

CHRIST: WORLDVIEW @ WORK



Worldview

If you have done any traveling, you've probably used either an old school map or a gps, which essentially uses maps to help you navigate. You use the map because you believe that it will take you to where you want to go. A worldview is kind of like a map or gps: it's the belief system or mental map we use (consciously or unconsciously) to navigate through life.

Worldviews answer basic questions that determine the purpose of life and how it's lived. It is the set of a person's ideas, convictions, and opinions which are made up of their values, their perceptions, their beliefs, and their assumptions. It's our mental map or lens for how life works or should work. We use it to guide our choices. What we think determines how we feel and what we do. How we think about the world and our place in it influences how we engage with God, others, ourselves, and our environment.

One's worldview attempts to explain and provide direction for questions of purpose, problems, fixes, and future of living daily life. Our worldview informs how we explain what's messed up in the world and how that mess ought to be fixed. Different worldviews propose their own fixes to the *problem*, believing that if you implement their *fix*, the future (outcomes) will then be better. They have beliefs about the *purpose* of what they will use to fix the problem for a better *future*.

Action on those beliefs will result in outcomes: good or bad, intended or unintended, fruitful or unfruitful. We know from life experience that not all solutions are truly helpful. All choices have consequences. So it's important to have a reliable map for navigating life.

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Perhaps that's one reason why Paul told the Colossians, "Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ." (Colossians 2:8, NLT)

To the Ephesians he said, "I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts. Having lost all sense of shame, they have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity, with a craving for more. But this is not the way you came to know Christ. Surely you heard of Him and were taught in Him—in keeping with the truth that is in Jesus— to put off your former way of life, your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be renewed in the spirit of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:17-23)

This renewed life of the mind, catalyzed and aided by the Spirit, is rooted in biblical literacy, a knowledge of scripture. If you don't know (and obey) the view of scripture on various topics relevant to daily living- a biblical worldview- you won't be able to discern "empty philosophies" and "high-sounding nonsense" and therefore avoid unnecessary detours and roadblocks in your journey.

Biblical worldview on work

Understanding the truth of God's designed intent for work and the ways that we as His image-bearers reflect Him as a worker, can help us combat the lies about work which can stifle our impact for the Kingdom.

(Purpose.) A biblical worldview on work is that it is good. God wouldn't do anything that was evil, sinful, or cursed. God worked. Therefore, work is not evil, sinful, or a curse. (Genesis 3:17-19)

Also, God created people as workers reflecting His image. God worked, and as His image-bearers, people working reflects God. (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

We reflect our working God in several ways.

- *Creativity*: Humankind is unique in their creative abilities, reflecting a creative Creator.
- *Redemptive*: God loves to redeem the broken, including our work and our relationships. When we use work to redeem broken systems and broken people, we are taking part in God's redemptive Kingdom plan.
- *Satisfaction*: God took satisfaction in His work. Humans can take satisfaction in their work. (Genesis 1:31; Ecclesiastes 3:13, 5:18-19)
- *Purposeful*. God was purposeful in His work, with His work. The things God created served a purpose. As His image bearers, we can be purposeful with our work.
- *Administering Justice*. God cares about justice in the workplace and has consequences for sinful behavior. We see justice- and consequence- throughout scripture. As his image bearers, we too may need to exercise justice in our jobs. Genesis 3:14-20,23
- *Grace & Mercy*. God extended grace and mercy to Adam and Eve, even while administering justice. (Genesis 3.) He made a provision for mankind (Jesus) and continued to provide for humankind through work. We too can reflect grace and mercy in our interactions in the workplace.

Work and worship are integrated. The Hebrew root word **Avad** is used in the bible for the words work, worship, and service. When we work, we are to do it as a form of worship.

- *ROI Reflection.* In Genesis 1:28 we read, “And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply.” In the parable of talents in Matt. 25:14-30 we see a principle of a return on investment being expected of a steward by the owner. God values a return on investment from work. We can also.
- *Provision.* God provided for humankind through work and provided what he needed for his work. (Genesis 1:28-29) Humankind is to provide for themselves, family, and others through work (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12), and managers are to provide their employees what they need to do their work.
- *Choices & Consequences.* Free will extends to our work: We have the choice to do right or wrong in our work, just as Adam and Eve had to choose to obey God or not with the fruit. Our choices at work have consequences.
- *Excellence- Work Outcomes & Behaviors.* God’s work reflected excellence, as did how He worked. Reflecting His image, we are to work with excellence.(Genesis 1:31; Colossians 3:23-24)
- *Teamwork.* Creation was an act of teamwork, of the Trinity. (“Let us make...,” Genesis 1:26) Distinct individuals working in teams reflects God’s image.
- *Varied.* The wide range of occupational interests among humanity throughout the world is God’s design for exercising dominion and reflect Him.

Humanity’s work assignment was to partner with Him to rule over and cultivate His creation as faithful stewards, yielding from the creation its latent potential and providing for themselves and others from the fruit of their labors. Work also included creating culture. Work was to be done in harmonious relationship with God, each other, and creation. God designed humanity with what they needed to accomplish his assignment, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10

(Problem.) When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they corrupted the relationship with God, each other, within themselves, and with creation. That corruption made work more difficult, progress temporary, and humankind’s relationship to work tainted. Work and the workers became broken. Because all humanity is inherently broken and sinful (Romans 3:10-12,23), we can expect that this brokenness will make its way into the work that humanity does (e.g. lying, greed, injustice, cheating, arrogance, stealing, laziness, etc...) Work also is not a part of the curse: Its value remains intact after the Fall.

“Adam and Eve are called to be priests over creation. They were to receive the world as a gift from God, work in it and on it, and offer the world back to God as an offering in praise—a world touched by their gifts and transformed by their labor. And in doing so, they would imitate God. We, too, as priests are to receive the world as a gift, touch it with our labor, and offer it back to God in thanks and praise. And in doing so, we imitate God; we look like our Maker. Work is part of what it means to bear the very image of the Creator.”

Robert Lynn, Pastor of *Knox Presbyterian Church*

(Fix.) Christ redeemed all through His sacrifice, including our work. He calls us to be redemptive in and through our work. Our occupation doesn’t indicate our holiness before God: Jesus’ gracious redemptive work in our heart and walking in obedience with Him does. Redemptively working today through our jobs can produce good, true, and beautiful, but temporary, results. *Not only does the why and how of our work need to be redeemed, but the souls of those with whom we work. We are called to share Christ in word and deed with those around us, with the vision of making disciples who make disciples.*

(Future.) One day the consequences of sin will no longer affect our work: the redemptive work of Christ will be fully realized in His creation and our work.

How can every worker discover the connection between his everyday work and how that work contributes to what God wants done in the world? We can start by inviting God into our workday,

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explore the various ways God works, and by asking, “Where do my own vocational interests fit in the various ways God works...?”

Ask Your Mentor

1. Can you think of a story when a faulty belief led you astray, and how you came out of that?
2. How have you seen a biblical worldview help you to make better decisions?
3. What’s it like to be a Christian in your occupation?
4. What ethical dilemmas do you face that may be unique to your occupation? How do you deal with those dilemmas from a biblical perspective?
5. What do you think God thinks about your work, your profession or industry?
6. How do you live out your faith in your workplace context? How do you share your faith in word and deed?

Go Do

Ask God, “What’s a belief or perspective about how I think that life ought to work that needs realigned with your perspective?” Write down what comes to mind. Dig into God’s Word to learn more about its teaching on that topic. What might God be asking you to do? What would it look like to trust in Him with that as you obey?

Go Deeper with your mentor: Further Conversation & Study

1. What have you learned about following Christ in your occupation, among your peers? How do you try to integrate your faith and work?
2. Do you know of other Christians in your occupation that may be willing to share with me their experiences?
3. Are there Christian associations for this profession?
4. How do you share your faith? How do you build bridges with your coworkers?
5. Is there any one person you admire for how they integrate faith and work? If so, why do you admire them?
6. Are there any questions about career or faith & work that I should have asked, but didn’t?
7. What do you think God expects of you at your work?
8. Have you ever considered that the occupational category you are in or pursuing may reflect God's image and things He wants done in this world?

Sources & Resources

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