



EVERYDAY WORKS

Rethinking What You Do and
Why It Matters for the Kingdom

A Talking Points Curriculum | Grand Rapids Theological Seminary

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Grand Rapids Theological Seminary
A Division of Cornerstone University
1001 East Beltline Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Everyday Works: www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works

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The background features several faint, grey line-art illustrations of light bulbs and lanterns. Some are simple incandescent bulbs, while others are more complex, resembling lanterns with multiple glass panes and small protrusions. They are scattered across the page, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others.

EVERYDAY WORKS

Rethinking What You Do and
Why It Matters for the Kingdom

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WELCOME TO EVERYDAY WORKS!

In this study, we invite you to take a journey through your “everyday”—the normal things you do to make a living, raise a family, care for loved ones and have an adventure beyond yourself. We invite you to think about what you do every day and then rethink why it all matters.

What does your everyday work have to do with the kingdom of God?

**What does your daily grind have to do with following Jesus?
Do you know?**

All of us work in one way or another. You may be a full-time student, you may work a 9-to-5 job in an office, you may break your back every day on the job site or factory floor, you may run a startup business, you may be looking for work, retired, on disability or you may focus on raising your children. We all work in some way. For some of us, it may be enjoyable and life-giving. For others, it may simply be a necessity.

Either way, work is woven into the fabric of life. However, work may also be one of the most overlooked parts of the Christian faith.

“Work is most of life when you add up work in the home, work in the workplace, work in neighborhoods and schools and communities. When you add it all up, work is most of what we do during our waking hours. So if we don’t connect our faith to the world of work, then Christianity just becomes a leisure time activity, something we squeeze in for a few hours a week when we’re not working.” — Greg Forster¹

We spend most of our lives working, so if faith in Jesus is truly all-encompassing, work and faith must go hand in hand. As monotonous and frustrating as our work lives can be, God intends for our work to enrich His world and the people in it. We were created for this. Even before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve lovingly cared for God’s creation as an expression of their love toward Him.

Many followers of Jesus struggle to see their work in this way—as a place of worship and mission for the kingdom of God. It’s time to change that.

It’s time to ***rethink what you do every day and why it matters...for the kingdom.***

ABOUT EVERYDAY WORKS

In this study, you will explore the ways your everyday work is (or can be) used by God to worship Him and serve others. You will be equipped to discover how your work contributes to our collective calling to care for God's world, serve our neighbors and help each other flourish. You will be challenged to rethink old assumptions about what God cares about and what it means to live out faith in Jesus in a practical and daily way. We hope you will be inspired to see all of life, even the mundane and difficult things, with renewed purpose.

Here is how the study works. The material is broken down into four parts:

PART 1 | WORK IS GOOD

PART 2 | LIVE THE KINGDOM

PART 3 | FLOURISH FOR OTHERS

PART 4 | EXPAND THE CIRCLE

Each part has five short videos with 1-2 discussion questions. Our hope is that you will understand each of these statements and gain insights on how to live out the gospel in your everyday life. However, each of us lives in different circumstances with unique callings from God. It may take time for you to discern how God wants you to apply the teachings in this study in your life. Be patient, and ask God to give you wisdom.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE STUDY?

The materials for this study are meant to be flexible for individuals and groups to use in various settings. You will find the following resources in your Everyday Works packet or online at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works:

- **INTRO VIDEOS:** Your narrator for this study is George Moss, a young artist and entrepreneur whose life embodies what this study is all about.
- **FULL VIDEO PRESENTATIONS:** The full presentations feature leading teachers and authors, allowing you to dive deep into each topic (approx. 40-60 minutes each).
- **VIDEO CLIPS:** These short videos pull out key portions of the full presentations for group discussion. Your group time will rotate between these videos and discussion questions.
- **STUDY GUIDE:** This written resource provides discussion questions, key ideas from the presentations and space for taking notes. Used effectively, it will guide you toward applying each teaching in tangible, practical ways. Use the journaling space to write down what you discover, what you are praying for, questions you have and how God works in your life.
- **GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES):** Periodically, in this study guide, you will find additional resources to lead your group or take your own learning deeper. This section provides a summary of the main point of the presentations, answers to common questions or objections, additional discussion questions, helpful scriptures and further reading.

PREPARING FOR THE STUDY

Everyday Works presents concepts from Scripture, theology, business, economics and community development. The speakers and this study guide apply this material to the daily, practical reality of following Jesus. Very few people are experienced in all of these topics, so you will be challenged to think and rethink your assumptions and life choices in new ways. Our hope is that God will be your primary teacher and that He will give you clear next steps for your life.

To get the most out of this study, the following will be important:

1. PATIENCE, HUMILITY AND AN OPEN HEART:

This study will challenge many common assumptions about the gospel, the kingdom, work, economics, poverty, race, missions and more. Some have come away with direct and clear application to their daily lives, and others have needed time to study and wrestle more with how God wants them to respond. If you are looking for a safe, quick study with easy applications, this may not be the study for you. But, if you're hungry to dig deep and rethink how God is calling you to serve Him in your "everyday," you've come to the right place. You may find that re-watching, re-reading and re-discussing some parts of this study will be valuable.

2. PRAYER AND REFLECTION:

Prepare your heart by asking God to speak to you about what He is calling you to do in response to this study. Jot down your thoughts and questions along the way using this study guide or a journal. You may decide to study certain topics more deeply on your own before you know how to apply them to your life. The "Go Deeper" sections provide more information, helpful scriptures and further reading.

3. COMMUNITY AND DISCUSSION:

Individuals can benefit from this study, but journeying with a small group is valuable. The learning and application will go deeper when you hear from others. Therefore, we recommend completing this study as part of a group, meeting for one to two hours at a time. Depending on the logistics and preferences of your group, you can either watch the video clips separately (they're all available online), or you can watch them together as a group.

4. PACE AND FLEXIBILITY:

Your group will need to decide how fast or slow you want to move through the material. Some parts of this study may be familiar, and your group can move more quickly. Other parts of the study may be newer or more challenging, and your group will want to slow down and allow extra time for discussion. Find the right pace for your group. To help you make a plan, we have provided a visual layout of the entire study on pages 8-9.

Here are a few approaches to consider:

▪ One Video Per Week (16-20 weeks; RECOMMENDED):

If you watch and discuss one video per week, you will complete each of the four parts in 4-5 weeks, and you'll complete the whole study in 16-20 weeks. Go as fast or slow as you want. This approach provides plenty of time for interaction and application. Many groups want to spend extra time on certain topics, and this approach provides that flexibility. Most groups will find this to be the ideal pace.

▪ Four 5-Week Studies:

Each of the four parts of this study can serve as a standalone five-week study. Some groups will appreciate breaking the material up in this way, and sometimes schedules require it! If 16-20 weeks seems too long or you want to take breaks, you are free to do so.

- **Fast-Moving Overview (8 weeks):** If you want to move more quickly through the material, you can cover each of the four parts in two weeks by watching and discussing 2-3 videos each week. This approach provides a manageable pace, but discussion time will be limited. Most groups will feel the need for a slower pace and more discussion time, at least for certain topics in this study.

5. WATCHING THE VIDEOS: You will need a computer or TV and DVD player to watch the video clips, which range from 9-25 minutes. Some groups prefer to watch the videos together. Others choose to watch them separately and focus their group meetings on discussion. Either approach is fine. The videos are available online for individuals to watch at cornerstone.edu/everyday-works. The DVD format provides an easy way to watch the videos as a group.

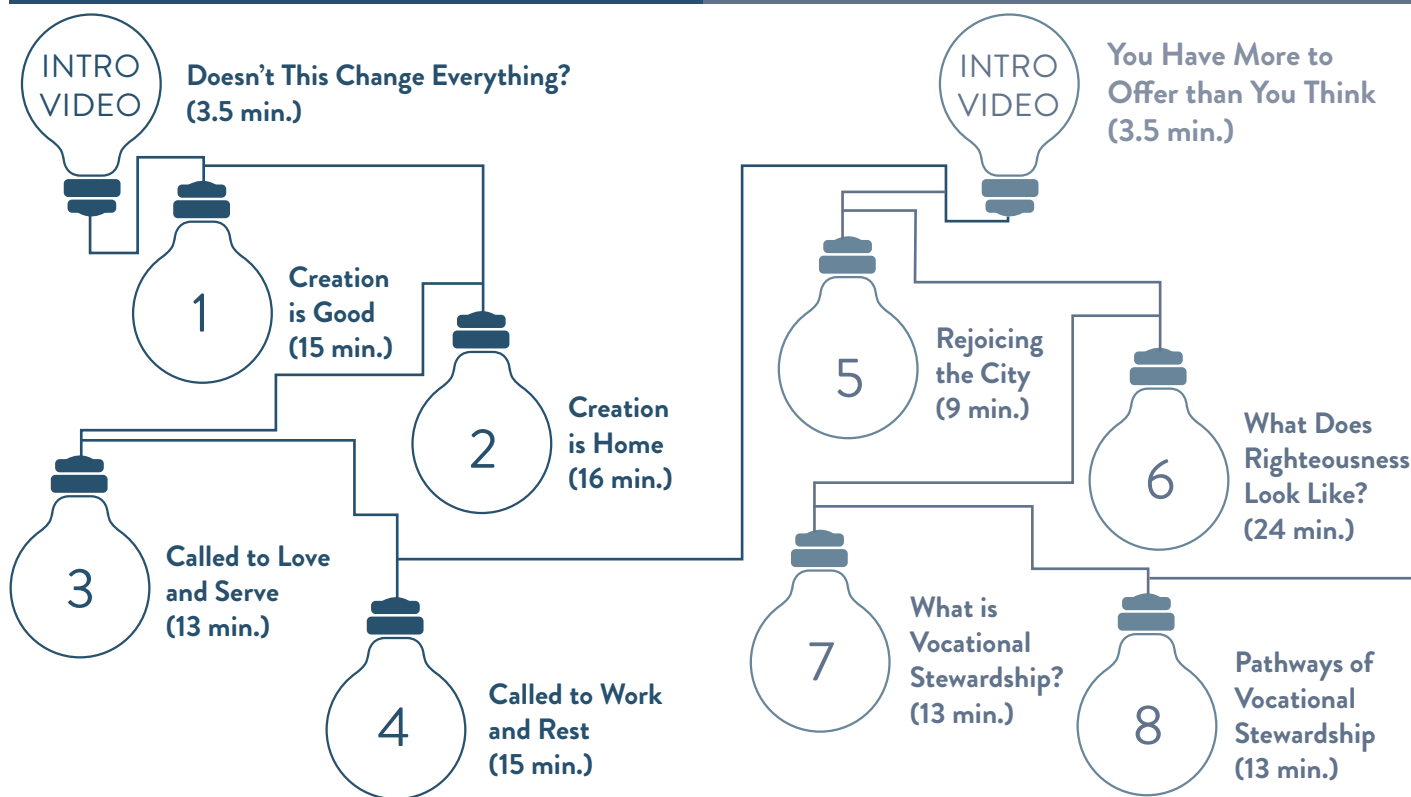


EVERYDAY WORKS AT A GLANCE

This visual layout shows how the pieces and topics of the Everyday Works curriculum fit together. Each light bulb represents a video clip in the study that you can watch individually or with a group. Make your way through each clip at your own pace, and use this layout to track your progress. You will find even more video content online at cornerstone.edu/everyday-works and on the DVDs.

PART 1: WORK IS GOOD

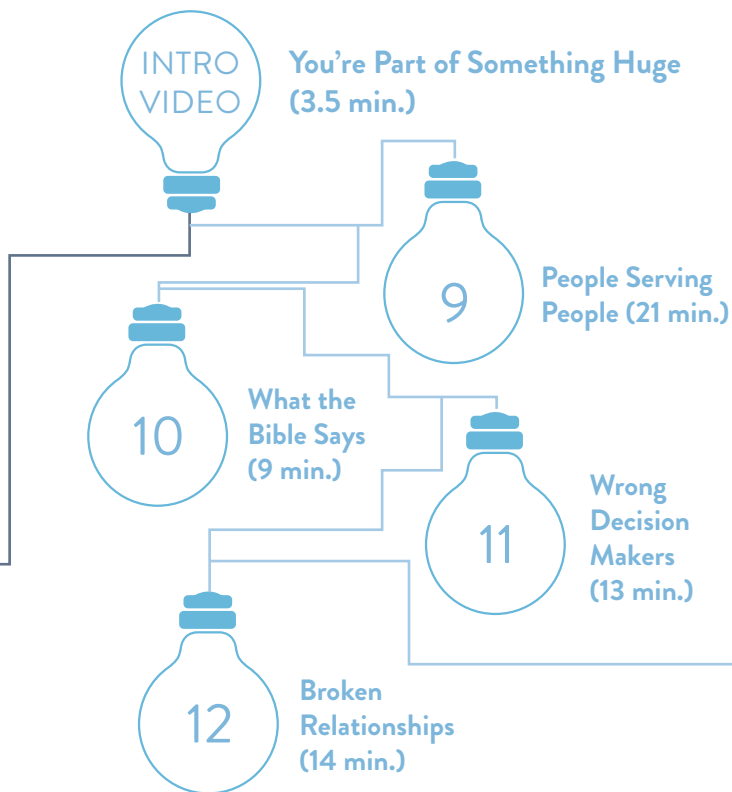
PART 2: LIVE THE KINGDOM



Topics: creation, work, calling, identity, theology, Bible, worldview, kingdom, image of God, dignity, discipleship, pleasure, love, service, rest

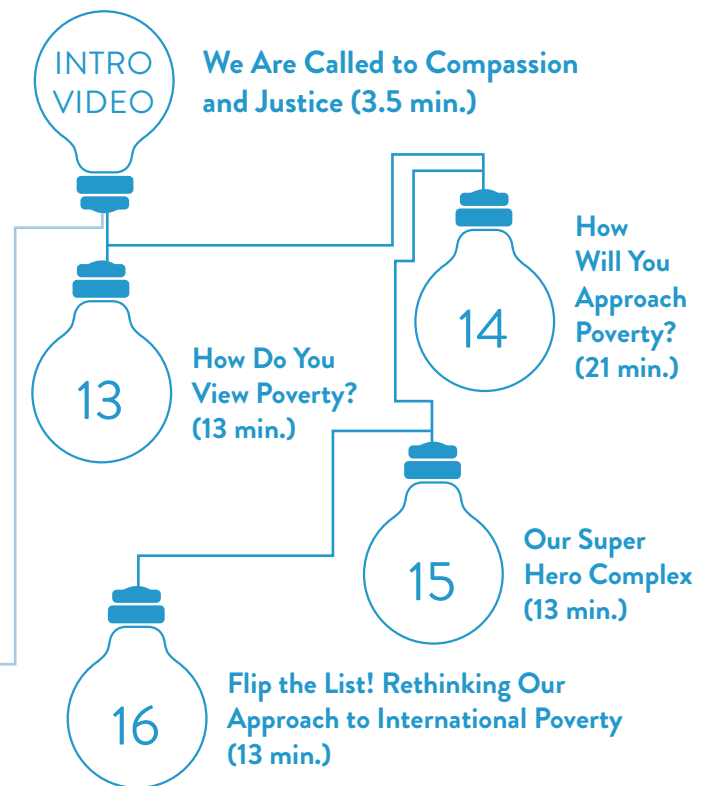
Topics: righteousness, compassion, justice, Bible, gospel, discipleship, work, power, kingdom, strategy, stewardship, sacrifice, common good, *shalom*

PART 3: FLOURISH FOR OTHERS



Topics: economics, business, service, poverty, Bible, race, society, work, stewardship, power, responsibility, compassion, justice, reconciliation

PART 4: EXPAND THE CIRCLE



Topics: poverty, race, justice, compassion, Bible, responsibility, work, empowerment, relationship, development, advocacy, missions, humanitarian aid, economics, microfinance



PART 1:

WORK IS GOOD

“God saw all that he had made, and it
was very good.” – Genesis 1:31

INTRODUCTION

Most of us work day-in and day-out to pay the bills, keep the house in order and fulfill our daily obligations. For some, work is mundane and feels meaningless. For others, it brings joy and fulfillment. Some are paid with large salaries and benefits, while others do their work for no compensation at all. Still others are looking for work.

Wherever you are in this, work and faith can feel like separate worlds. Work is what you do all week; faith is what you do on Sundays or whenever you can find time to read, pray or serve. When we think this way, our lives can feel out of balance. Too much time goes to work and not enough to faith. Some can make adjustments to read, pray or serve more (some may even work for a church!). Others cannot make these adjustments and feel guilty for not doing work that honors God, or they feel bitterness that God doesn't seem to care about them or what they have to offer.

What if the dichotomy we've created between work and faith doesn't exist?

What if God believes that your work, not just your Sunday worship, is sacred?

God created you with specific gifts and abilities that others need, and He wants you to use them. Your work may actually be the best way for you to show God's love and care for the world.

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- Additional Video Clips by Mike Wittmer
 - ♦ "Two Extremes to Avoid" (14 min.)
 - ♦ "How to Read Tough Bible Passages Correctly" (15 min.)

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Extras

- Full Video Presentation by Mike Wittmer (60 min.)
- Additional Video Clips by Mike Wittmer
 - ♦ "Is My Work Valuable?" (6 min.)
 - ♦ "What is the Kingdom?" (12 min.)
 - ♦ "Doing the Lord's Work the Lord's Way" (12 min.)

Panel Discussion

Available online at cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.



ENJOY GOD'S GOOD WORLD

Video clips 1-2 are taken from this presentation.

“We often struggle with the value of work, but we also struggle with pleasure. Can we really have and enjoy nice things, or are these in conflict with following Jesus?”

– Mike Wittmer²



Doesn't This Change Everything? (3.5 MINUTES)

In this video, George Moss expresses a tension many people feel between their faith and their everyday work. This intro video sets up the theme “Work is Good,” which you will explore in video clips 1-4.

*After watching this, read the **Introduction** and discuss the **Opening Question** below.*

INTRODUCTION

In Genesis, we read that God created the world, and it was good in His eyes. Did this change when Adam and Eve sinned and work became toil? The Apostle John wrote that “God so loved the world” that He sent His Son to save it, but He also said that we must “not love the world” (John 3:16; 1 John 2:15). This can be confusing. The word “worldly” has negative connotations, but we all know the joy of earthly pleasures like good food and a job well done.

“How do we fit this big gospel into the small world of everyday? Sometimes it doesn’t seem like it fits.”

– Mike Wittmer

Heavenly purpose and earthly pleasure go together. This is critical for seeing earthly things like work the way God sees them. God actually wants us to enjoy His good creation and to understand that even work is a gift from Him. He wants us to use His gifts for His glory and for the common good of everyone around us.

OPENING QUESTION

What is your “everyday work,” including the paid and unpaid tasks you do day-in and day-out? Identify the two things that consume most of your time. Would you say you enjoy these things, or are they more of a necessity?



Creation is Good (15 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Mike Wittmer walks through the story of Scripture, showing that creation is good and that God wants His people to enjoy the gifts He provides. The Bible, like any other book, has a plot, and we need to understand each part of the story in light of the whole thing.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Enjoy God’s Good World**” by Dr. Mike Wittmer, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*



REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

When you hear the word “worldly,” what comes to your mind? How have the ideas discussed by Dr. Wittmer made you rethink your view of “worldly things”?

What are some of the “good gifts” in your life, and what are some things that “matter more”? What are some ways you can be tempted to let those good gifts become idols in your life?



Creation is Home (16 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Mike Wittmer shows that humans are created for a physical earth. This is our home, and God wants us to flourish here. But He doesn't ask us to do it alone. He is with us, redeeming all things and removing all of the effects of sin and evil.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Enjoy God’s Good World**” by Dr. Mike Wittmer, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

“Heaven is not our home. Jesus is our home.” —Mike Wittmer

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

Heaven is not our final goal, but rather a renewed and restored earth with Jesus. How does this make you rethink old assumptions, and what difference could it make for the value of your everyday work?

How real does the statement “Jesus is my home” feel to you right now? How might God be inviting you to find your identity and purpose more fully in Jesus Christ?

PRAYER

Father, help me enjoy and appreciate the beautiful world You have made. Show me the difference between the impact sin has on Your world and the beauty of what You created. Help me remember that what You created was pure and is a gift to enjoy. But may I never turn Your gifts into idols that replace You or crowd out my obedience to You. Lead me to enjoy Your good creation. And may it draw me to love You even more deeply. Amen.

EXTRAS

DEFINING TERMS | NEW CREATION

When God made the earth, He said it was good. However, due to the Fall, sin has entered and tainted this good world. Sometimes when we imagine heaven, we think of it in terms of escape from the tainted things on earth. We assume or perhaps wonder if God is abandoning His creation, as if it was a failed plan He is giving up on. The biblical teaching, though, is that God desires to bring restoration to His creation and bring about “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1). This new creation will be our home. It will not be an ethereal location in the sky, but a new and restored earth.

EXTRAS | NEED SOMETHING MORE?

If you have difficulty embracing the view that “creation is good” or “creation is home,” check out two video clips included in the extras.

- **“Two Extremes to Avoid” (14 minutes)** – In this clip, Dr. Wittmer explains in more depth why creation is good, and how philosophies like Gnosticism have impacted Christian thinking even today. The Apostles’ Creed was written to help us with this very issue!
- **“How to Read Tough Bible Passages Correctly” (15 minutes)** – In this clip, Dr. Wittmer explains some of the common mistakes we often make when reading passages like 1 John 2:15-17, 1 Peter 2:11, Colossians 3:1-2, Philippians 3:20, 2 Corinthians 4:18 and others. (Hint: Distinguish between “things” and “actions”!)

GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 1-2

Video clips 1-2 are part of the presentation “Enjoy God’s Good World” by Dr. Mike Wittmer, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch his full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

Can we love God with our whole hearts and still enjoy our lives here on earth? Many people who want to put Jesus first and “store up treasures in heaven” read certain passages of Scripture like Colossians 3:1-5 or 1 John 2:15-17 and conclude that anything that is worldly or earthly should be rejected or at least minimized. Their priorities should be focused only on “heavenly” things (e.g., God, Bible reading, prayer, witnessing) because enjoying worldly or earthly pleasures is less valuable to God and a distraction to spiritual growth or mission. Unless they work for a church or Christian ministry, they wonder if their work is unimportant in God’s eyes. Dr. Wittmer points out that this way of thinking makes the mistake of confusing actions with things. These scriptures warn against worldly, earthly actions we must avoid (e.g., sinful desires and behaviors) but not against worldly, earthly things that are good and natural features of human life (e.g., good food, meaningful work and recreation). Dr. Wittmer warns that confusing these things runs the risk of no longer enjoying the good things of creation—the things God wants us to enjoy with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:4). We fail to love God fully when we refuse to enjoy His good gifts—including the gift of our everyday work.

An important point here is that Scripture never teaches that the ultimate destination of followers of Jesus is “heaven,” as in some ethereal place high up in the sky. This view is more similar to Platonic Gnosticism than it is to biblical Christianity. Gnosticism taught that anything physical (e.g., the earth, our bodies, physical pleasure) is inherently evil, and that the goal of life is to escape. Christianity has had trouble avoiding this

mistake ever since the first century, including today.³ The Christian hope is not that we will be taken away from this world (earth), but that Jesus will come here, cleanse our world from sin and live with us forever. When we die, we “go home to be with Jesus,” but when He returns we will be at home with Him on a redeemed, restored earth. We wait for Jesus’ return so that we can live the physical human lives we were created to live. In other words, Jesus is our relational “home” (the Person we’re created for) and earth is our physical home (the place we’re created for). The biblical story of Creation-Fall-Redemption helps us keep that hope straight.

With that said, Dr. Wittmer encourages us to remember the tensions in the biblical story. He says, “All things matter, but some things matter more. Some things matter more, but everything still counts.” While we remind ourselves that God wants us to enjoy the earthly pleasures of this world, He also wants us to avoid the temptation of turning those pleasures into idols. Our hearts are idol factories, so even while we enjoy God’s good gifts, we should never let them replace Him in our hearts. Likewise, as we embrace Jesus’ mission of redemption in the world, we want to follow Him and always give priority to the things that matter more (e.g., salvation). Scripture never tells us we need to pick between earthly pleasure and heavenly purpose. We can hold on to both extremes. The resurrected Jesus did exactly that (John 21:1-14).

What's the push back?

A common criticism of these ideas is that this view of creation risks merely justifying human excess at the expense of sacrificing to serve and promote the gospel. Enjoying human pleasure doesn't sound like denying yourself for Jesus. Critics may view it as simply a way for us to avoid feeling guilty for pursuing our hobbies while avoiding other forms of gospel ministry. However, we must remember the purpose of creation. God's design in Genesis 1-2 clearly shows His desire for humanity to enjoy what their Creator provided. For more information, check out the extras listed on page 19.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Dr. Mike Wittmer and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

Talk about a time you felt guilt for delighting in creation through a hobby or activity you enjoy. Explain how this tension affected your attitude toward that activity.

How can that same activity help you enjoy and participate in God's creation, and how does it influence your relationship with God and others?

What is a common way of viewing heaven? What terms are typically used to describe it, and how might these terms misrepresent God's promise of a restored earth?

Think about your favorite hobby or activity (this could be your everyday work, if you enjoy it). What can you do to direct praise to God for this gift? What steps must you take to make sure it does not become an idol in your life?

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **CREATION IS GOOD** – Genesis 1-2; John 1:14, 21:1-14; 1 Timothy 4:1-8; Colossians 2:20-23
 - **CREATION IS HOME** – Genesis 3:17, 4:10-11, 6:7, 9:8-11; Revelation 21:3
 - **LOVING GOD'S CREATION IN THE RIGHT WAY** – John 3:16; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 Timothy 6:17
-

FURTHER READING

Becoming Worldly Saints: Can You Serve Jesus and Still Enjoy Your Life?
by Michael Wittmer

Creation Regained
by Al Wolters

The New Heavens and New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology
by J. Richard Middleton



WORK IS A CALLING

Video clips 3-4 are taken from this presentation.

“Instead of starting at the end of the story with redemption, what if we started at the beginning with creation?”

– Mike Wittmer



PAUSE TO REFLECT

Read and discuss this reflection before moving on to video clip 3.

Many times when we meet someone for the first time, we ask them a simple question, “What do you do?” While we know that this is equivalent to asking someone what their occupation is, we ought to ask ourselves, “Is this the right question?” When meeting another person, would a more appropriate question be, “How do you serve?” or “How does your work help others?” These questions highlight the goodness in even the most menial jobs. They recognize the dignity of every role no matter how big or small. This mindset is closer to the biblical view of work as “calling.”

“Creation contains the meaning of life.”
– Mike Wittmer

God ordained even the simple act of work from the beginning of creation. Adam was called to rule the earth, name the animals and care for the Garden of Eden. It was quite a job. But it never became difficult or toil until sin entered the picture.

OPENING QUESTION

Complete this sentence: “The meaning of life is ____.”
What is the first thing that comes to mind, and why do you think you thought of that first?



Called to Love and Serve (13 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Mike Wittmer explains that every person in the world has a calling—even several callings. Pastors and missionaries are not the only ones who are called. We are all called to love God more than anything else and to deny ourselves, that is, to set aside our own interests in order to love and serve others.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Work is a Calling**” by Dr. Mike Wittmer, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*



REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

Reflect on this quote from St. Augustine: “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.” Do you feel this in your own life? Why or why not?

Give an example of a time when you denied yourself (set aside your interests for the sake of others). How did it give you a deeper sense of life, meaning or purpose?





Called to Work and Rest (15 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Mike Wittmer describes two more callings that every person has. God created each of us to rule over the earth on His behalf. One way we do that is through our everyday work. However, God also calls us to rest and to remember that we are not defined by our work. Our identity is found not in what we do but in Who we know.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Work is a Calling**” by Dr. Mike Wittmer, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

What are your callings? List as many as possible. Which ones are covenantal, and which are not?

How is your occupation a way you can love God, serve your neighbor and contribute to culture and society?



PRAYER

Father, help me understand that it is Your desire to work for Your glory and honor in whatever we do. You care about my work, the way I relate to others and how I steward Your resources. You have called me to show Your love to the world in every area of my life. I pray that You will guide me and empower me in every area of my life so that this calling is visible and honoring to You. Thank you for the purpose You have given me! Amen.

DOING THE LORD'S WORK THE LORD'S WAY

In the extras for this session, you will find a 12-minute video clip entitled “Doing the Lord’s Work the Lord’s Way” where Dr. Wittmer explains how to see your everyday work in light of the big picture of Scripture and how to see the big picture of Scripture inside your everyday work. Take a moment to put your occupation, your everyday work, alongside the story of Scripture. Think about the biblical story and describe your job in light of those three movements. Prayerfully ask God to show you His purpose for your work.

CREATION (Genesis 1-2)



FALL (Genesis 3-11)



REDEMPTION (Genesis 12-Revelation 22)

How does your everyday work fit into the call to create and steward God’s world?

How is your everyday work frustrated and twisted by sin?

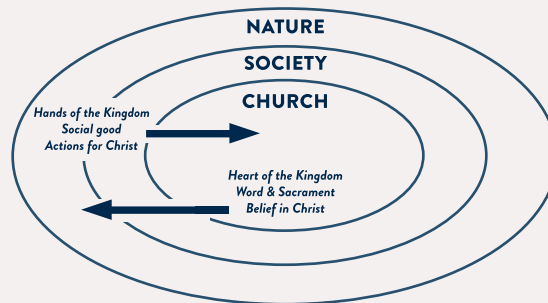
How can you use your everyday work as a way to show God’s love and draw people to Him?

EXTRAS

DEFINING TERMS | The Kingdom of God

As you rethink what you do and why it matters for the kingdom, it’s important to ask the question, “What is the kingdom of God anyway?” Scripture is clear that the kingdom is no one nation, but rather something much bigger. In the extras, Dr. Wittmer spends 12 minutes defining the kingdom. Here are a few highlights:

- The kingdom is the reign of Christ over the whole world (all nations) and over the whole person (every part of our lives).
- The kingdom is already here and it is not yet. Jesus Christ launched the kingdom through His ministry and we taste the kingdom when we surrender to His Lordship, but the kingdom is not yet here in its fullness.
- We do not build the kingdom. We receive and bear witness to the kingdom.
- The kingdom is broader than the Church. It’s as large as creation.
- The Church is the center or headquarters of the kingdom.



For more on this topic, check out the video clip “What is the Kingdom?” (12 minutes).

*Graphic adapted from “Becoming Worldly Saints,” p. 157. Used with permission.

GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 3-4

Video clips 3-4 are part of the presentation “*Work Is a Calling*” by Dr. Mike Wittmer, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch his full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

The main point of this presentation is that humanity is called. Every single person is called. Pastors and missionary workers are not the only people called to serve God with their whole lives. Everyone is called. God invites and expects us to live out the purpose for which He created us. Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments (think: callings) are to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...[and I]ove your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37, 39). Those two callings are universal and primary. God is number one, therefore His kingdom must permeate our lives. Next to God, loving and serving others is primary. Dr. Wittmer clarifies that among our human relationships we can and should rightly give some relationships greater attention than others. We are in covenantal relationships with our church (followers of Christ) and with our family. Husbands and wives should prioritize each other and parents should prioritize their children.

In addition to these two primary callings, humanity is also called to work and rest. Sometimes we can have a tendency to look at our work or hobbies as things that are outside of our calling or less important than going to church or serving in a ministry capacity. If this were the case, though, most of life would be wasted on unimportant things, which is exactly how many Christians feel. As Dr. Wittmer teaches in this session, everything is part of our calling from God as individuals. We are called to love God and serve our neighbor through our everyday work, whether we have our “dream job” or are

simply doing whatever work we can find. Theologians call it the “cultural mandate,” which is our calling to take care of and develop God’s creation. God invites and expects us to work for the common good. When we do, we worship God and love our neighbor in very practical ways. At the same time, Dr. Wittmer points out that God also calls us to rest, to remember that our identity is not found in what we do but in our relationship with Him. This balance between work and rest helps us to love and serve our neighbor while also keeping our hearts and identities centered on God. Rest reminds us that we are finite and dependent on God, which frees us to enjoy God’s good creation.

What’s the push back?

A common criticism of this session may be that some callings—pastoral ministry or missions—are higher and more important than other callings, and we must be careful not to discourage people from going into ministry. This is absolutely true and is presented by Dr. Wittmer toward the end of the full presentation. He presents the dichotomy between two biblical truths: that there is something unique about leading as a pastor, but that this does not minimize the value of other callings. There are high standards for those in pastoral leadership, but those who love God and serve their neighbor outside of formal ministry are no less called by God in those vocations. Christ asks all of His followers to pick up their cross daily and follow Him. It is the most important calling we could have, and it is given to everyone who puts their faith in Him.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Dr. Mike Wittmer and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

In what ways is it true that you love God more than everything else? In what ways is it not true? What are some specific ways you could make God and His kingdom permeate your life more fully?

(NOTE: This question is not intended to produce guilt but to encourage honest reflection on God's role in your life. God knows your heart, and He loves you despite your imperfections. If you are unsure about this, see Romans 5:8 and 1 John 3:16. God is looking for people who will be honest with Him and with themselves. Growth often comes when we acknowledge what is true and ask God to work in our hearts. Take a moment to ask God to show you specific ways you can make Him more central in your everyday work.)

When you hear the word “calling,” what does it make you think of? Have you ever thought of your current occupation, your friendships or the way you interact with your family as part of your calling or do you believe your calling is still somewhere out there that you have not achieved yet? How does the teaching in this session encourage or challenge you?

How might embracing Sabbath rest help you to anchor your identity in Christ rather than in what you're able to accomplish? In what ways is rest both appealing and difficult to embrace?

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **CREATION CONTAINS THE MEANING OF LIFE** – Genesis 1:27; Matthew 13:33, 44-46
- **OUR CALL IS TO SERVE OTHERS** – Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 16:24
- **WE ARE CALLED TO CULTIVATE THE EARTH** – Genesis 2:15; Colossians 3:17, 23-24
- **WE ARE CALLED TO REST** – Genesis 2:1-3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15

FURTHER READING

Becoming Worldly Saints: Can You Serve Jesus and Still Enjoy Your Life?

by Michael Wittmer

Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work

by Tim Keller

Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work

by Tom Nelson



PART 2: LIVE THE KINGDOM

“When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices.” – Proverbs 11:10

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Prayer begins with the simple words, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9-10). At the core of this prayer is a desire for earth to become like heaven. In the hardest times, we can find ourselves dreaming of heaven or new creation, forgetting that we actually have a role to play here on earth. We are called to bring about a foretaste of the future kingdom into the present.

Life can be difficult, and God understands this struggle. But His command is not to just sit and wait for the future kingdom. He wants you to be a part of realizing the kingdom now.

In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus gives His inaugural address to His hometown crowd when He says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." This was Christ's ministry on earth, and it should be a real part of ours as well.

Our kingdom calling does not lie somewhere in the future, but it is woven into the fabric of the here and now. How do you do that? How do you live the kingdom?

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- Additional Video Clips by Amy Sherman
 - ♦ "What are the Criteria for Being a *Tsaddiq*?" (2 min.)
 - ♦ "The American Dream and the *Tsaddiqim*" (3 min.)
 - ♦ "What's the Best Way to Bring Societal Change?" (5 min.)
 - ♦ "How Millennials Integrate Work and Rest" (6 min.)
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- Additional Video Clips by Amy Sherman
 - ♦ "Pathway 4: Invest in a Targeted Initiative" (10 min.)
 - ♦ "The Mindset of the Righteous" (5 min.)
 - ♦ "A Model of *Tsaddiqim* Discipleship" (4 min.)

Panel Discussion

Available online at cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.



ARE YOU A **TSADDIQ?**

Video clips 5-6 are taken from this presentation.

“You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world.”

– Matthew 5:13, 14



You Have More to Offer Than You Think (3.5 MINUTES)

In this video, George Moss describes how our everyday work can be light and salt to the world. This intro video sets up the theme “Live the Kingdom,” which you will explore in video clips 5-8.

*After watching this, read the **Introduction** and discuss the **Opening Question** below.*

INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, “By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:16). In other words, when you look at someone’s life, you should be able to see things that indicate whether or not they are followers of Jesus. Their faith should be reflected in their actions. What are those things? What sets a Christian apart from the rest of the world? Depending on background and culture, many people will answer those questions differently.

Either way, following Jesus will lead us to live in a uniquely “kingdom” sort of way. We will allow the kingdom of God to change us so that the world gets a taste of God’s love, justice and righteousness.

How do we, as followers of Jesus, live in a way that pushes back darkness and preserves and enhances our world? What if your job is meant to do this...for the kingdom?

OPENING QUESTION

Describe a time when you saw someone’s behavior and, without the person saying anything about Jesus, you could tell he or she is probably His follower? What characteristics or behaviors tipped you off? What made the individual stand out?





Rejoicing the City (9 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Amy Sherman explores the biblical vision of the “righteous” in Scripture. These people see everything they have, not as something they’ve earned for their own benefit, but rather as a gift from God to be stewarded for the common good. They willingly disadvantage themselves to help others flourish—especially the most vulnerable.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Are You A Tsaddiq?**” by Dr. Amy Sherman, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

What is the vision of “the righteous” in Proverbs 11:10? How does it compare with what people in your culture usually look for in Christian behavior? What similarities or differences do you see?

What kinds of suffering or oppression do people experience where you live? Start close to home, a 10-mile radius, then move out to a radius of 50 and 100 miles. In what ways are Christians involved with addressing injustice?





What Does Righteousness Really Look Like? (24 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Amy Sherman describes how becoming “righteous” is a process of spiritual transformation that plays out in three dimensions: upward toward God, inward in our own hearts and outward with others. If we want to take part in God’s mission through our everyday work, we need to start by becoming certain kinds of people.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Are You A Tsaddiq?**” by Dr. Amy Sherman, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

DIMENSIONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS	CHARACTERISTICS	IMPLICATIONS FOR WORK
UP	Godward orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work for God's glory, not self-fulfillment ▪ Eschew workaholism ▪ Set boundaries on institutional loyalty
	Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Functional, daily dependence on the Spirit
	Eternal perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ God as the audience ▪ Eschew cynicism
IN	Personal holiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not cheating, stealing, lying ▪ Sexual purity with coworkers
	Fruit of the Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grace-based relationships
	Openhandedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generosity toward others; share credit; share power
OUT	Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proactive "seeing" of others' needs
	Flourishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bettering conditions for workers ▪ Being green
	Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting just relations with employees, customers, suppliers and shareholders ▪ Encouraging transformation with one's institution
	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being a good corporate neighbor/citizen

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

Which type of righteousness is hardest for you (upward, inward or outward)? What is the biggest obstacle to growing in this type of righteousness, and what can you do to overcome it?

Think again about the needs in your community (10-, 50- or 100-mile radius). What are the most crucial needs that people in your vocation may be able to uniquely address?

Write down three things that you are doing (or can do) through your work to show God’s love and bring a foretaste of God’s kingdom to others.



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please help me become a *tsaddiq* who blesses and honors those around me. I want to be part of Your movement that brings restoration to the disenfranchised and the less fortunate. I want to see the needs around me. I pray that my city can be a place where all rejoice because of those who are in leadership and in power, and that I can do my part in shaping this city toward Your justice and righteousness. Amen.



EXTRAS

EXTRAS | NEED SOMETHING MORE?

Check out these extras where Amy responds to questions about what it means to be a *tsaddiq*:

- “What are the Criteria for Being a *Tsaddiq*?” (2 min.)
- “The American Dream and the *Tsaddiqim*” (3 min.)
- “What’s the Best Way to Bring Societal Change?” (5 min.)
- “How Millennials Integrate Work and Rest” (6 min.)
- “Does this Vision of the *Tsaddiqim* Conflict with the Gospel?” (5 min.)

DEFINING TERMS | SOCIAL JUSTICE

Amy Sherman refers to “social justice” as a goal of being a *tsaddiq*. She argues that part of living a “righteous” life before God entails seeking justice for those who are marginalized. But what is social justice? People often use this phrase in different ways to mean different things, so we need to look at how Scripture defines it.

The biblical concept of justice is tied to this idea of righteousness. In numerous places, these two terms, justice and righteousness, are used together to describe one important concept—the kind of people and the kind of societies God wants to cultivate in His world. “Justice and righteousness,” then, as a unified concept, describes the kind of character that reflects God’s own character. Here are a few passages that illustrate this (emphasis added):

“*Righteousness and justice* are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you” (Psalm 89:14).

“Blessed are those who act *justly*, who always do what is *right*” (Psalms 106:3).

“To do what is *right* and *just* is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” (Proverbs 21:3).⁴

The biblical vision of justice, then, is more than simply giving someone what they deserve (i.e., an appropriate punishment for a crime). It is also caring for those who suffer. Justice is recognizing the image of God in each person and treating them with dignity, honor and care. If someone is suffering—especially if due in any way to an unjust system—God calls His people to right what is wrong. We are not only called to be just; we are also called to “do justice” (Micah 6:8 ESV). We are called to action. In this way, a core component of justice is both compassion and advocacy for people in poverty.

For more on the biblical concept of justice, check out “Generous Justice” by Tim Keller.

DEFINING TERMS | *SHALOM* (*shah-LOM*)

A Hebrew word meaning “peace,” “wholeness” or “flourishing” in all aspects of life.

Throughout her presentation, Amy Sherman uses the Jewish word *shalom*, which describes a desired state of the world in which true peace reigns. *Shalom* is much more than a simple state of peace or contentment, though. It is all-encompassing and points to a beautiful integration of God and man with all creation. *Shalom* results in universal flourishing and wholeness that brings about God’s desired goodness in a community and the world.

In his message “The Dream of the Kingdom” (delivered April 30, 2000, at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, N.Y.), Tim Keller divides this idea into three distinct concepts:

1. **Physical *Shalom*:** When every body part is working together as it should and you experience physical health.
2. **Psychological *Shalom*:** When the things you most desperately want are the things that make the most sense and which your conscience tells you are right.
3. **Social *Shalom*:** When those who have money, power, status and resources weave all they are and have into their communities.

True *shalom*, then, is reached when the “righteous” in a community address physical, psychological and social needs with honor and care.

DEFINING TERMS | *TSADDIQIM* (*tso-de-KEEM*)

A Hebrew word meaning “the righteous,” used in Proverbs 11:10 to describe a specific group of people. *Tsaddiq* (*tso-DEEK*) is the singular form; *tsaddiqim* is plural.

In this presentation, Amy Sherman focuses on the *tsaddiqim* and describes them as a group of righteous people within a particular city. She says that if these people prosper, the city will prosper as well because they understand that their flourishing is to be shared. They do not see themselves as individuals trying to get by for themselves and their immediate friends or families. Rather they feel solidarity with everyone around them. When there is pain and suffering in their city, they have compassion and strive to relieve it. When there is injustice, they seek to advance God’s justice for the disenfranchised. When there is inequality, the *tsaddiqim* use their resources to foster development and bring honor to those affected by it.

One important point here is that those who are the “righteous” in God’s eyes willingly disadvantage themselves for the good of others. Wisdom and discernment is needed to know how God is calling us to do that. But, as Amy points out, the *tsaddiqim* go out of their way to be strategic and sacrificial in how they use their resources and influence so that the vulnerable and marginalized can be lifted up.

GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 5-6

Video clips 5-6 are part of the presentation “Are You A Tsaddiq?” by Dr. Amy Sherman, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch her full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

The goal of this presentation is to consider how we view our own occupation in the context of God’s vision for His people—a vision of justice, righteousness and flourishing. Do we see ourselves as the righteous in society and the type of people who would cause others to rejoice in our success? Are we becoming the kinds of people who willingly disadvantage ourselves for the common good? Amy Sherman focuses on how our faith can be lived out through our work. We often can think the primary way we can influence our workplace is by evangelism (telling people about Jesus). This is an important part of following Jesus, but our words will fall flat if they do not match our work.

Amy points out that we live out our faith—we become righteousness—at work in three dimensions: upward, inward and outward righteousness. We must pursue upward righteousness by excellence at work, by keeping appropriate boundaries to company loyalty and by depending on God (not just ourselves) for our success and livelihood. We must pursue inward righteousness through our conduct, our personal holiness and our grace-based relationships with others. Finally, we pursue outward righteousness through compassion, fairness in our relationships and engagement with our surrounding community. At the end of the day, this attitude is visible and speaks volumes to the people we work with. We want to be people who don’t just talk about Jesus but exude the qualities of Jesus as we serve others in our vocations.

What’s the push back?

A common criticism of this presentation may be that all of this information is great in theory but is too idealistic to actually work in day-to-day life. Competition in the real workplace is fierce and people’s well-being are at stake. This is true, but it leads to a bigger question, “Why do we work?” If we are forced to leave our faith at the door when we go to work and we are primarily serving ourselves, are we fulfilling God’s desires for our lives at all? While these are hard questions to ask, they are important because they highlight some of the ways we may have set our faith aside, become complacent in our everyday work or even failed to trust God with our situations.

Another potential objection to this teaching may be about competing values. Some may feel a tension between seeking the common good of society and promoting the gospel. They may ask if all of our effort to help society flourish could unintentionally distract us from sharing the good news of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. Our answer to this question will depend on how far we think the gospel reaches into our lives. The view expressed in this study is that the gospel is the good news that through Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, God is redeeming and restoring all things. He is saving souls, but He is also bringing the reality of His kingdom into the world. He is reclaiming all things. Therefore, as we follow Jesus we “live the kingdom” (i.e., we seek to live according to its values). Those values impact every aspect of life, including everyday work, economics and the common good. By giving people a foretaste of the kingdom, our lives and our everyday work actually *enhance*

our proclamation of the gospel message. Our invitation to believe in Jesus becomes clearer and more compelling as people see its impact and power.

See also Dr. Sherman's helpful response to this question in the extra entitled "Does this Vision of the *Tsaddiqim* Conflict with the Gospel?"

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Dr. Amy Sherman and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

How might the message of the gospel be enhanced or hindered by the way we engage (or disengage) from pursuing the common good?

Describe an activity in which you could participate that would allow you to bring about rejoicing and true justice in your community, even if it is only on a small scale.

Our call to be righteous can sometimes conflict with the desires of our bosses or the nature of our work. Have you ever been faced with a situation that forced you to choose between your loyalty to a company and your loyalty to God? How did you deal with this situation?

Think about your workplace. Which aspects of righteousness, as described by Dr. Sherman, are easy to practice within the culture of your workplace? Which are difficult? How can you be a catalyst for change or an example of an inwardly righteous person in your specific workplace?

Amy Sherman talks about the power of blessing others and asks us to try blessing three people a day: one Christian, one non-Christian and one who is different from us in some way. How do you think this simple idea could influence who you are at your workplace and how you see those around you?

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **THE RIGHTEOUS** – Proverbs 11:10
- **UNDERSTANDING OUR LIMITATIONS AND RELYING ON GOD** – John 5:19, 15:5
- **OUR BEHAVIOR TOWARD OTHERS** – Psalm 11:5, 112:9; Micah 6:8

FURTHER READING

Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good
by Amy Sherman

To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World
by James Hunter

The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited
by Scot McNight

Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just
by Timothy Keller



HOW DO YOU LIVE THE KINGDOM?

Video clips 7-8 are taken from this presentation.

“What if your everyday work,
paid and unpaid, is meant
to preserve and enhance
our world?”

– George Moss



PAUSE TO REFLECT

Read and discuss this reflection before moving on to video clip 7.

In Dorothy Sayers' profound article "Why Work?," she wrote: "In nothing has the Church so lost her hold on reality as in her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world's intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion."

How do you "live the kingdom"? In short, by stewarding your vocation.

Secular work and faith are not separate. In fact, the very purpose of our work is to engage in God's plan, previewing the kingdom on earth and honoring His name.

OPENING QUESTION

Reflect on the statements below. Do these statements feel more true or false, and why?

In my everyday work...

I am working for Jesus and His kingdom.

☐ True ☐ False

I have resources and influence that can impact others for the kingdom.

☐ True ☐ False

Jot down your thoughts about these statements, and discuss them with your group.

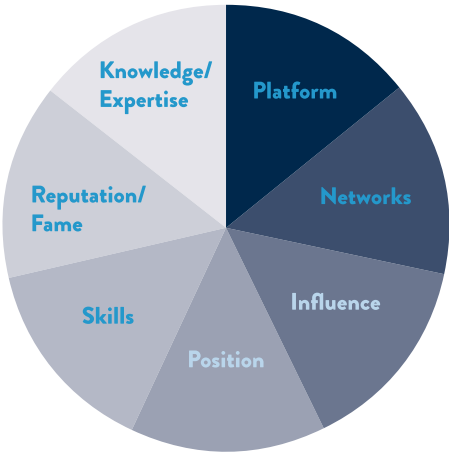


What is Vocational Stewardship? (13 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Amy Sherman describes “vocational power” and “vocational stewardship.” These concepts will empower any willing person to love God and serve their neighbor through their everyday work. Everyone has certain skills, knowledge, experience and spheres of influence. We just need to identify ours and deploy them for the kingdom.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**How Do You Live the Kingdom?**” by Dr. Amy Sherman, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

THE DIMENSIONS OF VOCATIONAL POWER



Taken from vocationalstewardship.org. Used with permission.

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

Take an inventory of your vocational power. What gifts has God given you to steward for His kingdom? These may be traditional spiritual gifts, but they are also any other asset you have. Brainstorm anything that comes to mind in the seven dimensions of vocational power.

- **Knowledge/Expertise:** What do you know and what experience do you have? This can include your job or anything else.
- **Platform:** What opportunities do you have, large or small, to get a message out or to shine a spotlight on an issue or cause?
- **Networks:** What relationships do you have with others who have knowledge and experience that you don't have?
- **Influence:** What ability do you have, whether large or small, to affect change in positive ways?
- **Position:** What authority do you have because of your position or title?
- **Skills:** What are you good at? These include what you do at your job, but they also include any other skill, gifting or hobby you enjoy.
- **Reputation/Fame:** What name recognition do you have and in what circles?

Begin to think creatively and prayerfully about how God might want you to deploy these things intentionally and strategically. Share with your group whatever comes to mind even if you're not sure yet what to do with it. Video clip 8 will help you brainstorm further.





Pathways of Vocational Stewardship (20 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Amy Sherman describes several ways you can leverage your vocational power to serve others. You don't need to change jobs. You can advance the kingdom right where you are, donate your skills, mentor others, launch new initiatives, etc. With real-world stories, Amy illustrates how to offer your everyday work for real kingdom impact.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**How Do You Live the Kingdom?**” by Dr. Amy Sherman, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*



REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

Look back at the inventory of vocational power you brainstormed after video clip 7 and think of where God has placed you vocationally (e.g., traditional workplace, self-employed, stay-at-home parent). Which of Dr. Sherman’s “pathways of vocational stewardship” seems the most relevant to you?

What is one specific step you can take to push yourself toward action in at least one pathway of vocational stewardship?



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please show me clearly the vocational power and skills You have given me and help me to steward those gifts for the betterment of Your world. Let me be an integral part of helping people experience Your kingdom here on earth by offering to them foretastes of what Your kingdom will truly be like. Give me eyes to see the doors You open and courage to walk through them. Amen.



EXTRAS

EXTRAS | NEED SOMETHING MORE?

Dr. Sherman discusses a fourth pathway of vocational stewardship that seeks to harness all the energies, talents, influence and skills of a group of people (like a church) and direct them all toward one specific mission.

Pathway 4: Invest in a Targeted Initiative

Hopefully, your local church body is already serving in different ways in your community, but if not, you can be instrumental in bringing this about. The shared skills and talents of those in your church community can be used together to do more than anyone could do individually. One joy of engaging with and serving your community is that you don't need to do it alone!

Listen to the 10-minute extra entitled "Pathway 4: Invest in a Targeted Initiative" to hear about Lincoln Village Ministries in Huntsville, Ala. It's a church who sought to address issues of justice and poverty in their local area. Tons of people got involved from the church and the community, including teachers, homeschool moms, PTA groups, schools, scientists from NASA and more.

EXTRAS | WHAT ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

In "Kingdom Calling," Dr. Sherman writes that discovering your spiritual gifts is important, but that spiritual gifts assessments are often insufficient for discerning all of the ways God wants us to join in His mission. Most spiritual gifts assessments fail to give recommendations for service outside the church. If they give recommendations at all, they focus on service within the church.

Plus, many biblical scholars argue that the lists in Scripture (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12) are not exhaustive lists, and that they contain many rather common and mundane abilities. Take Romans 12:3-8, for example:

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Some of the gifts listed here are normal things people do every day like serving, teaching and leading. So, a spiritual gift is essentially any ability God has given you, common or unique, that He wishes to use to serve and bless others.



DEFINING TERMS | OCCUPATION AND CALLING

At some point in the past, you may have heard someone say, “I wish I knew what my calling was,” or “I wish I had a calling on my life.” These comments are often based on the idea that to fulfill a calling you must either be in full-time ministry, involved in overseas missions, working with a nonprofit or at the very least serving in a church-based ministry. However, every person, regardless of formal occupation, has a calling to love their friends and family, to serve others through their labor and to use the abilities and talents they have been given for the greater good of God’s creation.

Your occupation gives you contact and engagement with the calling God has already put in front of you, exactly where you are.

“The gospel reminds me that God cares about the products we make, the companies we work for, and the customers we serve. He not only loves us, but also loves the world and wants us to serve it well. My work is a critical way in which God is caring for human beings and renewing His world. God gives us our vision and our hope.” – Katherine Leary Alsdorf, “Every Good Endeavor,” p. 14.

DEFINING TERMS | ENTREPRENEURS AND INTRAPRENEURS

In her presentation, Dr. Sherman refers to “social entrepreneurs,” “cultural entrepreneurs” and “social intrapreneurs.” These phrases are new to many people. Here are a few quick definitions as you explore what God is calling you to do with your vocational power.

Social Entrepreneur: Someone who creates a new company or nonprofit to meet a specific social need.

Cultural Entrepreneur: Someone who seeks to motivate new behaviors in society through their enterprise.

Social Intrapreneur: Someone who innovates within an existing organization rather than leaving it and starting something new.

DEFINING TERMS | KINGDOM “PREVIEW PASSAGES”

Many biblical writers describe God’s promised future kingdom with picturesque imagery. We don’t know exactly what the kingdom will be like, but we do know it will be a place of complete peace, wholeness, flourishing, justice and joy.

Isaiah 65:17-19

“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more...”

Amos 9:13-14

“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills, and I will bring my people Israel back from exile.’”

Revelation 21:1-5

“Then I saw a ‘new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’”

See also Ezekiel 34, Zechariah 8 and many others.



GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 7-8

Video clips 7-8 are part of the presentation “*How Do You Live the Kingdom?*” by Dr. Amy Sherman, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch her full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

The goal of this presentation is to help people recognize their own vocational power and how they can use it in practical ways to bring a foretaste of the kingdom of God to earth. Dr. Amy Sherman teaches that many people do not realize the vocational influence they have which leads to a lack of stewardship and faithfulness. Amy says, “You cannot steward well what you do not recognize that you possess.” If you are leading a group through this study, encourage your group to examine their vocations and recognize what influence they have, whether it is great or small. Start with their jobs and careers, but also include other hobbies and interests. Many people are interested in things they’ve never dreamed of actually using for the kingdom of God.

In addition to discerning their vocational power, another main point or take away from this session should be that the way we interact with and serve others today can give people a preview of what the kingdom will be like when Christ returns.

We hope and pray for opportunities to tell people about Jesus specifically, but even when that doesn’t happen, our lives should work for the common good and help people flourish. When they do, we pray God will draw their hearts to Him with thankfulness. In this way, we can all bring joy, peace, justice, care for creation and flourishing to the world. This is what we want people to understand as they go into their own workplaces and communities: that they have unique abilities

that can play a part in bringing about redemptive change, which will inevitably point toward Christ.

What’s the push back?

A common criticism of this session will be that there are a lot of great stories and examples, but that it may be difficult for the average person to single-handedly change his or her environment or community. Dr. Sherman addresses this in the extra entitled “Pathway 4: Invest in a Targeted Initiative.” We as believers form a community (the church) where we can use our individual gifts together to bring about change on a larger scale than we can alone. Imagine what could be done if every church had a specific targeted initiative that it was striving to address in their community. When contemplating the vocational power of every individual in each church around the world, it would be very difficult to argue that the potential is not available to bring a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven to earth in the here and now.

You may also find the other extras helpful. In each clip, Amy addresses a question that was raised after her full presentation. In “The Mindset of the Righteous,” she emphasizes the importance of humility, especially for those who are prosperous. In Deuteronomy 8:17-18, we see that even the ability to produce wealth is a gift from God, so nothing we have today is something gained merely from our own intelligence or hard work. Amy gives a passionate reminder that everything

is a gift to be humbly stewarded for the sake of others. In “A Model of *Tsaddiq* Discipleship,” she explains a multi-church effort to engage a nine month whole-life discipleship program.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Dr. Amy Sherman and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

Dr. Sherman says that sometimes when we think about vocational stewardship we tend to focus on simply evangelizing co-workers without also considering how our work itself participates in God’s redemptive purposes. What are some problems that may arise if we focus only on evangelism, and what are some simple ways your work offers a “foretaste of the kingdom of God”?

Brainstorm as a group the collective vocational power you have and what needs God may be inviting you to address in your community.

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

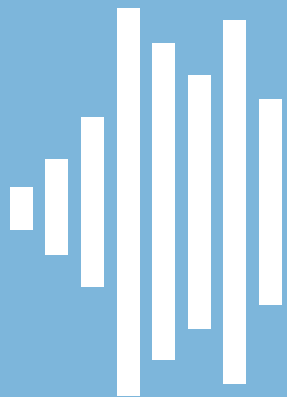
- **SEEKING THE PROSPERITY OF OUR COMMUNITY** – Jeremiah 29:7
- **USING OUR GIFTS FOR GOD**
– Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:10-11;
Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12
- **PERSPECTIVE ON OUR POSITION** – Deuteronomy 8:17-18;
Philippians 4:12-13
- **FORETASTES OF THE KINGDOM**
– Isaiah 2:4; Amos 9:13; Revelation 21:4

FURTHER READING

Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good
by Amy Sherman

Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship in Monday Work
by Tom Nelson

Fruitfulness on the Frontline: Making a Difference Where You Are
by Mark Greene



PART 3: FLOURISH FOR OTHERS

“Love your neighbor as yourself. I am
the LORD.” – Leviticus 19:18

INTRODUCTION

What is work, and why do we do it? Is it good enough that we use our income to pay the bills, provide for our loved ones and tithe? Or should we be thinking bigger? In Part 3, you will explore a big concept called “economic activity,” which helps us see that our jobs are so much more than a means to an end. They are the way in which we flourish, interact with the overall economy and bring value to society. Work is the God-ordained intersection of skill, material and relationship which provides us the opportunity to engage in something much bigger than ourselves.

Work is the intersection of skill, material and relationship. As you seek to flourish, how is God calling you to flourish for others?

The way we look at our jobs and the overall economy is crucial to the way we treat others and see our own place in this world. We cannot separate what we believe about government, social justice and economics from our Christian worldview.

As individuals, we are a part of a much bigger system than ourselves. Oftentimes these systems can harm or neglect large portions of society. When they do, as followers of Jesus, we should be moved to pursue justice and restoration. Sometimes this will require sacrifice, maybe even at great personal cost to ourselves. But God calls us live with a mindset that puts His desires and the needs of others before ourselves. God wants us to flourish in whatever we are doing, not just for ourselves, but for others.

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 - ♦ “Principles of Economic Wisdom” (9 min.)

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- Additional Video Clips by Rudy Carrasco
 - ♦ “Creative Destruction” (4 min.)
 - ♦ “Dead Capital” (9 min.)

Panel Discussion

Available online at cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.



HOW DO WE FLOURISH?

Video clips 9-10 are taken from this presentation.

“In the church in America right now, we are talking a lot about flourishing, but we haven’t yet opened up the space of ‘how does flourishing connect to others?’”

– Rudy Carrasco



You're Part of Something Huge (3.5 MINUTES)

In this video, George introduces a concept that is critical for understanding how everyday work serves people and communities in practical ways. This intro video sets up the theme “Flourish for Others,” which you will explore in video clips 9-12.

*After watching this, read the **Introduction** and discuss the **Opening Question** below.*

INTRODUCTION

We cannot understand the significance of our everyday work, or the opportunity it provides to promote human flourishing, if we don't see how our work connects with everyone else's work. In other words, your everyday work is part of something much bigger, the “economy,” and the clearer this becomes the easier it will be to see how God wants to use you to serve people—you may already be serving people you never meet.

In Part 3, Flourish for Others, you will explore what “economy” and “economic activity” really are, using business and businesspeople as examples of how everyday work serves people in life-changing ways. You'll get behind the numbers and policies of economics to the rub of authentic human behaviors and relationships. And you'll be able to evaluate how this relates to living out your Christian faith in the world of your everyday work.

OPENING QUESTION

What did your parents do for a living when you were a child, and what impact did your parents' employers have on you and your family? Share one example of this impact, either positive or negative.





People Serving People (21 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Rudy Carrasco explains how “economy” and “economics” are more about relationship and ministry than we often think. Economics is about human behavior and the ways we engage with each other. Rudy provides stories of thoughtful business people to illustrate how our everyday work really can help people and cities flourish.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**How Do We Flourish?**” by Rudy Carrasco, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

In what way, if at all, does focusing on human relationships change your view of economic activity and working for the kingdom?

How do Rudy's examples of Cemex and Broetje Orchards illustrate everyday work as a way to promote flourishing? What gifts, skills and motives were needed for those businesspeople to make an impact?





What the Bible Says (9 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Rudy Carrasco provides an overview of biblical teaching about economics and God’s intent for human flourishing. God’s people are called to model His righteousness in how we live and work together, including in our everyday work. Jesus demonstrated this as a balance between personal responsibility and concern for people in poverty.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**How Do We Flourish?**” by Rudy Carrasco, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*



REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

Read Leviticus 19:9-10 and Leviticus 25:25-28. Though our current cultural and economic situation has changed much since the writing of Leviticus, what do these passages tell you about the heart of God in regards to the less fortunate, and how might we apply those principles today?

Read Philippians 2:4 and discuss the following statement from the video clip: “Self-interest was not condemned but affirmed and balanced by the concern for others.” How do you balance self-interest (making sure you and your family are taken care of) and proper concern for others? What questions have you wrestled with in navigating this balance, and what helps you?



PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the opportunities You have given me to serve You right where I am. Help me to recognize the social capital that I have, whether relationships or training, and to use them for the good of others. Let me not be satisfied with my own flourishing, but seek the flourishing of others as well. Amen.

EXTRAS

DEFINING TERMS | PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION

Israel was called to model God's righteousness in how they lived together as a nation. They were to ensure they were a "holy nation" economically by making sure people could take care of themselves and by providing for those who could not. See Leviticus 19:9-10, 15, 18, 33-36; 25:8-12, 25-28; Deuteronomy 15:1-11, 25:13-16 and 26:12-13. "The poor" was defined as "those who could not provide for themselves."⁶

"Scripture, God's heart, has a concern that goes beyond laws and righteous behavior. It goes to people. How are people supposed to flourish? How are people even supposed to live?" – Rudy Carrasco

Scripture speaks to both personal responsibility and systemic oppression. Proverbs alone expresses both concerns. Individuals are told to be diligent (Proverbs 6:6-11, 14:23), and those with power or privilege are told to look out for the poor and oppressed (Proverbs 13:23, 14:31). Likewise, "self-support and personal responsibility were assumed in the early church" (1 Thessalonians 4:11-12),⁷ and the prophets routinely spoke about systemic injustice, even connecting our response to systemic injustice to our spiritual health (Isaiah 58:6-11; Jeremiah 22:16). In other words, God's people are called to pay attention to both issues.

"Self-interest was not condemned, but affirmed and balanced by the interests of others (Philippians 2:4)." – Scott Rae⁸

DEFINING TERMS | ECONOMY

"The economy is not numbers on spreadsheets and lines on graphs ... the economy is fundamentally a web of human relationships. We have to rediscover the perennial truth that the economy is a moral system ... in which each person's work benefits others through a vast system of exchange." – Greg Forster, Oikonomia Network, Trinity International University

As Greg Forster's definition of "economy" highlights, the economy could be described as a network of human beings—producers, distributors and consumers—in a local, regional, national or international community. Whether macro or micro, the economy is made up of all people involved and is intended to benefit them. Any expansion of the economy should not just build wealth but also meet more needs. It should provide opportunity for more people to participate and serve one another for the greater glory of God.

Like other parts of creation though, sin often taints this pursuit. The economy itself has no intrinsic moral value, but decisions people make always have moral implications. Their decisions flow from their values, and they impact others in positive and negative ways. Though your personal influence in the global or national economy may be small, we are all called to be faithful in our everyday work, to use our influence responsibly and to help others flourish.

GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 9-10

Video clips 9-10 are part of the presentation “How Do We Flourish?” by Rudy Carrasco, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch his full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

This goal of this presentation is to help people rethink their assumptions about “economy” and “economic activity” from a relational and biblical perspective. For many people, economics is primarily, if not only, about money, stock markets and political policy, which loses sight of the actual way people and communities function. If we want to leverage our everyday work to love and serve our neighbor, we need to see the economy as fundamentally about human relationships—people serving people. Our everyday work is part of that network of relationships, so understanding economy in this way gives our everyday work context and expands the possibilities for how our daily grind contributes to a flourishing society. If you’re a group leader, encourage people see how their everyday work plays a role in something much bigger than themselves.

Scripture approaches economic issues in just this way. God commands His people throughout the Bible to live and work together in a way that enables people to take care of themselves and to provide for those who cannot. Rudy Carrasco points out that a biblical view of flourishing is more than purely monetary gain; it is a holistic view of people’s emotional, spiritual and material health. God looks at how the system treats people within it, and He calls His people to do the same, to pay attention to the way the economy impacts people.

What’s the push back?

For some, one of the biggest tendencies will be to hear Rudy’s comments as a critique of the way in which America engages in economics. Rudy is not trying to say that the American system is right or wrong; he is simply trying to help the listener acknowledge that there are ways we can promote human dignity where it is lacking, regardless of our position within a company. Economic tools can be used to subjugate people, but they can also be used to help people gain self-sufficiency. Money can be used to control, but it can also be used to bless and provide opportunity. Biblically speaking, the goal of any economic system is not simply to promote economic flourishing, but holistic human flourishing. We can all be a part of making sure that our contribution produces both.

Secondly, people may push back on examples like Broetje Orchards, saying, “It’s nice that they could figure out how to help people and make a profit, but that’s just not reasonable in most businesses.” Remind people that God often calls us to do things in our personal and corporate lives that are difficult. God does not expect everyone to do exactly what the Broetjes did, or to change the world single-handedly. But He does expect us to contribute where we can, large or small, toward creating a just, flourishing economy within our specific contexts.

Thirdly, some people may have a difficult time discussing economics without focusing primarily on national politics. Avoid this by guiding people back to the basic concept of economics presented here, and focus on how our everyday

work plays a part in it all. After some discussion, people should begin to see that actual human relationships (not just policy), personal responsibility and concern for others are the main values that should drive us, regardless of political approaches.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Rudy Carrasco and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

What interests you or makes you feel uncomfortable when talking about economics? Do you see the Bible as relevant to work and economics? Why or why not?

Rudy tells some of his own story in video clip 9, about how his sister learned leadership skills at her job that impacted her ability to care for him and his siblings. Have you ever overlooked or minimized the importance of this kind of human development as a spiritual ministry for the kingdom? Why or why not?

Rudy argues that, throughout the Bible, God calls His people to live in a way that is economically just and right. Not all of the specific laws in the Old Testament apply today, but the intended outcomes of those laws do apply (e.g., flourishing communities). To what extent, in your experience, does the church or individual Christians pay attention to local economic practices? Do you think they should pay more or less attention? Why?

(NOTE: By “local economic practices,” we do not mean politics or national economic policy but rather the interactions and dynamics at work in your own town or city that impact daily life (e.g., the Broetjes’ efforts to improve life for their employees). It can be difficult to think of these things because we take them for granted, but reflect on the way things work in your town, how people get things done and how they are treated. Then, ask if it is just and right in God’s eyes, and if it is helping people flourish or not.)

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **TREATMENT OF THE POOR**
 - Leviticus 19:9-10; 25:8-12, 25-28; Philippians 2:4
 - **FAIR ECONOMIC TREATMENT**
 - Leviticus 19:35-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-16
 - **STEWARDSHIP AND MANAGEMENT** – Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:11
-

FURTHER READING

The Pastor’s Guide to Fruitful Work and Economic Wisdom edited by Drew Cleveland & Greg Forster

Available as a free download from the Made to Flourish Pastors’ Network (madetoflourish.org).

Business for the Common Good: A Christian Vision for the Marketplace
by Kenman Wong and Scott Rae

The Divine Conspiracy Continued: Fulfilling God’s Kingdom on Earth
by Dallas Willard and Gary Black Jr.

“For the Life of the World: Letters to the Exiles” Video Curriculum
(letterstotheexiles.com)



WHAT KEEPS US FROM FLOURISHING?

Video clips 11-12 are taken from this presentation.

“One of the ways I learn is by
looking at the opposite.”

- Rudy Carrasco



PAUSE TO REFLECT

Read and discuss this reflection before moving on to video clip 11.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he argued that the history of Israel provides examples of what not to do as the people of God. We can read the Old Testament stories of idolatry, corruption, sexual immorality and disbelief that brought harm to millions. And we can be appropriately warned to instead seek lives of faith, trust, honesty and fidelity. We can learn from their negative example.

“Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts to evil things as they did.”

– I Corinthians 10:6

In a similar way, Rudy Carrasco offers examples of what not to do as we seek to love God and serve others with our everyday work.

OPENING QUESTION

Describe a time when you learned something by someone else’s mistake. What happened, and what did you learn?



Wrong Decision Makers (12.5 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Rudy Carrasco provides an example of how economies breakdown and people don't flourish. When people don't have the freedom to make decisions, their everyday work is stifled, producing systemic waste and inefficiency. This is true at all levels: governments, companies, churches and nonprofit ministries.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**What Keeps Us From Flourishing?**” by Rudy Carrasco, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

“This is a statement of how God has uniquely and wonderfully made people, that we have a huge capacity to learn and adapt. This is a story about human dignity and creativity.” – Rudy Carrasco

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

In this clip, Rudy gives the negative example of Soviet Russia's centralized planning and the work of the *tolkachi*. What is the economic problem, and what does Rudy suggest as the solution? Do you agree or disagree, and why?

Why is it important to give individuals freedom to make decisions? What biblical values does this apply, and how does this relate to your everyday work and daily life?





Broken Relationships (14 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Rudy Carrasco provides another example of how economies breakdown, this time due to racism and oppression. Everyone is hurt when people or groups of people are cut off from each other. Rudy discusses the life and work of John Perkins, a leader in racial reconciliation and Christian community development.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**What Keeps Us From Flourishing?**” by Rudy Carrasco, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

In this clip, Rudy gives the negative example of racism and prejudice. What is the economic problem, and what does Rudy suggest as the solution? Do you agree or disagree, and why?

Do you find discussions of race and racism to be comfortable or uncomfortable? What experiences have you had that shape the way you approach this issue?

Review the examples of broken economies in this session: wrong decision makers and broken relationships. When you consider your everyday work and your context, which of these issues do you think you could, in a small way, participate in to bring restoration? What is your next step? Keep it simple and ask God to guide you.



PRAYER

Lord, help me to make sacrifices so that others can flourish. I know it will take time and hard work to bring reconciliation in a real and lasting way, but give me the patience to persevere. Let me be someone who uses my power, whether much or little, for Your good. I want to see freedom and flourishing on every level of society, so please let me be a part of this effort. Amen.

EXTRAS

EXTRAS | CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

Rudy describes the idea of “creative destruction,” proposed by Joseph Schumpeter. For some new things to begin, old things need to fall away. While this can be hard in the short term (emotionally and materially), it is a necessary process. Rudy describes how God often uses these difficult shifts to bring new opportunities.

Have you ever lost a job or missed an opportunity?

How did God use that loss to open new doors?

In the long run, were you able to see good in this situation or is it still difficult?

To learn more, check out the extra “Creative Destruction” (4 minutes).

EXTRAS | DEAD CAPITAL

In Haiti, the poorest nation in Latin America, the total assets of the poor are more than one hundred and fifty times greater than all the foreign investment received since Haiti’s independence from France in 1804. But they hold these resources in defective forms: houses built on land whose ownership rights are not adequately recorded, unincorporated businesses with undefined liability, industries located where financiers and investors cannot see them. (The Mystery of Capital, pp. 5-6)

In the above quote, Hernando de Soto makes the case that some of the poorest countries in the world have immense wealth in the form of assets like land, houses and “know how.” However, their societies remain poor because they cannot use those assets to build wealth. For example, if the legal system is broken, even if someone has a house worth \$400, they cannot get a loan because they may not have a title for the house. Even if they drew up a title, without legal proof of ownership and a court system to defend it, no one will take a risk on it.

De Soto’s team calls this “dead capital,” property or assets that cannot be utilized in the economy. He makes the argument that all around the world there is value, wealth and opportunity, but it’s dead. We have to do something with the legal systems and cultures to transform these societies. Anyone who engages in global poverty efforts will face this challenge.

For more information, check out the video clip “Dead Capital” (9 minutes).



GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 11-12

Video clips 11-12 are part of the presentation “What Keeps Us From Flourishing” by Rudy Carrasco, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch his full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

The goal of this presentation is to give examples of how economies break down and to show the inherent moral and relational nature of the economy—that it’s a web of human relationships working together for good or ill. Our purpose in life is much bigger than ourselves, and God calls us, in whatever way we can, to right what is wrong in the world and restore what is broken. Our time, resources and skills are God-given tools to be used to partner with others to help everyone flourish. We may do that in big ways that get attention, or in small ways that few people notice. Either way, we are called. Due to the nature of sin, the tendency for individuals and systems is self-centeredness rather than other-centeredness. This causes widespread suffering, inequality and economic breakdown. As individual Christians, we are called to fight actively against this tendency, pursuing the good of others and systems that bring about this good, even when it is difficult and requires sacrifice on our part. Each video clip presents a problem and an answer to it:

VIDEO CLIP 11: “WRONG DECISION MAKERS”⁹

- **The Problem:** Making decisions at a distance without enough knowledge and relationship
- **The Answer:** Recognizing human dignity by empowering people on the ground to make decisions

VIDEO CLIP 12: “BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS”

- **The Problem:** Racism, prejudice, injustice, abuse of power, distrust and pain from the past
- **The Answer:** Relocation (proximity and relationship), reconciliation (vertical and horizontal) and redistribution (spreading skills, opportunity, hope)

What’s the push back?

For this session, there may be some push back on the seemingly extreme nature of the call to seek flourishing for others. Some may ask, “Do you really expect me to move into a dangerous neighborhood or reorganize my entire business with the hope that good may come out of it? Aren’t we also called to provide for and protect our families?” This is an important clarification. The point is not to guilt everyone into giving up what they have or jeopardize their loved ones. The point is for everyone to take a close look at what God has given them (i.e., “vocational power”) and how He may be calling them to respond. Not everyone is called by God to move into a disenfranchised neighborhood, but some people are. If we did feel that calling, would we go? We should never turn God’s blessings into idols we place above our allegiance and obedience to Him, including the things that are most dear to us. We remain open to God’s leading and honestly seek His desires for our lives. He may call us to do something uncomfortable for the sake of others, and we must be open to Him. Compassion, love and empathy should have a greater pull

on our hearts than self-protection and fear. God doesn't call every person to "change the world," but He does call us to do whatever we can in our context with what we have, whether big or small.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Rudy Carrasco and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

When have you seen a company or a ministry make decisions for the people they were serving? What was the result, and what could have been done differently to empower the right people to make decisions?

Which of the three Rs—relocation, reconciliation or redistribution—do you find most compelling? Which do you have questions about? How do you think God might be calling you, through your everyday work, to participate in restoring economies where race and/or prejudice is a factor?

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **GOD LOVES THE DISENFRANCHISED** – Psalm 68:5-6, 140:12; Deuteronomy 10:17-19
 - **REDISTRIBUTION OF TIME AND SKILL** – Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-12
 - **RECONCILIATION** – Ephesians 2:13-18; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; James 2:1-13
-

FURTHER READING

Eat the Rich: A Treatise on Economics
by P.J. O'Rourke

The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else
by Hernando de Soto

Let Justice Roll Down
by John Perkins



PART 4: EXPAND THE CIRCLE

“Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed. Take up the
cause of the fatherless; plead the
case of the widow.” – Isaiah 1:17

INTRODUCTION

God has created every human being in His image and our everyday work is a way of reflecting His character and serving our neighbor. If that's true, what does that mean for people who cannot find work or provide for their families? In this discussion about everyday work, we need to remember to look past our own situations. God wants us to flourish, but He also wants us to help others flourish—especially those on the edges of society. God calls us to compassion and justice, to look out for people on the margins and offer opportunity and hope.

In other words, the biblical vision of everyday works calls us to expand the circle. This can be inconvenient, but the potential for impact is huge. We all live in comfort zones and predictable routines, but those habits often isolate us into groups. We live, work and play with the same people. We go to the same places. We help people who look and think like us. If we ever want to address poverty in a real way, these routines must change. Our circles must grow.

“Love and hospitality is the platform that makes justice, and any kind of justice, available.”

– Dr. John Perkins¹⁰

How do we, in our individual everyday work contexts, follow Isaiah's call to “learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed” (Isaiah 1:17)? Do we even know who the oppressed are? If we do, are we doing all that we can with what we have?

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Extras

- Full Video Presentation by Artie Lindsay (45 min.)
- Additional Video Clips by Artie Lindsay
 - ♦ “Three Dimensions of Impact: Getting Benevolence Right” (10 min.)
 - ♦ “How Do You Move from Compassion to Development in a Neighborhood?” (3 min.)

Expand the Circle Globally

VIDEO CLIP 15: Our Super Hero Complex (13 min.)94

VIDEO CLIP 16: Flip the List! Rethinking Our Approach to International Poverty (13 min.)..... 96

Extras

- Full Video Presentation by Peter Greer (42.5 min.)
- Additional Video Clips by Peter Greer
 - ♦ “Lessons Learned in Ukraine” (12 min.)
 - ♦ “What is the Value of Short-term Mission Trips?” (4 min.)
 - ♦ “What About When Governments Prevent Economic Progress” (3 min.)

Panel Discussion

Available online at cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.



EXPAND THE CIRCLE LOCALLY

Video clips 13-14 are taken from this presentation.

“In the life of Jesus — the very things that encompass who He is and who He was — He identifies with the poor. And as followers of Christ, we too must identify with the poor.”

– Artie Lindsay



We Are Called to Compassion and Justice (3.5 MINUTES)

In this video, George Moss wrestles with the calling of all Christians to care for people in poverty in a way that honors their dignity as the image of God. No matter what our everyday work is, we all have a potential role to play. This intro video sets up the theme “Expand the Circle,” which you will explore in video clips 13-16.

After watching this, read the **Introduction** and discuss the **Opening Question** below.

INTRODUCTION

The way we think about and treat people in poverty is critical. The Proverbs make this clear: “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,” (Proverbs 14:31), and “Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker” (Proverbs 17:5). Active oppression and passive mockery—both of them tell us more about our hearts toward God than anything else.

“Our heart attitude toward those who are in poverty really does reveal our attitude toward God.”

– Artie Lindsay

In Part 4, Artie Lindsay explores how we can “expand the circle” at a local level, beginning with our attitude toward poverty. He opens with a biblical foundation for thinking about poverty, evaluates two common views of poverty and considers its causes. He then explores ways we can expand the circle that affirm the dignity of the people we serve.

Identifying with the poor in our communities is not optional or temporary. It is the ongoing calling of the Church. Although this is not a simple step-by-step process, Artie shares the core views and attitudes that will help this take place.

OPENING QUESTION

What kind of efforts have you participated in to address poverty at a local level? Describe one experience that was especially impactful in your life.



How Do You View Proverty? (13 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Artie Lindsay provides a biblical foundation for thinking about poverty. He evaluates two views that are common but insufficient. The way we view poverty and its causes matters because it shapes how we view potential solutions. We must ask hard questions of ourselves and analyze what values drive our response to poverty.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Expand the Circle Locally**” by Artie Lindsay, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

At the end of this clip, Pastor Artie invites us to do a simple exercise to discern our attitude toward poverty and people who are poor. Prayerfully complete this exercise and discuss it with your group:

- Make a list of all the adjectives you have heard or used to describe people who are poor. Do these labels describe the people who are poor you actually know? If you don't know anyone who is poor, why is that, and how has this session challenged you so far?
- List reasons why you think people are poor. What does your culture believe are the reasons people are poor?



How Will You Approach Poverty? (21 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Artie Lindsay shows that poverty is a relational and spiritual issue—not just a material one. We are all experiencing poverty in some form, and this shared experience provides connection and solidarity. In some ways, we are all the same, so we really can foster relationships of mutual trust and partnership. Pastor Artie offers advice for how to navigate the challenges these relationships always face.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Expand the Circle Locally**” by Artie Lindsay, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

In the following questions, it will be easy to think only about personal or church ministry relationships. Be sure to have your everyday work setting in mind as well. Remember: your everyday work may be God's best plan for you to love and serve others—that includes expanding the circle.

In this clip, Artie Lindsay says that poverty is not only material, but also relational and spiritual. To what extent are you aware of your own poverty, whether material, relational or spiritual? Describe a time when you experienced one or more of these kinds of poverty. What impact did it have on you, and how might that experience help you identify with and relate to people who are poor in other ways?

Why is economic and relational exchange always better than one-time or one-way giving? When was a time you gave, worked or served in a way that was from a posture of superiority, even when you didn't realize it? When was a time you received in a way that was from a posture of inferiority, questioning your own worth or forgetting your true value? What steps of repentance do you need to take?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please help me notice those around me who are in need. Give me empathy for their experience. There is no place that I have more influence than right in my own community. Move me to spend the time it takes to restore relationships and bring hope and justice to people whom You love. Let me be a catalyst for change so others may see the love You have for every person You have created. Amen.

EXTRAS

EXTRAS | THREE DIMENSIONS OF IMPACT

In the extras for this session, Artie Lindsay describes three ways to respond to human need and when it is appropriate (and not appropriate) to engage in each one. All three dimensions are vital for responding to poverty, but we need wisdom to know which one to practice and for how long. Check out this 10-minute clip to learn more.



Compassion/Relief: “Direct aid to meet physical and material needs”

Development (redistribution of skills): “Creating opportunities for individuals to get out of their situation. Focuses on measured changes in knowledge, skill and abilities where they take responsibility for their own change.”

Advocacy/Empowerment (redistribution of opportunity): “Seeking to change the social conditions that cause dependency. Focusing on the system and issues that create injustice and committing to using your resources and privileges to create opportunities that will build economic capacity for others that lead to long-term impact.”

DEFINING TERMS | CONSERVATIVE COMPASSION AND LIBERAL JUSTICE

In his presentation, Artie Lindsay defines and addresses both conservative compassion and liberal justice. He acknowledges that both have valid points and can be rooted in Scripture. However, as described below, it is dangerous to apply only one of these views to the entire issue of poverty because poverty is never that simple.

Conservative Compassion: “We need to help people, provide what they don’t have, and bring them to a place they cannot get to by themselves.” See Proverbs 22:9.

This approach is needed, but by itself often leads to paternalism—viewing ourselves as “saviors” who offer what we have achieved that people in poverty cannot achieve. By implication, there must be some personal flaw on their part that prevents them from flourishing. Plus, compassion in the form of “doing for the poor” can never lift them out of poverty so they can do for themselves.

Liberal Justice: “Something is wrong or unjust about the system, which must be changed.” See Isaiah 1:17.

This approach is also needed but by itself often leads to derision and anger—blaming everything on a system that needs to be confronted. Personal responsibility is often ignored or forgotten. Even when the system is fixed, poverty continues because individuals have not developed the necessary skills to flourish.

Here’s the point: Poverty always involves both systemic and personal responsibility issues, so both must be addressed simultaneously.

GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 13-14

Video clips 13-14 are part of the presentation “Expand the Circle Locally,” by Artie Lindsay, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch his full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

The goal of this presentation is to create a robust, biblical understanding of poverty and to honestly assess our personal attitude toward people who are poor. Artie Lindsay presents two polarized views of poverty, one of conservative compassion and another of liberal justice. In conservative compassion, people may tend to give out of their abundance (sometimes with an attitude of superiority) and overlook the bigger systems that harm people. On the other side, liberal justice focuses solely on systems and tends to ignore issues of personal responsibility. This position believes that if we can remove the barriers in the system, then people in poverty will have all the tools they need to bring themselves out of their current situation. Lindsay argues for an approach to poverty that merges compassion and justice in a uniquely biblical way.

A second important purpose of this talk is to discuss ways to include others who are not already in our circles. Artie reminds listeners to affirm the image of God in people who are poor and to remember that poverty, biblically speaking, is more than just a material issue. It’s a spiritual and relational issue. In this way, poverty affects everyone. We are all poor, and therefore no one is above another. We just need to partner together to help each other flourish. Pastor Artie also wades into some real-world issues related to race and culture, and the way these dynamics affect efforts to address poverty.

As you reflect on this summary and discuss it in your group, be sure to keep your “everyday work” as a part of the

conversation. Avoid the temptation to consider these topics only as they relate to church ministry. How might your everyday work play a role in connecting with people who need help or offering skills, opportunity or hope?

What’s the push back?

One of the biggest critiques of this session may be that people will have anecdotal and personal experiences that support their previous view of poverty. The view expressed in this study is that the Bible speaks to both personal responsibility and also systemic issues. Therefore we must care about both. It’s a complicated issue. In your group, avoid getting into merely political discussions, siding with political parties. We must face the reality that, if Scripture is our authority, we are called to pay attention to both personal responsibility and systemic justice.

A second point of resistance for some may be having a conversation about cultural and racial differences. Invite your group to share honestly and humbly without criticizing or shaming anyone. Make sure everyone is heard and thanked for sharing. Encourage your group to focus on biblical teaching and to have empathy for people or groups who are different than them. If you’re comfortable, lead the discussion by sharing your own mistakes, missteps or wrongful attitudes when it comes to race or poverty. Whether or not your group agrees on the exact causes of poverty, we can all benefit by honest self-assessment about our attitudes about “the other,” and how our actions affect them.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Artie Lindsay, Peter Greer and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

When you think of poverty, do you tend to view it more in terms of personal responsibility or in terms of systemic issues? How do you think this shapes your view of people in poverty and possible solutions? What might a holistic approach look like that merges justice and compassion together?

When you see people who are poor in your community, what is the first thing that comes to your mind? How does this coincide with the core truth that every person in the world is made equally in the image of God and has both assets and abilities to offer?

What are your thoughts about doing the hard work, especially through your everyday work, to develop relationships with people outside your circle (i.e., marginalized or lacking opportunity)? What if there are cultural and racial differences? What hesitations or concerns do you have, and how might you overcome them?

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **OPPRESSION OF THE POOR** – Proverbs 14:31; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Corinthians 8:8-9
- **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY** – Proverbs 14:23
- **SYSTEMIC ISSUES** – Proverbs 13:23
- **CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD** – Genesis 1:27

FURTHER READING

Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How To Reverse It)
by Robert Lupton

Charity Detox: What Charity Would Look Like If We Cared About Results by Robert Lupton

When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development by Bryant Myers

Building Unity in the Church of the New Millennium edited by Dwight Perry (forward by John Perkins)

He's My Brother: Former Racial Foes Offer Strategy for Reconciliation by John Perkins and Thomas Tarrants



EXPAND THE CIRCLE GLOBALLY

Video clips 15-16 are taken from this presentation.

“When we see incredible needs around the world, we can have discussions about what we do, but there is no discussion about whether or not we should do something. Indifference is not an option.”

– Peter Greer



PAUSE TO REFLECT

Read and discuss this reflection before moving on to video clip 15.

“I’m glad people want to help. It comes from a good heart. People give us food. They dig us wells. They bring us shoes. They encourage others to give. The problem is it does not work ... What we need is to no longer be excluded.” That statement from Magette Wade, an entrepreneur from Senegal,¹¹ expresses the deep need for us to expand the circle on a global level.

Peter Greer closes this study by exploring some of the pitfalls of global missions work and what can be done to help address these problems. He leads a heartfelt discussion on what it means to truly help the communities we intend to support spiritually and materially.

“When I travel around the world, I don’t hear individuals asking for another aid shipment. I hear individuals asking for a job so that they can have the dignity and the ability to provide for themselves and their families.” — Peter Greer

We all want to help people flourish, but sometimes we need to reevaluate the ways we help to make sure the goals we are actually trying to achieve are being met.

Interestingly, this conversation about poverty circles right back to everyday work.

OPENING QUESTION

What kind of efforts have you participated in to address poverty at a global level? Describe one experience that was especially impactful in your life.



Our Super Hero Complex (13 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Peter Greer explains how every generation tends to believe that we (people in the West) have the education, skills and intelligence to fix other people's problems. We don't, and we end up making our efforts to solve poverty about us rather than about the people we serve or about Jesus Christ Himself.

*This video clip is part of the presentation “**Expand the Circle Globally**” by Peter Greer, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.*

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

This video clip calls for honest self-reflection. When was a time you saw, experienced or participated in an effort that was more about the people serving than it was about the people being served or about Jesus Christ? What was the impact?

Think about your everyday work. Do you ever take on a “super hero complex”? If so, what usually happens? What usually doesn’t happen?

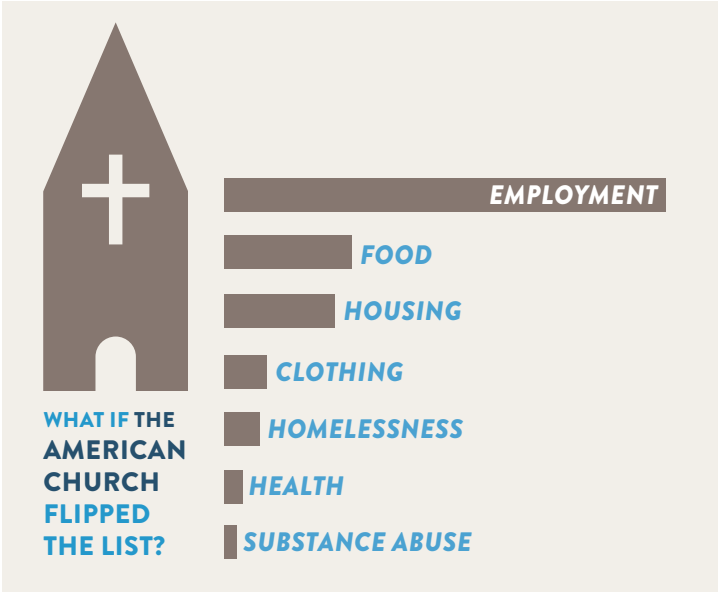




Flip the List! Rethinking Our Approach to International Poverty (13 MINUTES)

In this video clip, Peter Greer proposes an alternative response to international poverty. Humanitarian aid is needed in crises, but if we want to address the root causes of poverty and bring long-term change, we need to focus on employment. This is where lay people can offer skills and expertise from their everyday work to empower others.

This video clip is part of the presentation “**Expand the Circle Globally**” by Peter Greer, available at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.



These statistics and the “Flip the List!” proposal are the work of Jobs for Life in Raleigh, N.C. Their graphics are used with permission. See their full proposal and stories of churches “flipping the list” at www.jobsforlife.org/FliptheList.

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

After you watch the video clip, reflect on and discuss the following questions with your group.

How did Peter Greer challenge or change your understanding or perspective on humanitarian aid and charity? What questions does it raise?

How do you think your everyday work and your vocational power could be used to alleviate poverty around the world? Do you have a particular skill or experience that would be valuable to impoverished people who want to develop their communities?



PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please help me to see people around the world the way You see them. Give me both compassion and determination to engage in Your mission in whatever way I can, big or small. Let me not be motivated by a super-hero complex but rather driven by love, humility and sacrifice. Remind me that it's a marathon, not a sprint, and that the end goal of all we do is to bring people into a true relationship with You. Amen.

EXTRAS

EXTRAS | LESSONS LEARNED IN UKRAINE

Peter Greer describes his experience working with a church and community in Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union. What started out as grateful appreciation for help eventually transitioned to the local, receiving pastor saying, “Your help isn’t helping anymore.” Because they hadn’t listened to and partnered with the people they were serving, because they assumed they knew best, their help was ineffective.

In this 12-minute extra, Peter describes several lessons they learned from that experience, distinctions that have helped him partner with people more effectively:

- Relief vs. rehabilitation vs. development (recall Artie Lindsay’s “Dimensions of Impact”)
- Charity vs. development
- Symptoms vs. causes
- Paternalism vs. potential

Peter ends the clip describing the paradigm shift taking place through efforts like PovertyCure, which focuses on “enterprise-based solutions that affirm the role of individuals and families in turning around their situations” (povertycure.org). As one Haitian individual put it, “Work is freedom. We have what it takes.”

DEFINING TERMS | MICROFINANCE

What is microfinance? In a general sense, microfinance describes financial services to low-income individuals or to those who do not have access to typical banking services. The idea that low-income individuals are capable of lifting themselves out of poverty, if given access to financial services, that many in the majority of the world take for granted.

Peter Greer describes his experience with microfinance with his own organization, Hope International. Due to corruption and lack of reliable banking networks, it is difficult for people in many areas of the world to borrow money at a reasonable rate. In the United States, with a reasonable track record, most people can get access to loans at a small fraction of the cost, allowing them to have startup funds that would take years to save for. There are many hardworking and honest people in minority world countries who could take advantage of systems like this, but simply don’t have it available to them. This leads to discouragement and hopelessness in the face of such enormous odds.

Through microfinancing, those with easier access to capital can allow for small loans to be paid back at a reasonable interest rate to those in impoverished areas. Instead of just giving money as a temporary solution, these loans allow people to become engaged in the process, have ownership of their stake and develop skills of stewardship and management. In other words, microfinance is one model that affirms dignity, leverages the assets of people in poverty and empowers them to pursue long-term flourishing.

GO DEEPER (LEADER NOTES)

VIDEO CLIPS 15-16

Video clips 15-16 are part of the presentation “*Expand the Circle Globally*” by Peter Greer, given at a workshop in Grand Rapids, Mich. You can watch his full lecture at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

What’s the point?

Good intentions do not always create good results in the area of foreign missions. In his presentation, Peter Greer takes a realistic look at the way many churches approach global missions, and he challenges the results of these models. Humanitarian aid and other forms of giving are good, and Peter explains that there are times for providing immediate aid. When a country has a humanitarian or natural disaster-related crisis, the world must step in to provide aid. The ultimate solution to poverty, though, is not aid. There is also a time for development. Through his personal experience and research, Peter found that aid begins as something that is appreciated, but eventually leads to entitlement and dependency. He also found that all too often our mission efforts are more about us, driven by a super-hero complex, rather than about the people we serve and Jesus Himself. We must ask ourselves the question, “Is our mission work about us or is it about them? Are our efforts providing for or empowering people?” If we really believe that mission work is for those we serve, then we must focus on what brings sustainable change, not what makes us feel good.

Tackling global poverty is not just about donations or short-term trips to provide food, clothing and housing. We must be willing to look at and focus on root causes like employment and economic development, and then help the disenfranchised realize their potential. One model presented in this presentation is microfinance, which has been an effective model for bringing about sustainable change. However, there

are also other ways to effectively partner with those in poverty, and the skills needed might often come more from church attenders than from pastors.

What’s the push back?

As you lead this session, be careful not to denigrate the work that has been done in the past. Much good has been done. However, remind people that many of the poorest communities that have been supported for years (e.g., Haiti) are still impoverished. We may have helped with immediate needs, but we have not helped them out of poverty. At the end of the day, if someone is serious about helping another person for the long term, then they will support efforts that bring lasting change, not simply temporary relief.

Some of the pushback in this session will come from those people who have had life-changing experiences on short-term mission trips. What is being taught is not that those trips were worthless or that they did not bring joy and camaraderie to everyone involved. Mission trips are needed, especially for opening the eyes of people in wealthy countries to the great needs around the world. However, if the primary goal of supporting those in poverty is to bring them out of poverty, mission trips alone can never be the solution.

For more discussion of this material, check out the panel discussion with Artie Lindsay, Peter Greer and other experienced leaders. You can find this additional resource at www.cornerstone.edu/everyday-works.

Additional discussion questions:

Why is a “super hero complex” so easy to take on and so harmful to others?

How are mission trips viewed and implemented in your church?
What could be done to leverage mission trips for providing skills and development?

What does it teach the people we are trying to help, if we only address their spiritual needs, but neglect their physical ones? What does it say if we address only their physical needs, but not their spiritual ones? What does it say if we address both?

HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

- **JUSTICE AND MERCY** – Micah 6:8
 - **SERVING THE POOR IS SERVING CHRIST** – Matthew 25:40
-

FURTHER READING

Created to Flourish: How Employment-Based Solutions Help Eradicate Poverty
by Peter Greer and Phil Smith (available at www.hopeinternational.org/ctf)

Entrepreneurship for Human Flourishing
by Chris Horst and Peter Greer

The Spiritual Danger of Doing Good
by Peter Greer

When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert

From Dependency to Dignity: How to Alleviate Poverty Through Christ-Centered
by Brian Fikkert and Russell Mask

“Poverty, Inc.” a two-hour documentary by Acton Institute (www.povertyinc.org).



WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS?

As you rethink your everyday work and why it matters for the kingdom, here are some suggestions for how to continue your learning and put it into practice:

PART 1 | WORK IS GOOD

Enjoy. Give yourself permission to truly enjoy your favorite hobbies, foods and activities as blessings from the Giver of all good gifts. Go for a walk. Go to the beach. Make your favorite food. Turn on great music. Learn a new hobby. Hike a mountain trail. You decide.

Work. For three weeks, start each day with a verse or prayer that reminds you of the value of your everyday work as a form of worship to God and both love and service to your neighbor. When you get discouraged or distracted in your daily grind, stop for two minutes to be silent with God. Express trust in His goodness and ask Him to be present with you in your tasks.

PART 2 | LIVE THE KINGDOM

Prayer and Community. Pull together a group of friends or colleagues to pray together and discuss how you can become the *tsaddiqim* who rejoice your city. Brainstorm ways you can bless people in your community.

Assess. Continue to assess your situation and identify every aspect of vocational power you have. Be creative. Ask others for feedback. Jot down everything you have at your disposal, big or small, and ask God to guide you to use them for His purposes.

PART 3 | FLOURISH FOR OTHERS

Read. Pick a book or resource that will help you expand your thinking about “economy” as a web of human relationships. Draw from the books mentioned in this study, or read a biography of a community leader who helped others through his or her everyday work.

Observe. Depending on your current economic situation, “flourishing” might not be a word that you relate to. Life is hard. However, just as the wealthiest person experiences poverty (perhaps relational or spiritual), even the poorest communities experience flourishing (again, perhaps relational or spiritual). Ask God to open your eyes to see the flourishing around you, or ways to bring greater flourishing.

PART 4 | EXPAND THE CIRCLE

Connect. Reach out to someone from another culture or ethnicity and begin building a friendship (not as a project, but as a real friendship). Take interest in them and ask questions about their life and experience. Listen with empathy to what they say. Share your own life with them as well.

Dream. Start a conversation at your church, your workplace or among friends about how you and your community could get involved in an impoverished area of your community or of the world. Refuse to focus on symptoms (food, clothing, housing) and instead brainstorm the skills, training, mentoring or investment you could provide to future entrepreneurs. Consult with organizations like Partners Worldwide (Rudy Carrasco’s organization) and Hope International (Peter Greer’s organization) for advice and guidance.

B|O|S

DR. LUKE BOBO **(APPEARS IN THE PANEL DISCUSSION FOR PART 4)**

Dr. Luke Bobo serves as director of resource and curriculum development for the Made To Flourish Pastors' Network (Oakland Park, Kan.), providing leadership to create and curate resources and curriculum for pastors in that network. Luke has a rich blend of experience. He worked for 15 years in the marketplace as an engineer before pursuing an M.Div. and Ph.D., serving as the executive director of the Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Seminary. Luke has also spent time as professor of religious studies at Lindenwood University, adjunct professor of religious studies at the University of Kansas and of culture and apologetics at Covenant Seminary. Luke has also written curriculum for a workplace ministry and is the author of several books, including "Living Salty and Light Filled Lives in the Workplace" and "A Layperson's Guide to Biblical Interpretation: A Means to Know the Personal God."

RUDY CARRASCO | SESSIONS 5-6

Rudy Carrasco is the U.S. regional facilitator for Partners Worldwide, an organization in Grand Rapids, Mich., which uses business, enterprise and entrepreneurship to create flourishing economic environments in all parts of the world. He is also a writer, minister and advocate for Christian Community Development. Since graduating from Stanford University with a B.A. in English, Rudy has focused on indigenous leadership development. A writer by training, his articles have appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Christianity Today, Religion News Service and other publications, and he lectures regularly for the Acton Institute (Grand Rapids, Mich.). In 2001, he joined a group of nine Hispanic religious leaders who advised President George W. Bush on faith-based initiatives. He serves on the board of directors of World Vision US and TechMission and on the advisory board of the Christian Community Development Association. He lives with his family in Grand Rapids, Mich.

PETER GREER | SESSION 8

Peter Greer is the president and CEO of HOPE International. He joined HOPE in 2004 following experience serving in microfinance organizations in multiple places around the world. Greer served as managing director for Urwego, a Christ-centered microfinance institution in Kigali, Rwanda, and as a technical advisor for Self-Help Development Foundation in Bulawayo,

Zimbabwe. He also has experience working as a microfinance advisor in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Greer is the co-author of several books, including "Created To Flourish," "The Spiritual Danger of Doing Good," "Mission Drift," "Entrepreneurship for Human Flourishing" and "Watching Seeds Grow" (co-authored with his son, Keith). He holds a Master in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School and an honorary doctorate from Erskine College. Peter and his wife, Laurel, live in Lancaster, Pa., with their three children.

RACHEL HAMMOND **(APPEARS IN THE PANEL DISCUSSIONS FOR PARTS 1-4)**

Rachel Hammond serves as assistant professor of business at Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Mich. She graduated with a B.A. in Communication Arts from Cornerstone University in 1999, and in 2002, she earned her Master of Management from Aquinas College while working in the banking industry as a corporate trainer and HRD manager. Hammond teaches Principles of Management, Business Communications, Project Management and other management-related courses. She also serves as a co-faculty adviser for Cornerstone's Enactus team. In her free time, Rachel enjoys spending time with her family, serving at her church, reading and joining the occasional urban adventure race. She is one of the editors for Mom Colored Glasses, a website for moms that provides both information and inspiration on a variety of mom-focused topics.

ARTIE LINDSAY | SESSION 7

Pastor Artie Lindsay serves as teaching pastor at Tabernacle Community Church, a multiethnic congregation in Grand Rapids, Mich. Artie was one of the lead architects in establishing the church. He earned a B.A. in political science from the University of Michigan before following God's call into pastoral ministry. He moved from his hometown of Detroit to Grand Rapids, in the fall of 1995 to complete an M.T.S. at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. Prior to establishing Tabernacle Community Church, Lindsay served as the associate pastor at Messiah Baptist Church in Grand Rapids from 1997-2002 under the leadership of Dr. Clifton Rhodes, Jr. Pastor Artie has a burden and passion for community revitalization, and he continues to work extensively in the community to address the very real physical, emotional and spiritual needs of community members. Artie is married to Raquel, and they have three children, AJ, Victoria and Alysa.

GEORGE MOSS | INTRO VIDEO NARRATOR

George Moss is a hip hop musician, speaker and entrepreneur. He has released two studio albums with Dreamlight Entertainment, “All or Nothing” (2008) and “It’s Time” (2012). Through his music, George boldly declares, “I wasn’t called to make fans. I was called to make disciples.” Out of this commitment to his faith, George launched OXEN Apparel and OXEN Team Ministries, a discipleship program for students and leaders to discover what it means to be branded, trained and yoked to Jesus Christ. George provided his talent and experience to the Everyday Works intro videos, and his life is an example of stewarding your everyday work for the kingdom of God.

DR. AMY L. SHERMAN | SESSIONS 3-4

Dr. Amy Sherman is a senior fellow at the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research, where she directs the Center on Faith in Communities. In 2012, she was named by Christianity Today as one of the 50 most influential Evangelical women in America. She is the author of six books and over 80 articles in a variety of Christian and secular periodicals. Amy’s most recent book, “Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good,” seeks to help marketplace Christians live missionally, advancing foretastes of the kingdom of God through the strategic deployment of their vocational power. Dr. Sherman is a long-time member of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Va. Her undergraduate degree is from Messiah College (1987) and her M.A. and Ph.D. are from the University of Virginia (1991, 1994).

DR. MICHAEL WITTMER | SESSIONS 1-2

Dr. Michael Wittmer serves as professor of systematic and historical theology (1996 to present) and director of the Center for Christian Worldview at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary (2003 to present). He earned a B.A. at Cedarville University, an M.Div. and Th.M. from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Calvin Theological Seminary. In addition to teaching, Mike preaches regularly as pulpit supply and is an avid writer, blogging at mikewittmer.wordpress.com. He has written several theological books for the Church, including “Becoming Worldly Saints,” “Despite Doubt,” “The Last Enemy,” “Don’t Stop Believing,” and “Heaven is a Place on Earth.” He lives in Rockford, Mich., with his wife Julie and their three children.

DARRELL YODER (PANEL MODERATOR)

Darrell Yoder has been serving in pastoral ministry since 2009 and is currently a program director and adjunct professor at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. He earned a B.A. from Liberty University and a M.Div. from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. At GRTS, Darrell gives leadership to the Talking Points program, which provides resources and events for pastors, ministry leaders and counselors. He also leads two scholarship programs for Master of Divinity students, the Pirsig Fellowship and the Kern Scholars Program, where he provides spiritual retreats and oversees small groups that seek to cultivate students’ personal spiritual formation. Outside of GRTS, Darrell serves as a lay pastor at his home church and as the director of the Evangelical Seminary Deans’ Council, a professional development network of evangelical seminary deans. Darrell and his wife live with their three children in Rockford, Mich.

MATT ZAINEA (APPEARS IN THE PANEL DISCUSSIONS FOR PARTS 1-3)

Pastor Matt Zainea is the lead pastor at Blythefield Hills Baptist Church in Rockford, Mich., where he has served since 1997. Before entering pastoral ministry, Matt worked in the banking industry for over a decade. He earned a B.A. in Finance from Michigan State University, a MBA from the University of Notre Dame and a M.T.S. in Historical Theology from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. Matt and his wife, Lesley, have six children. Matt enjoys reading, gardening and basketball.

ENDNOTES

1. From “Going on Vocation,” a documentary and small group study produced by the Christian History Institute (goingonvocation.com).
2. From the video clip “Creation is Good—A Gospel for the Whole World”
3. For a fuller definition of Gnosticism, see the recorded extra “Two Extremes to Avoid.”
4. See also Genesis 18:19; Psalm 11:7, 103:6; Proverbs 8:20, 29:7; Isaiah 1:17; Ezekiel 18:5-9; Amos 5:24; Micah 3:9 and many others. The New Testament echoes this theme as well (e.g., Matthew 12:18, 23:23-24; Luke 11:42; Romans 3:26).
5. See Scott Rae, “Made for Responsibility,” in *The Pastor’s Guide to Fruitful Work and Economic Wisdom* by the Kern Family Foundation, p. 98.
6. Rae, 104.
7. Rae, 104.
8. Taken from the “Economic Wisdom Project,” a downloadable resource from the Oikonomia Network (oikonomianetwork.org) and Made to Flourish Pastors’ Network (madetoflourish.org).
9. For more on the balance between freedom and regulation, see Episode 4, entitled “Order,” of the video curriculum “For the Life of the World” developed by the Acton Institute (www.letterstotheexiles.com).
10. From Episode 4, entitled “Order,” of the video curriculum “For the Life of the World” developed by the Acton Institute (letterstotheexiles.com).
11. Magette Wade was interviewed for a documentary called “Poverty, Inc.” produced by the Acton Institute in Grand Rapids, Mich. (povertyinc.org). The full documentary is a devastating look at the impact and inadequacy of humanitarian aid. Peter Greer is also featured in the film.



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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Cornerstone University



**1001 EAST BELTLINE AVE NE
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49525
CORNERSTONE.EDU/EVERYDAY-WORKS**

