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Joanna Meyer: [\(00:19\)](#)

You're listening to the Faith & Work Podcast, where we explore what it means to serve God, neighbor and society through our daily work.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:28\)](#)

Hi and welcome to the Faith & Work Podcast. I'm Joanna Meyer, Denver Institute's Director of Public Engagement, and I'm joined today by Brian Gray. Brian serves as our Vice President of Formation and Director of the 5280 Fellowship. Hi Brian, how's it going?

Brian Gray: [\(00:42\)](#)

It's going well. Most everything is pointed in the right direction in life. We'll take that for right now.

Joanna Meyer: [\(00:46\)](#)

I love it. I can't say that about my life right now. So we're recording this episode in mid-September and Brian just got back from the kickoff retreat for this year's class of 5280 Fellows. And I would love to know more about how it went Brian. What are you looking forward to, as you think about beginning this fellowship journey with this class?

Brian Gray: [\(01:04\)](#)

Yeah, 5280 Fellowship is our Denver version of what we call our CityGate Fellowships. They're happening in a few other cities around the country, and it's always so great in the Fall to get a group of people who are total strangers together, who are only brought together by a shared interest in having a deeper expression of the life with God for the world through their work. And other than that, there's nothing else that holds them in common, other than a city and that vision. And then they leave an opening retreat connected, they've shared stories, it's really significant. So, I'm just coming off the energy of seeing really, really good and thoughtful people connect and just see that potential, the latent potential for where all their conversations are going to go and the impact they might come out of that. So-

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:46\)](#)

Yeah it's-

Brian Gray: [\(01:46\)](#)

Fall's always just fresh and fun in that way.

Joanna Meyer: [\(01:49\)](#)



That's awesome. And this year we're seeing two new cities, or two cities, where you start leading CityGate Fellowships. One is in Indianapolis and the other is in Richmond, Virginia, and it's exciting to see this movement of fellowship professional development programs to be spreading. So if you're thinking about that for your city, we'd love to talk to you about it.

Joanna Meyer: ([02:07](#))

On today's episode, we have the pleasure of introducing you to Denver Institute's new CEO, Ross Chapman. Yay, welcome Ross. Our team has enjoyed getting to know him through this interview and hiring process, and we cannot wait to introduce you to our new leader.

Joanna Meyer: ([02:23](#))

So Brian, tell me a little bit about how this interview process has been for you. What are you thinking about the CEO of transition, your excitement about working with Ross?

Brian Gray: ([02:31](#))

Well, I'm sitting in a room with him right now and he's glaring at me with these beady oppressive eyes that I would give it exactly the right answer to this. As Ross and I have interacted, he's gone from someone who I've heard about, and truly, actually only positively in terms of reputation from other colleagues around the country, particularly through some of our CityGate connections. So from just reputation towards interactions, I've been feeling just increasingly excited about both the current season and the season to come for Denver Institute. I think particularly because Ross, my perception of your collaborative nature, the willingness to think imaginatively about what could be. That's just always a hard question, and a really important question for an organization, is to imagine next seasons and to be pretty vision oriented. So I feel pretty excited about that. And I was told that there would be a pay bonus if my answer to that question was accurate and influential. No? Okay.

Joanna Meyer: ([03:28](#))

Well welcome Ross. We're glad you're here.

Ross Chapman: ([03:30](#))

I'm so glad to be here. Thanks Brian. Nice words, man. So kind. We'll see if I can live up to him.

Joanna Meyer: ([03:35](#))

His \$5 we'll be slipped under the table.

Brian Gray: ([03:38](#))

At least \$5.



Joanna Meyer: ([03:40](#))

So we have a wide ranging interview planned. We have some just simple questions to get to know the fun side of Ross, as well as deeper and more philosophical questions. But leading off, I'd love to just get to know you a little bit more. These are questions I haven't even asked you yet Ross. So I would love to know a little bit more about how you would spend a day off?

Ross Chapman: ([03:57](#))

Well, if I get to choose how I spend the day off, I'll probably start with some coffee in the morning at my favorite coffee shop, which is usually a local spot. And then maybe just take it real easy for a little while. If I could get a pickup game of basketball in, that would be excellent. Maybe a workout. Probably watch a movie. Spend time with the kids. I got three boys, they're eight, six, and four. That would be a blast. Who knows what they would come up with, but that would be a great way to spend the day.

Joanna Meyer: ([04:27](#))

So fun.

Brian Gray: ([04:30](#))

You're moving from Indiana, a place where the heartbeat of basketball, you're moving to a place where we tend to pride ourselves on beauty and getting out of the outdoors. What are some of the things that you're most looking forward to exploring here in Colorado?

Ross Chapman: ([04:45](#))

Well, definitely the mountains. It seems like an obvious answer and it's amazing that we get to look at them every day. So I'm very excited about that. Our family's excited to go and explore and see the mountains and see the beauty of creation in a different way. And I would say to all of the people who have not been to Indiana and haven't planned to, there's still beauty in Indiana. There's a lot of green. There's a lot of great things going on there too. But this is different and it just feels exciting and there's a lot to explore. So we're really looking forward to being in a new place with a lot of places to unpack and see.

Joanna Meyer: ([05:20](#))

So fun. I know that you're a reader. So I'm curious to know what has been intriguing you from your reading list lately?

Ross Chapman: ([05:27](#))

Oh, that's a great question. I've been spending most of my time reading for my doctoral work out at Fuller, and that has not allowed me to choose my works that I'm reading as much. But I've been really intrigued by the number of industries and professions that are talking about the idea of flourishing. So you see stuff coming out of Harvard, you have the Happiness Quotient and all these different ways of measuring wellbeing, depending on the field. And so I've been scanning through those. That's been



really fun to just see, how does humanity talk about this idea of flourishing? That's been really, really good.

Ross Chapman: ([06:07](#))

I've also been reading a lot about urban and suburban context and what's been going on previous to the pandemic, and then what has the pandemic... has it changed anything with cities, and there's been significant ones. And just really fascinated with the way people are self-selecting where they live, who they spend time with. And we know that happens on social media, but I've been reading a lot about how we're actually choosing where we live based on those things too. And just wondering what that means for life in the world. So I know it's not the most exciting, most thrilling fun things, but it is been really a lot of learning, a lot of good opportunities to do that.

Brian Gray: ([06:48](#))

We can counterbalance that. We can add some fun and we'll add fiction responses into that next... Sometime middle of next year when that dissertation's in the-

Ross Chapman: ([06:54](#))

Yeah. We'll have to ask the question again and you can give me some good fiction works, Brian.

Brian Gray: ([07:01](#))

Over on that side of the brain, I don't even know if you're a music person or not. Any favorite musical artists and why?

Ross Chapman: ([07:08](#))

Yeah. I love music. And if I was just putting something on in the car to listen to, it will probably be Needtobreathe or Johnnyswim or somebody like that. If I'm feeling very much like I just need a moment to reflect on the goodness of God, I'll probably listen to Shane and Shane. Introduced to them in college and have listened to them since. So they've been really a great source of just letting God speak his truth over me.

Brian Gray: ([07:37](#))

The double strum guitar masters.

Ross Chapman: ([07:39](#))

Oh man.

Brian Gray: ([07:40](#))

How many double strums can get into a single song?



Ross Chapman: [\(07:43\)](#)

It's pretty amazing. And yeah, some people love it, some people are tired of it. It's cool. But yeah, they're great guys. Awesome stuff that they're doing.

Joanna Meyer: [\(07:52\)](#)

So fun. So if any of our listeners may have read either web announcements, emails talking about Ross coming to us, you may know the bare bones of his professional history. He's from Evansville, Indiana, where he led For Evansville, which is a local expression of the City Transformation movement, which we'll talk about more in this conversation. He also is the father of three. But I would like to dig into your history a little bit more, and your personal story and outlook beyond what a person would read in an email. So tell us a little bit about your growing up here. So maybe birth through college, what was your life like?

Ross Chapman: [\(08:25\)](#)

So I grew up in Indianapolis area. I grew up in a Christian family. Something funny about me that's a little embarrassing to say, so I'm really trusting all of you with this, my first word was Amen.

Joanna Meyer: [\(08:40\)](#)

Are you serious?

Ross Chapman: [\(08:40\)](#)

I was in church whenever the doors were open. My parents were very involved and I have to imagine that's why. I don't think they were just praying all the time. And that was my first word. That's just what came out, I guess.

Ross Chapman: [\(08:52\)](#)

So raised in a Christian home, it was a great experience. We had family devotions every night that I can remember growing up. Just sit in a circle, let's read scripture together and pray. And that was a beautiful discipline that my parents instilled in us and allowed us to have an awesome rhythm. And I loved church. I loved going to church. I loved being part of the church.

Ross Chapman: [\(09:17\)](#)

Reflecting on that childhood time, one thing that has stuck out to me with raising younger kids right now, is how known I felt. I'd walk in the building and people would say, "Hey." And they knew my name and asked how things were going. They knew my family and that was just an assurance of like, "Oh, this is a place where I can belong." And so that was my growing up years.

Ross Chapman: [\(09:40\)](#)

I always loved basketball. It was the only sport I ever wanted to play. That's what I was doing in the driveway. After school, that's all I did. And so basketball was a big story of my life. Just found a great joy



in it. Wish I could still play it like I used to. I stopped growing my freshman year in high school and my basketball days were basically over at that point, but still enjoy it.

Ross Chapman: ([10:05](#))

We moved to Evansville my junior year of high school, so just before starting junior year. Indianapolis is about three and a half hours north of Evansville. And Evansville is a smaller city, and it felt like that when we moved there. It was a family decision. It was pretty cool to see my parents say, "Hey, we don't have to go. Dad's job's going there, but we don't have to." So we prayed through that together. Tried to discern is this the right next step. And we all felt comfortable with that.

Ross Chapman: ([10:36](#))

But Evansville ended up being a great place for me. Great church we got engaged with. Enjoyed the friends I made at school. And the church actually, I had three internships at, after I went to college. And it was a fun time, it was just really a neat experience of being able to step into some leadership, and also give opportunities to grow through my church there. So that was really nice.

Ross Chapman: ([11:02](#))

But I went to Taylor University. It's the greatest place on earth. If you're not sure where it is, it's in Upland, Indiana. Which has a population of... I don't know, less than a thousand. And Taylor's campus is 2000 students. So we bring a lot to the Upland area when we show up.

Ross Chapman: ([11:20](#))

But Taylor was a great place. I actually initially went there thinking I'll decide if God's calling me into what I would've called at the time full-time ministry, which I would never say now but paid church work might be another way to say it; or if I was going to pursue business. And once I chose one or the other, or felt like I was being led one way or the other, I would've transferred. But I ended up staying at Taylor because I loved it. It was a great community. I felt known, cared for. I grew a ton and I decided to pursue both degrees in management and Christian education, which was preparation for whatever full-time ministry would look like. So that was life up through college. There's not more to say. It was a good childhood, a good college experience.

Brian Gray: ([12:08](#))

Okay for fun, and just to get you to brag on Taylor, can you give us the 20 second version of one of the greatest sports traditions in college athletics called Silent Night.

Ross Chapman: ([12:18](#))

Brian, I'm so glad you asked. So there is a tradition that happens in December. Every December there's a basketball game, home game. It's called Silent Night. The students dress up in whatever ridiculous outfit they can come up with. Most of the time they're coordinated with their wing-mates and friends. And they show up at this game and really Taylor University basketball games aren't necessarily a full house all



the time. But on this day, it's really hard to stand there. And so the idea is not just dressing up, but the main reason it started is, for the first 10 points, it was completely silent.

Brian Gray: ([12:55](#))

Like crickets. Like eerie.

Ross Chapman: ([12:56](#))

Like crickets, you can hear the shoes squeaking, you can hear the coaches whispering on the bench. You can hear the away team fans trying to figure out what's happening. It's just like this eerie sense that you get until Taylor scores it's 10th point, total silence. So it could be a free throw. It could be a layup. It could be a dunk, a three pointer, whatever. As soon as that 10th point hits the place goes nuts, just erupts. And when I was a student, we didn't do it quite like what they do now. But when I was a student in the game would continue. They stop it actually now, because it's so disruptive. But, it would just be hilarious because the away team wouldn't know it's coming, and it was just pandemonium and people were screaming at the top of their lungs. For no good reason really, we just had a free throw. And they would do turnovers and we'd get a 20 point run. And it's a great tradition. So it's more the 20 seconds, but it is now mostly featured on ESPN.

Brian Gray: ([13:50](#))

It's been on ESPN?

Ross Chapman: ([13:50](#))

So you can check it out.

Brian Gray: ([13:52](#))

Well, you're married. We have heard... this isn't an exaggeration. We've been told, "That's nice that you got Ross, but really his wife is the one who's really the competent, solid one who you want to move into your city." Tell us about Candace.

Ross Chapman: ([14:08](#))

Yeah. Candace.

Brian Gray: ([14:09](#))

How y'all met and what she's like?

Ross Chapman: ([14:10](#))

Candace is amazing. Whoever told you that is completely accurate.

Brian Gray: ([14:14](#))

I can name names.



Ross Chapman: ([14:15](#))

She is 100% more competent in this marriage. So Candace and I met through church. It's a funny story. I'd love to tell you more details. But she's four years younger than me, and her mom worked at the church and I was an intern three times. And so I would get nudges every once in a while like, "Hey, are you dating anyone?" And I would think that's four years. That's too much distance. I was in seminary, she was in college.

Ross Chapman: ([14:46](#))

But that summer, it was 2008, she actually spent a summer in London, but she had a few weeks before she left and we ended up writing each other back and forth through Facebook messages. And it wasn't particularly romantic. It was just getting to know you. "How's London? Did you find a church?" Things like that. It's how it started. But then I got a notification from Facebook that said that my message was too long and it wouldn't send it.

Brian Gray: ([15:12](#))

Is that a thing?

Ross Chapman: ([15:15](#))

And I don't know if it's a thing anymore, but in 2008 it was a thing. So we switched to emails and we started dating after she got back. And I actually had to go in and ask my boss at the church. I sat down with him and I said, "Hey Todd, I've got a personal/professional question for you." And he goes, "What's her name?"

Brian Gray: ([15:34](#))

That's great.

Ross Chapman: ([15:35](#))

So he was totally cool with me asking her out. So that's when we started dating and for my first birthday after we were dating, she actually printed out all the emails that we'd sent back and forth and put them in a little book. It was 110 pages, 10 point font. It was insane.

Brian Gray: ([15:52](#))

The dissertation's not going to be a problem at all.

Ross Chapman: ([15:52](#))

Insane amount of communication.

Brian Gray: ([15:56](#))

Easier [inaudible 00:15:56]



Ross Chapman: ([15:56](#))

So the funny thing about that though is later in our relationship, maybe even into our marriage, I can't remember, we finally learned that I was writing the messages in 30 minutes and she was writing them in three or four hours. And so she's an internal processor, I'm an external processor and our communication is beautiful. We get to sit back and do emails, but sometimes when we don't get to do that, it's a little more challenging.

Ross Chapman: ([16:22](#))

But Candace is great. She is currently doing some downtown development in Evansville, helping public/private partnerships happen. And I would say is rebuilding the landscape of downtown. The physical environment and trying to think about how do we create places that allow more flourishing for people, and greater connections of people who don't know each other as well, or maybe come from different areas. Downtown is the place for everyone. And so she's great. I'm excited for her to be here and for sure she is. She's going to be a great advocate for the work of Denver Institute and just integrating your faith in your work.

Jeff Hofmeyer: ([17:06](#))

Hi, I'm Jeff Hoffmeyer, Vice President of Advancement here at Denver Institute for Faith & Work. And I would like to invite you to become a part of our new monthly partner community. Whether it's a monthly commitment of \$25, \$50 or any amount, your generosity will support Denver Institute's ongoing efforts to help men and women love God, their neighbors and society through their daily work, including this podcast. To say thank you as a monthly partner, you'll receive a welcome box. You'll have exclusive access to private digital content, personalized vocational coaching and discounts for Denver Institute content and experiences. To become a monthly partner, simply visit [Denverinstitute.org/give](https://denverinstitute.org/give) or see the show notes in today's episode. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Brian Gray: ([17:59](#))

Let's talk a bit about your professional background. You come from what's known as the City Transformation movement that has some overlap and then some real differences from the Faith & Work movement, and I think some strengths that could happen here. So what is the City Transformation movement and talk about the way that it's caused you to think about the role of Christians and churches in their place?

Ross Chapman: ([18:25](#))

Yeah, it's a great question and really gets to the heart of what I'm excited about for coming to Denver and working at the Denver Institute. City Transformation movements, I'll define them in the way that Eric Swanson does. Who's been a mentor for a little while and wrote a book called, *To Transform a City*. In that book he says that City Transformation is basically when the whole church brings the whole gospel to the whole person and the whole city. And so the idea is what does it look like for churches to work



together to bless the city, to create a more transformed, a more flourishing city, a more gospel saturated city. And not just to think of it in terms of church leaders or church buildings, but the whole church. And I always resonated with that because to me it was the gathered and the scattered church. I think oftentimes in City Transformation work, it can become a little limited to the churches themselves, the gathered church. How do we get the gathered church to work together? So I'm really fascinated in that scattered church idea and how that impacts City Transformation.

Ross Chapman: ([19:33](#))

There's a beautiful description of the New Jerusalem in Isaiah 65. It's poetic, but if you take the time to study it, you'll start to see things that everybody wants in their city. There's not violence, there's reconciliation among people groups, people have meaningful work, intergenerational family support. The people are a delight and a joy, meaning mental health is not really an issue. Everybody loves visiting that city and living in it. And you just go on and on down the list and it's really the kind of city God would want to build if he started from scratch.

Ross Chapman: ([20:08](#))

And so I was just really fascinated with that vision and trying to say, "Okay well, if that's the idea of what God would do if he was going to build a city from scratch, what does it look like for our city, wherever we are to, start reflecting that more and more and more? And might be that's what it would look like if the Kingdom of God came to your city more fully. And of course that means more people would have the opportunity to live life to the fullest.

Ross Chapman: ([20:35](#))

I just think that's the most compelling thing we have. God's wired it into our DNA. We long for it. Like I mentioned before, reading through all the different fields of study that are talking about flourishing and trying to define that. They're really just longing for what is this city supposed to look like? It feels like I'm made for something more. And that's the big question. How do churches work together for that vision?

Ross Chapman: ([21:06](#))

So City Transformation work has been a lot of let's get churches to think about that. Let's see that we're all working towards a common vision and we're all on the same team. I had become notorious in Evansville for helping people think about how many churches there are in the city. And so at events, I like to ask the question, "How many churches do you think are this city?" And they all say 300, 400, whatever the number is. And then I always say, "There's one. There's one church." And they all just boo.

Ross Chapman: ([21:36](#))

And so I think that's a really important mentality though. We are all on the same team, we have a common vision and we've all been placed in a particular city or location. And we're there for a reason. And I'm excited about that opportunity in City Transformation work. And one of the things that became apparent very quickly as I was starting that work, there wasn't a lot of language for how people integrate



their faith in work. How does what everybody does every day fit into this idea of City Transformation? How do we help church leaders think about that? How do we help the person working, serving tables, or a CEO, or a plumber or whatever the kind of work is, align that with this big vision of what God wants to do in their city.

Ross Chapman: ([22:25](#))

And I just think there's a big missing piece in the City Transformation movement around that. Not that it's totally absent, just that it's not emphasized enough. And when I think about the Faith & Work movement, I think it needs the City Transformation movement too. It needs a big vision. It needs this idea of we're all working towards this one thing together. And so there's separate practitioners, there's separate scholars, there's separate gatherings of people in both movements.

Ross Chapman: ([22:54](#))

And I'm just very excited to sort of, "What does it mean to collide these two things?" And even the work at Denver Institute has been very focused on that in my opinion. It's been a cool thing to see CityGate happen and to talk about what does it mean to make a difference in Denver, through the Denver Institute and from people thinking and living out their work lives differently.

Joanna Meyer: ([23:18](#))

We were intrigued to learn that you're pursuing a doctorate in Faith & Work from Fuller Seminary. What motivated you to put that much time into that particular degree?

Ross Chapman: ([23:26](#))

Ignorance.

Ross Chapman: ([23:29](#))

No, I've had a passion about work. I remember trying to discern a calling into paid church work. My family was very supportive of that, excited for me. And I can remember going to Thanksgiving meals and holiday meals and I would always be the person who was asked to pray, because I was the pastor.

Joanna Meyer: ([23:51](#))

Classic.

Ross Chapman: ([23:52](#))

And then I got ordained in 2009. I was sent out by my church to go and work. Actually, when we moved to Charlotte, that's what I was looking to do, was to go work in a church somewhere. And I had this strong sense of... I'd done a management degree, and I felt a holy discontent about people get called into doing church work and then they end up... They want to shepherd people and help them live life in Christ more fully, but they're managing people and budgets and events and schedules and all of that, and I just thought they needed to go together more. But what I came to see was the people who were doing



non-church work felt like maybe they weren't doing enough spiritual work and that's what birthed that passion. And so I just wanted to lean in and explore it as much as possible.

Ross Chapman: ([24:43](#))

And so I can remember looking and trying to see what schools are offering an intensive look at Faith & Work. And I found two; Fuller and Asbury, and I up choosing Fuller. And it's been a really great experience. So we spent a lot of time looking at all the biblical foundations of the Faith & Work conversation. It's really faith, work economics and vocation. And there's a thousand passages in scripture that touch on something that has to do with one of those areas.

Ross Chapman: ([25:15](#))

So we had to read through those. We had to explore them and understand them. And we looked at theological and philosophical foundations. And then finally, our last year, looking at what does this look like in church life, kind of an ecclesiological perspective.

Ross Chapman: ([25:28](#))

And so it's really just been a great joy. I didn't know how God might use it. I felt just a yearning, I guess, to learn more because I felt no matter what work I was going to do, there's something that happens when people connect their work and God's work together. I can remember several times, my first few years in Evansville, I spent all of my time in coffee shops. I just wanted to meet people. I did a lot of listening and throughout those conversations, whether it was a retiree or a young person who was just figuring out their next job, having conversations about what does this work have to do with God's work. And you could see once they connected some dots, literally their face would change. Their expressions would change. There'd be a sense of joy, a sense of, "I didn't realize that God might care about this." And so it just gave me a huge passion to just help people get released from that idea of what I'm doing is secondary somehow or not good enough in terms of what God wants to do in the world.

Brian Gray: ([26:35](#))

Ross, what was the motivation about joining Denver Institute and perhaps Denver in specific, as a location?

Ross Chapman: ([26:45](#))

Well, that's a great question. I really feel Denver Institute has a great opportunity to really explore this collision of the City Transformation work with the Faith & Work movement. And it's built a great reputation over the years. A lot of credibility, a lot of great things have been created from the team at Denver Institute. And I think that's gotten noticed. And so it was an exciting thing to think about, wouldn't this be an ideal spot to work towards this collision. And then of course, once I actually got to meet some of you guys, this is a very talented team and you're fun to work with and very faithful to the work, passionate about it, committed to it. And I'm obviously learning more and more how much you love Denver.



Ross Chapman: ([27:34](#))

I had a few mentors from around the Faith & Work movement that I would call and ask and say, "Hey, tell me about the Denver Institute of Faith & Work. What do you think about it? What do you know about it? I'm in this interview process and I'm just trying to discern who you think they might be." And I had one person who I just have a ton of respect for, who just said, "I think they're the best thing going on in the Faith & Work movement right now." And that's just one opinion and I'm sure you guys are like, "Wow, that's crazy." There's a lot of great work out there. There's a ton of people doing things in the Faith & Work movement." But I thought that was a huge statement from him. So that was really encouraging to hear. But at the core of it, I think this is good work that needs to be done. This idea of colliding the transformation of cities with people, seeing their everyday work as integral to what God wants to do in the world. Those things are related. And this is a place where we can wake up every day thinking about that.

Brian Gray: ([28:32](#))

Did you hear that our reputation is mostly built off of our director of public engagement.

Ross Chapman: ([28:35](#))

Well, absolutely. I mean the podcast-

Joanna Meyer: ([28:38](#))

Not only is she beautiful and single, but she's good at her job.

Brian Gray: ([28:45](#))

You talked a bit about some of the strengths of the City Transformation movement. And then as you were just talking about how you've understand the similarities and opportunities in Faith & Work. What are some of the strengths you've seen from people considering vocational discipleship, Faith & Work? What possible gaps are there that you sense could be filled in the type of interest and work people are doing in this area?

Ross Chapman: ([29:11](#))

I think the Faith & Work movement has done a really good job of helping people grasp some theological categories that are really necessary. They're groundwork. I'm not an expert on the history of what's happened in the Faith & Work-space, but I would say there's a huge need to help it hit the ground. Like, okay, so now we have the categories for thinking about, what does God think about work? What does it mean to be made in the image of a God who works? What is the end goal of work? If it's the city that's coming down out of heaven and it looks like this Isaiah 65 vision, what does that have to do with my everyday work? I think those are great questions and people can draw implications from them. But I think one of the biggest things we have to do in the Faith & Work movement is give people an imagination about their work.



Ross Chapman: [\(30:04\)](#)

And also maybe that means the people we read in the Faith & Work movement are people who are doing, or have done, a lot of work in a particular area. And start to tell us here's what it looked like to integrate my faith and work as a lawyer or an accountant or a person in the trades or a contractor, whatever it might be. To maybe have somebody come alongside them, who's studied the theological categories, but then this person can help bring that to life. "Here's what this really looks like."

Ross Chapman: [\(30:40\)](#)

So I'm excited about what that could be. Maybe that's some work we can do here at the Institute, but I think that's a gap that's missing.

Joanna Meyer: [\(30:48\)](#)

I love hearing that. In the many conversations I've had with women about work and calling, that phrase of imagination, or sometimes I'll say in a more theological term, vocational imagination, that is the term that makes women's eyes start to sparkle because it's something that no one-

Ross Chapman: [\(31:04\)](#)

Same with the fellows.

Joanna Meyer: [\(31:05\)](#)

Yeah. In their local church community, and I don't want to sound like I'm slamming on churches, but we're not discipling the wholeness of who people are. That's when they start to sparkle, can imagine what God could do through them and the wholeness of their life.

Ross Chapman: [\(31:18\)](#)

Yeah, I think so. I was talking to a friend who's a pastor out in Kansas City, and I asked him, "What's the biggest barrier for churches to really help people start thinking this way?" And he talked about it being about imagination and being able to imagine the vocations of the people in the congregation redemptively. What is that vocation look like in terms of what God wants to do in the world, and how is it connected to something that he really cares about?

Ross Chapman: [\(31:49\)](#)

So I think there's a gap too, in terms of just helping church leaders think about why is Faith & Work important. And I sympathize, a lot of church leaders have gone through seminary and then gone straight into church work, and so helping people wrestle with their day to day work is helping somebody wrestle with something that you've never really experienced, at least on the same level. Work can just be work. There's a lot of similarities, no matter what the industry. But at the same time, it's very specific too. And so it's how do we help church leaders become incarnational to people's workplaces so that they can be the best pastors and church leaders that they can be. And I think there's a lot to explore there. There's a



lot of excitement, in my mind, about what that can look like. So there's another thing there that we can focus on.

Joanna Meyer: ([32:40](#))

So fun. Okay, this will be my last question for you. What would you want our constituents to hear as you take the helm of Denver Institute?

Ross Chapman: ([32:49](#))

Well, thanks for that question. The main thing I want people to know is that I want to learn. I'm a learner and I think that starts with listening. I'm a big proponent of listen first. And so I want to hear from people who listen to the podcast, people who've gone through the fellowship program, who've come to the events and found something valuable there or haven't done any of those things yet.

Ross Chapman: ([33:09](#))

And really, we just want to hear, what are you experiencing in your work life? What's hard about integrating your faith? Where is it easier? What would you need to really experience the fullness of recognizing that the work God's given you to do right now in this moment is deeply connected to what he wants to see done in the world. And so I'm just committed to that. I'm committed to listening. I think that's an important posture for the Denver Institute, not only to help equip y'all, I guess you could say, for the work of ministry that God's given you to do, but also I think that's a responsibility we have for the church of Denver and possibly beyond. Let's be good listeners of what people are doing every day and how we can help them connect their work with God's.

Joanna Meyer: ([33:58](#))

I love it. I love it. Well Ross, we're excited to welcome you officially on October 1st. Thanks for joining us and thanks for being part of the podcast today.

Ross Chapman: ([34:07](#))

Thank you guys.

Joanna Meyer: ([34:08](#))

It's awesome. We have a couple of action items for you. Amazing resources coming your way from Denver Institute. The first is a reminder that Women, Work & Calling is happening Saturday, October 8th. This is a last call for tickets. Ticket sales will close on Wednesday night, the 5th.

Brian Gray: ([34:22](#))

Hey Jo, can I ask a question?

Joanna Meyer: ([34:24](#))

Yes.



Brian Gray: ([34:24](#))

Because it's such a spectacular event and I have loved being there as a man. Why would this be something that men would want to consider participating in as well?

Joanna Meyer: ([34:32](#))

Ooh, I love that you ask that question. Okay. Thank you, Brian.

Joanna Meyer: ([34:34](#))

Here's my thought on this, is as we're talking about bringing your whole selves to God's mission in the world, this is an area in which Christian women have often never been discipled. I looked at some friends in my small group at church the other night, and I said, "Hey, have you ever been taught anything in church, any kind of women's programming or Bible study that spoke to your role in public life?" And it was just crickets. And I looked around the table, like "What do you mean?" And so I think this is a huge area and when we think about Christians having influence in the world, the gospel going into the world, it means everybody. It's all play. Everybody shows up at the table with what they have. And there's this huge gap. Christian women have not been fully equipped to have Godly influence in the world. And so there's this deep passion for why the conversation exists.

Joanna Meyer: ([35:19](#))

But I think when we look at scripture, we see men and women called into a Blessed Alliance. That's the term that the author, Carolyn Custis James, uses, and it's this vision of men and work women working together. And if you read the New York Times or the Harvard Business Review, that's something the entire world is still struggling with. That's not limited to church circles. That's a human problem. And if anybody should be able to figure it out, it should be Christians. We have the power of the holy spirit in us. We should be able to model, exemplify this collaborative relationship between men and women united in God's mission in the world. And we're not there yet. If you've read any of the headlines in Christianity today, or the scandals that have affected church circles in particular, we haven't figured that out.

Joanna Meyer: ([36:02](#))

And so this is an invitation to men to be part of that conversation. If you would like to see the women that you work with, or women in your circle of loved ones flourish more in their public lives, in their work, in their calling. This is an amazing opportunity to learn, to rub shoulders, bring a colleague, bring a woman who's on your team. It's really great. What would you say, Brian? Why would you exhort the men in our audience to come?

Brian Gray: ([36:25](#))

Similar reasons. It's important to learn and to pay attention to an experience that's other than your own. We can all stack hands together on the importance of women's professional life as contribution to the



flourishing of our society. And truth of the matter is, independent of any female particular topics, I thought there were two or three things each year that were pertinent to me in my own spiritual formation, my own development. So it's a great use of time. Wonderful event.

Joanna Meyer: ([36:55](#))

Yeah. Men are totally welcome in this conversation. I would want you to hear that and it tickles me when you guys show up. I love seeing men in the room. So we would love to have you come. So ticket sales close on Wednesday at the 5th. Saturday, October 8th. And what I love is that it's both in person and online, and we anticipate already... we have women around the world joining. We have women from four or five countries that'll be part of the event, and I hope even more. So you can find information about that at womenworkandcalling.com.

Joanna Meyer: ([37:20](#))

We have another resource for you that I think you're going to love. It's really fascinating. It's called Virtue and Vice. It's an eBook that is for sale. You'll find the link in our show notes, but why you should download it is that it's an exploration of historical Christian vices, things that are really juicy. Themes like sloth or... what are some of the other ones. I'm looking at Katherine, our producer, what are the other themes that we're exploring it in?

Brian Gray: ([37:43](#))

Acedia.

Joanna Meyer: ([37:43](#))

Acedia.

Brian Gray: ([37:44](#))

Being an Indiana Pacers fan.

Ross Chapman: ([37:48](#))

That's not [inaudible 00:37:49]

Brian Gray: ([37:48](#))

It's a classic Christian vice.

Joanna Meyer: ([37:51](#))

The reason why I think you should download it is that it will help you know and love your faith even more. Because we'll look at some of the writings from the fathers of the early church, from the fourth and fifth centuries, the challenges they faced in their monastic lives are relevant today in 21st century life. And it's a fascinating look for both historical, spiritual and very practical. So you can find a link to



download your copy of that eBook in our show notes today. So thanks for this wide ranging conversation and welcome Ross Chapman. I'm excited for you to be here.

Ross Chapman: ([38:21](#))

Glad to be here.

Joanna Meyer: ([38:25](#))

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