

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

One of the most frequently cited verses in conversations about integrating the truths of the Gospel with work is Gen 2:15: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” Most modern English translations use some version of work or cultivate, but as John Currid points out, the “it” (a pronoun ending attached as a suffix to verbs in Hebrew) is feminine, and the garden (the assumed modifier) is masculine, which means the verbs are *not* meant to be read as working and keeping the garden. Thus, as he argues “It is better, therefore, to understand the two verbs as infinitives without endings, which would give the reading: ‘to serve and to obey.’” It is not the garden we are to work and keep, but working and keeping – which can also be translated as “serving and obeying” - are to be our general states of being. We are to serve God and keep his word. Currid continues: “When the two words appear together in the Torah, they reflect the worship of God” (*Genesis*, 106).

The ancient Hebrews had a deep understanding of how faith should be integrated into all aspects of life and work. Thus, it shouldn't be surprising that they used the same word for work and worship (*avodah*). In Exodus, Moses' second book, this dual use of *avodah* becomes clear:

“Six days you shall work (*avodah*).” – Ex 34:21

“Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may worship (*avodah*) me” – Ex 8:1 (NIV)

God's original design and desire was for our whole lives to be united to worship in a seamless way of living. As we gain a better understanding of the beginning of the story, we will be better at finding our place in it. Andy Crouch ends his book with a beautiful summary of what we should all strive for: “When we are fully able to bear the beauty of God resting upon us, when our work and worship are one, we will live in the eternal now of creators made in the Creator's image. And, once more, it will be very good” (*Culture Making*, 268).

Article by Blake Schwarz is excerpted from Cultivate No 2
www.cultivatejournal.com

OTHER RESOURCES:

Institute for Faith, Work & Economics
<https://tifwe.org/>

Center for Faith & Work at LeTourneau University
<http://centerforfaithandwork.com/>



JULY 2016 PRAYER GUIDE

“Almighty God, by whose will we were created, and by whose providence we have been sustained, grant to us your blessing this day. You have given to each of us our work in life; Lord, enable us to diligently perform our respective duties. May we not waste our time in unprofitableness and idleness, nor be unfaithful to any trust committed to us. By Your grace strengthen each of us for the performance of duties before us.” - Henry Thornton

This month's topic is **Faith & Work**

The first thoughts that come to mind when we think about our faith at work are character, ethics, and excellence. Or we might think about workplace evangelism and discipleship. Still fewer think about the fact that God cares about our work whether we're in business, government, education, full-time church or nonprofit work, or another industry. Our jobs have intrinsic value. Sometimes, we ask, "How does my job, my company, or my industry impact society?" and "How can my job, my company, or my industry contribute even more to our city?" Imagine the kind of lasting transformation that could occur if all the Christians in the city thought that way.

Let these Scriptures and your time with God renew your heart for our Metroplex. Please prepare your heart before you begin to pray through the AP4C categories.



AP4C model was established in collaboration with
Movement Day Greater Dallas and is facilitated by **Unite**



All Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, NIV translation.
www.ap4c.org

SALVATION

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2:8-10

- Praise God for the mission field He has placed before us in Greater Dallas by bringing people here to work from other parts of the country and around the world.
- Pray for the salvation of every household represented at your place of employment.
- Pray that as people come to know the Lord they are excited to see their salvation as a means of engaging in the good works that God has prepared for them.
- Continue to pray for the salvation of individuals within your sphere of influence.

THE CHURCH

“May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands.”

Psalms 90:16-17

- Pray for Christians to see their 9-5 time, skills, and influence as a primary means of engaging in the good works God has prepared for them...as very significant investments in the Kingdom.
- Ask God to especially reveal this to young Christians who are making decisions for their future, eager to make a difference in the world.
- Pray that Christian leaders, bosses, and mentors would take seriously the opportunity to disciple others even though our companies likely wouldn’t call it that.
- Pray that as the world moves to our city that it will become evident to them that Christians are different in the ways that we conduct all things.
- Praise God that many pastors are considering how to encourage and disciple their people in this significant area of their lives.

OUR COMMUNITIES

“When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.” Proverbs 11:10

- Thank God for those whose jobs we often take for granted that are critical for our quality of life: at restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, A/C and plumbing, and waste management.
- Pray for opportunities to show others that their desire for a job that “makes a difference in the world” is straight from the heart of God who is restoring all things.
- Pray for vision and wisdom to encourage the work of non-Christians in our community that seek the good of our city.
- Ask God to guide those in your community who are unhappy or unfulfilled in their jobs to a role that matches their gifts and passions; ask Him for opportunities to serve others in this way.
- Ask God to sustain those in our community who are out of work or have to work multiple jobs to make ends meet.

TRANSFORMATION

“He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Revelation 21:5

- Pray that the Lord would give us a vision for participating in his renewal and transformation of all things.
- Pray for industry professionals as they work to develop economic and employment opportunities for Greater Dallas.
- Pray for the improvement of our education system that is currently failing to prepare a qualified workforce to meet the demands of our city.
- Thank God for our excellent community colleges that are making college accessible to everyone and preparing many for jobs that are very important to our city.
- Pray that God will transform the business, legal, medical, education and other systems so that they reflect His values of generosity, grace, and justice, as well as His attributes of creativity, excellence, and productivity.