I'm wondering if like there's a bit of a defining the difference between ambition and purpose, right? I hear people who don't have ambition, but they're a bit more than trying to figure out like, well, what am I supposed to be striving towards?

[31 : 51] Well, sometimes that's purpose outside of the ambition that you have at work. And sometimes it should be actually something that you have at work. But like, do you have a mooring purpose?

Yeah. I'm so glad you set that purpose. That's key. I think it's easy to also like listen to some voices in the culture saying, if you're not ambitious, if you're not seeking to better yourself in all these ways, then that means you're lazy or you're not fulfilling your potential or whatever.

And maybe that's not true in every case. And then again, seasonality, like Kulain was talking about. I think there's some seasons when you just, you just get through the work until you are ready for more.

Sarah and then Julia. I guess maybe as a thought and a thread actually that pulls a lot of this together, boundaries, you know, difficult casework, you know, wanting to take the hardest thing, whether or not ambition should be on the table, like is really, all of these are like, it depends.

And it's like, there's general principles around work that we've hit in a really great way. And then there's like, in like general calling, like we're all called to work of some kind.

[33 : 29] And like, there's all the benefits and principles around that. And there's this thing where like, we also have, actually, God gently and graciously reveals kind of our specific calling also to us.

We're not just talking about, you know, everyone's called to hold it, you know, whatever. But there's also these specific things where we're required to discern, like, I'm gifted in this way. So I want the hardest cases because like, I think God's called me to this because of the way he's equipped me and trained me and, you know, these kinds of things.

And like, I might just want to be faithful every day in this same job and, you know, really discerning. And, you know, we talked about this a little bit. How do you discern your calling?

I'm like, really discerning, like we no longer have the law to tell us like right and wrong. Work is good. Work is bad. Whatever, whatever. We have the Holy Spirit who like empowers us to discern for me at this time and this season, like what is God calling me to?

And there's no like specific answers I feel like to all of this. But I just want to, I guess, kind of preaching to myself a little, I guess, all of a sudden. Like these, you know, just the underlying foundation to all of this is like discerning God's calling.

[34 : 45] And I do think, one, we should be open to that and seeking that. And God also gently reveals it at a time to us. And just the power of all that pulled together. Yeah.

Can I, can I, I agree with that, Sarah. I think in the moment while you are waiting for that specific direction, how should you think? Yeah. And then I think there are a couple of things.

This is where principles are helpful. One is be faithful in the work that you have been called to do. Two is do good work because that honors the Lord.

Three, yeah, like, and then three, you know, respect the different areas God has called you to work. Always be trying and then try and focus about on the people that you are serving.

Do good work for the people that you are serving. Do it as unto the Lord and be faithful. And then everything else, honestly, like those corners, like the Lord is like, it's just the same way even managers think.

[35 : 42] It's like they have like a really good employee. They are just trying to like direct the person towards the most productive. The same way with the Lord. Be faithful. I mean, and I say the same way with the Lord in the sense of like, I think about maybe a little bit in the Bible of the talents, right?

Like, just do good, faithful work. Focus on others. Expanding your creative energies in service of others. Faithfully as unto the Lord.

And the remaining, I think you will discern on the side. I want to make one comment on working faithfully. And then I saw Joy's hand and Judy's hand. And then Justin. I think there's a lot.

So just really quickly on the idea of working faithfully, I think tying it into the narrative concept. When the world is sort of speaking into the work that we're doing and saying you ought to be doing more. You ought to be preparing. There's a lens on that that's not necessarily the biblical lens.

[36 : 42] And I think when we're working faithfully, we can take heart knowing that the Lord is in our faithfulness preparing us for whatever he has next. So working faithfully is, in a way, putting in the investment into whatever God has next for us.

And it just might not look the way that the world would tell us that it needs to look. So I agree. I agree with that. Joy. Joy. That sort of dovetails with what I was going to say.

I think that as Christians, sometimes it's hard for us to discern what you're talking about. Because I agree 100% with what you're talking about.

But within the church, sometimes the pressure of other people's expectations isn't only from the world. Sometimes it's in the church as well.

And it goes to what you were saying about boundaries. So sometimes we sort of have this idea that being ambitious or looking for the next thing can be prideful.

[37 : 50] And too much about self. And that is definitely true. But I think sometimes we're also hesitant to encourage people to live into who God made them. And to celebrate and enjoy the gifts that God put into them and the talents and the abilities that he gave them.

And serving others, yes, I'm not taking away from anything that you're saying, but sort of in addition to that, that there's something about just celebrating and enjoying who God made you to be and what he gave you to do.

And sometimes if it doesn't jive with what everyone around you is telling you, sometimes that's just other people's expectations.

Sometimes it's good advice and it needs to be listened to in its community. But that piece of it, I think, should also be considered. Yeah. Especially with service and boundaries.

Because I think, especially in the church, it can be very difficult to say no when someone asks you to serve. Because we all agree that service is good and that we need to be doing it.

[39 : 04] And so examining those motives or the call, is it God calling me to do it? Is it just that somebody needs this job done? It can be really difficult to discern that. Yeah. Before we move on to it, there's a question that we had that I thought, the question about being salt and light and what's the most effective way of being salt and light in the workplace.

Maybe after Ivor and I think Judy, I would love that maybe you could address that. Yeah. Because I think it may tie in, but I don't want us to leave it out talking about that.

Okay. I think, was Judy next? Yeah. Yes. I think so, yeah. I think one of the things is also working for others and working with others.

There are times, I know, when you're working in a team and there are things going on. And some of the folks that you're working with in their lives, that they may lead you to not be critical if they're not putting in as much.

Because it's mercy and grace. And when you work as a team, there are times when you also have to be giving towards the people you're working with. Yeah. And, you know, just put in.

[40 : 15] I just think that's also where we're put in a place for a reason. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Thank God. I actually, you know, I'm pretty confident that I was in the job I was in because very easily could have hired a male.

And I don't know if anybody knows anything about social work, but there was a very qualified male social worker. Maybe, probably more qualified than I was. And for some reason, I got the job.

So I think sometimes, and I'm very humble, I mean, it's, yeah. But what I'm saying is, yeah, I think we, rather than being critical of others or they're not pulling their weight, there are times when we need to also be encouraging and pull for somebody else.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's great. Thanks. I think, was it Ivor or Justin or both that had questions?

Both. Both? Okay. All right. All right. Yeah, I, this is just going back to Jocker's question on, like, not enough ambition.

And I think Jocker's kind of touched on this a little bit, but, like, you kind of have to consider these things in context, like the totality of your God-given desires. Like, if God's calling you to be a parent, for example, perhaps your entry-level part-time job is not going to, and maybe that is a sign that there's lacking ambition.

[41 : 42] But likewise, maybe if you're working 95 hours a week and God's calling you to be a parent, there's, like, considering specifically God-given desires in community and looking for points of, like, legal expositivity might be a way to see where something is lacking or past its point of value.

Yeah, for sure. Ivor, did you hear? Ivor, I just want, when you're caught between management and the union, what I did was concentrate on the most people I am in my work, doing the best I could do within the context, you know?

And I think that's the best approach, especially in a union environment. And some people didn't, you know?

Yeah. So it showed up. Yeah, I think that's really helpful and dovetails nicely into the salt and light conversation, because a few times, I think, in the last few weeks, we heard cropping up in questions and responses this idea that as we're working, that our work, we are implicitly or explicitly evangelizing and witnessing to our coworkers as we engage in our work.

And so I wondered if there have been questions around what it looks like to witness well, to be salt and light well in our work.

[43 : 24] And so we thought through that a little bit. And again, I think it sort of depends. It's nuanced. But as I was reflecting on that idea, I think we can go in one of two directions.

We can think of our work like we can say the primary point of our work is cultivation of creation. And then we tend to really prioritize that maybe at the expense.

If I just show up to my job and I do a good job, then I'm fulfilling my purpose. Alternatively, we can come over here and say the primary point of work is witnessing, making disciples, sharing the good news.

And the actual work that I'm engaging in when I'm there doing it is secondary. And I think both of those are sort of not reflective of the equal and total calling that we have in our jobs.

And I think all of the things that we've talked about today are relevant. There's seasonality. It's context dependent. Like, you know, you might have already shared the good news and nobody was receptive.

[44 : 37] And you kind of, you know, shake the dust off your feet and you say, I've done what I can do and I'm still going to engage in the work that I'm doing. Or you might say like, hey, I'm going to do my work.

But like God's doing really great things in this group of people that I'm working with. And I really want to like put in some extra effort to engage in that. And all of those can be good things.

But I guess what I was reflecting on is that I wouldn't want to lose one focus or the other as I'm thinking about engaging in my work. That being salt and light in our work is a good and important part of our work.

But it is not the only part of our work because cultivating creation is something that God has called us to do. So that was my thought on that.

Yeah. I think I was going to throw it open to how people have done it effectively. But we all work today, especially in the Northeast, work in increasingly secular environments where many people just don't think about spiritual things.

[45 : 45] And I think when we, how do we, maybe a big, how can we share the gospel or talk about, you know, our faith in ways that are also like context appropriate or context dependent?

I think first is like find ways to let people know that you're a Christian. Yeah. Yeah. We're sometimes increasingly secular, but in some circles, just increasingly like someone else, increasingly pagan.

We're all sorts of different ideas about religion. And so, yeah, like maybe sometimes you get, oh, that's great. I'm glad it works for you. But at least like talk about it. You know, there's little key things like what did you do on Sunday?

You don't edit out Sunday morning and talk about the rest of your Sunday. You can talk about all you did on Sunday. You can talk about Christmas. There's natural ways that spark curiosity and like seeing which hearts God is tugging that you can then speak to.

There is also doing that in the context of the relationships that you have. You start with people who you work with pretty regularly, who kind of know you in totality.

[46 : 55] And that way there's like a much lower barrier to start the conversation. It's, yeah, people you know at work, I think often are the better places where you can share. But I think do not, not ignoring the calling, the primary purpose for which you are there.

Right. It's not a, it's not a way of using excellence as a way of preaching the gospel because that I think also has its own pitfalls.

But recognizing too that like, you know, God also doing good, faithful work. Sometimes we have an opportunity to talk to others about what motivates our work.

Like the difference is actually what motivates our work. So in the class I shared, in the third class or in last class, I think, I shared about this two runners competing for the Olympics.

One is running because that's the only way he can justify his existence. Another is running because he feels God's pleasure when he runs. They can talk about, they are both running.

[47 : 57] They are probably both talking about training tips and running actual, in the practice of running, they can both discuss. One is able to share the gospel in a very context applicable way.

I actually can put in all of my effort because I do not worry about failure. Because someone else is taking, you know, all of the things I am striving for. And that I think would resonate in a way that somebody who doesn't run is like, ah, who cares about running?

He's like, yeah, forget that. But it is so, those would be additional elements. I think Alex is right. Like bringing, not sacrificing one toward the other. Because sometimes our just focusing on evangelizing through excellence is an excuse for being cowardly about your faith.

That's just, we're just like, oh, you know what? I'm just going to take the safe route. And sometimes also the other side is, like Alex also said, is not recognizing that God actually has very good purposes through our work.

And then you are in some way using that as an excuse to not do good work. And so it's the integration. And actually Keller addresses both of these in the first chapter of the book. And he talks about it even later in the last section.

[49 : 06] And when he calls it dualism, like versus integration. That we have this idea of separating our work and faith in these different ways. And it's just kind of one leg in.

But there is a way of integration that I think a lot of the concepts we've tried to cover in the book. I've addressed. So it seems like I have a question. I have a question about this other way.

And I haven't even had a prayer. But you can probably address this. It's fine. Okay. Okay. We are close to the top of the hour.

So we should probably... I wanted to bring it up because I thought it was a question most people were doing. But I think people are like, yeah, we got that already. So praise the Lord then.

That is not something that is as much of an issue. Okay. Okay. Well, thanks, everybody. This has been really fun for us.

[50 : 11] And just appreciate all of your engagement with the content and the questions. So thank you for being here. Kume, you want to close us in prayer? Yeah.

I will close us. But also, we are happy to talk and share our experience. I think a lot of people here have been working some longer than we have. So also look at people around you and also ask their experience as well.

But our hope is that the Lord will have used this to help us just work more faithfully and fruitfully to his glory in our work. So let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you give us work to do that we know is good. Oh, God. Even sometimes when we cannot see it immediately, oh, Lord, we trust your greater purpose is of working all things for your glory.

We ask that in the realms you've called us, oh, Lord, at home, in the marketplace, in the direct work of the kingdom, Lord, may we be your vessels accomplishing your good purposes, oh, Lord.

[51 : 13] Father, you know the specific areas and questions about work that we all struggle with, God. We just ask for your spirit to continue to make that clearer to us of how you just want us, oh, God, to be responding in those situations, Lord.

In all of these, oh, God, may you just be glorified in the work that we do, oh, Lord. And may we continue that good purpose you have, oh, Lord, of cultivating the earth.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. All right. Thanks, everyone. Thanks.