

God Shapes Our Souls through Work: Welcoming His Presence

Overview:

On a hectic work day, it can seem difficult to make time for God. But, what if we could learn to sense God's strength and presence in the midst of the busyness? This lesson will help you examine Scripture and group members' own experiences, to reveal God's power in fresh ways.

Discussion:

Albert Camus claimed "When work is soulless, life stifles and dies." But how many people would say their work is soulful? Tedious, sometimes...frustrating, often...but spiritually rich? Rarely.

Scripture reminds us that we live before God in *all of life* (Romans 12:1.) The same Spirit that moves our hearts at a worship service or convicts our conscience in prayer is at work *in our work* shaping our souls through conference calls, performance reviews, and budget reports. In fact, when we recognize God's presence in our work, our jobs become a place of deep engagement, where sin is revealed and God's refines our souls.

Read Romans 5:3-5.

- In what ways have you faced hardship or challenges at work?
- How did those experiences affect your spiritual life (in either good or bad ways?)

Take a moment to consider these thoughts from pastor Tom Nelson:

"God's preferred path of transformation is not a path of ease, but it is one of enduring hope...We must embed deeply in our hearts and minds that our work, though often filled with tribulations, is one of God's main means for our spiritual growth and transformation. Work is where perseverance, proven character, and hope are forged in our lives.

When we face the formidable winds of workplace trials, rather than running from or becoming embittered by them, we would be wise to lean into them with trust and confidence, knowing that God has allowed them for a reason. Now, often this reason is not fully known by us. But through the eyes of faith, we find contagious joy and enduring hope. If we grasp the truth of God's Word about our work, we can remain hopefully buoyant even in difficult job circumstances."¹

- What concepts resonate with you from this quote?
- How does Tom Nelson describe the spiritual growth God can produce through the challenges we face at work?

¹ Tom Nelson. *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work*. Crossway, 2011.

- How have you seen these principles be true in your own life?

Read the following verses written by the apostle Paul:

Gal 4:19 “...I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is *formed* in you.”

Romans 8:29 “For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be *conformed* to the image of his Son....”

Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your minds...”

- What do they tell us about the importance placed on our spiritual growth?
- What is God’s role in this process? What is our role?

Application: Learning to see God’s presence in all things is a life-long process, but you can take steps to acknowledge his presence today.

- Share one or two stressors you currently face at work.
- In pairs, spend a few minutes praying: ask God to reveal himself to you through your work / ask him to soften your heart—that your mind and spirit would be renewed / ask God to produce character, perseverance, and hope through these current trials.

Additional Resources:

“My Quest for Meaning in Work” (Video featuring Barry Rowan, CFO of Cool Planet Energy Systems, 30 minutes) <https://vimeo.com/149672066>

“Trusting God in A World of Competition” by Robert Bigley, *The Gospel Coalition*
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/trusting-god-in-a-world-of-competition>