

BEING A CHRISTIAN IN WORK

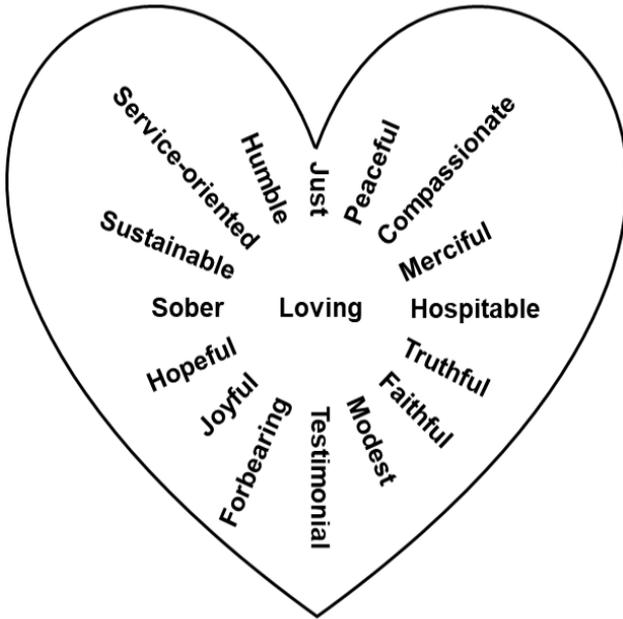
WORKBOOK



Muel

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Foreword

If work is a part of our lives as Christians, then it is important to reflect on what being Christian means in our work. For if we exclude work from our being Christians, it would be as inconsistent and impossible as saying that we love someone except when we are with another. Loving someone means precisely that it is neither parttime nor depending on the situation, but that it is fulltime and independent of the situation. Being Christian means that we are Christian in all facets of our lives, and, therefore, in our work as well.

Reflection on the meaning of being Christian in our work becomes more important the more we work. Because the larger the part of our lives we work, the more our work says whether and how we live as Christians. We then get more opportunities to put into practice our Christianity. The more we waste these opportunities, the more we waste our lives.

But even if we do not work or no longer work or never have worked, reflection on what it means to be Christian in work is important. When we orient ourselves for a study or job, it is important to think through what it means to be Christian in our future work. If we choose not to work, but, for example, dedicate ourselves fully to raising our children, then we can make this choice on better grounds when we know what work does and does not mean. If we are unable to work, or are unemployed or retired, it is important to think through how we might express our being Christian in activities other than a paid job.

Purpose

In this book I have tried to think through, at least for myself, what it means to be Christian for and in work. The first part of this book deals with what being Christian means *for* work. What is work from a Christian perspective, why is there work, and why should we work? Additionally, what are good works and when is work good? The second part is about being Christian *in* work. How can I be Christian in my work? What are the important virtues and principles for this? What makes up my ethical compass, and what behavior characterizes a Christian in work? The first part is about the basis of work (mostly, the 'why'), and the second part is about guidelines for work (mostly, the 'how').

Form

The form of this book is aphoristic in the sense that the paragraphs consist of theses, maxims, one-liners, mnemonics, nudges, reflections, thoughts, vistas, seeds, sparks, nuggets, nuts, or kernels of inspiration. I chose this form in the hope of stimulating the reader to reflect and think through what being Christian means for work in general and for their own work, in particular. A narrative can be easy to read through, but it carries the risk that the reader reads rather than thinks and considers. That's why this book is not a reading book but a workbook.

The intention of this workbook is not to read it in one go, but to consider one or more paragraphs, alone or with each other, and then to ask oneself: what do I think of this? What

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does it tell me? Do I recognize it? How would I formulate it myself? What can I do with this, and can I apply this (better)? This is how I used this book myself. Every working day, I read one paragraph, in addition to the Bible, and ruminate, hoping that its seed will sprout and come to fruition in my work. Each chapter comes with questions to stimulate this rumination. The numbers at the end of the questions refer to the paragraph numbers in the relevant chapter. The questions are formulated in the first person, so these are questions that you can ask yourself.

The form of this book is also aphoristic in the sense that the chapters are short. The short chapters build on each other but each can also be read separately. The first part starts out with a praise and confession and proceeds to explain what work is. It argues that work is a gift from God and that there are all kinds of motives to work. It continues with an exposé of what counts as good works and how God leads us in our work. This first part concludes with our choice of occupation, sin in our work, and the role of faith in distinguishing good from evil in work. The second part contains seventeen guidelines for work. These guidelines are not categorized to prevent artificiality and to prevent the impression that one guideline has priority over another. As far as I am concerned, these guidelines are all important, except that love is described as the heart of the ethics of work.

This organization in chapters hopefully helps in searching and retrieving—at least, that is how it works for me when I am confronted in my work with a question or dilemma and want

to find, for example, what a certain guideline means. In this sense, this book could be used as a code of conduct such as many organizations have. Because I have written a lot of codes of conduct for organizations, I know how useful a code can be as a reference material even though the chosen form can come across as monotonous.

Focus

The focus of this book is on work. It deals with work in the sense of paid and unpaid labor. Therefore, it is not just about a paid job, but also about unpaid, volunteer work. Homework and domestic work can also be included, although not everything that follows will be relevant for this. The focus on work means that it is not just about all the good works we can do, but “just” on the good works we can perform in and through our work. The focus on work also does not mean that work is the only thing and that nothing else counts. On the contrary.

First and foremost, it is about our relation to God and the work of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Only then is it about our work. Besides there is more to life than work in the sense that we can also lead a good life as Christians without work. The point of the book is not that everybody should work. Nor is it a plea to work as much as possible. The final chapter on working soberly will downplay the significance of work and stress the importance of recreation, meditation, and Sunday rest.

Sources

The main source for this book is the Bible. The Bible offers us numerous insights and guidelines for the meaning of being Christian for and in our work. Because of this, the Bible is the point of departure for the creation of this workbook. However, I have not chosen an exegetic method as structure for this book. This is because on the one hand, an exegetic method has been used in other publications, and on the other, a thematic ordering is more useful for this book so that the reader has the relevant elements together for each topic. In this book, the footnotes contain references to relevant passages in the Bible. These references hopefully make clear that the book is grounded in the Bible. The footnotes do not contain the Biblical texts so the readers can use their own preferred Bible translation.

The other source for this book is my own occupation. Why do I feel the need to write this book? Since 1991, I have been an active researcher and consultant in professional ethics. As a result, I have learned many things about work in all kinds of sectors, functions, and countries. In addition, I have experienced a great deal as an employee, employer, supervisor, stockholder, and regulator. All these functions have given me food for thought for what it means to be Christian in work. Especially the scientific research that I have conducted into being Christian in work and conversations and presentations in this area have inspired me with the bright side of work and of people. In addition, the forensic investigations into the legal violations within organizations have confronted me with

the dark side of work and of people. Since I was seventeen, I have made notes on all of these. This book is an ordered selection of these notes.

Tone

One remark about the tone of this book. Initially, I wrote this book for my personal use as a kind of record of my reflections about the meaning of being Christian in my work. After some encouragement from various people, I have published this book hoping that it might help others. I have rewritten the text somewhat. One of these changes concerns changing the basic text from first person singular to first person plural (as Christians we face a joint task). If the mode of address gives an imperative or paternalistic impression, this is not to lecture the reader, but it is purely the result of being somewhat stern with and provocative towards myself.

Another possible impression about this book is that it is oppressive because of the many things that are apparently expected of a Christian. However, this is not the intention. As Christians we may be idealists in our work, but we should not be unrealistic because we should know that both practice and we ourselves can be intractable. We should also know that the gap between ideal and practice does not need to distract us from God but can bring us closer to Him. Hopefully, this book does not remove but connects, not oppress but liberates.

There is much more to say about what this book is not. The book does not try to be exhaustive about what being Christian means in work. The book does not try to replace what the Bible says about work. The Bible is authoritative and if there is anything in these pages that is inconsistent with the Bible, then I am in the wrong. I hope you will let me know in that case. Neither is this book a rounded, unequivocal narrative. There are apparent contrasts or even contradictions. This book deals with a productive way of life and a life of in grace, about work as a blessing and as a curse, about the good and bad sides of work. The book does not aim to be a checklist, nor does it aim to refer to all the relevant passages in the Bible.

Thanks

Finally, a word of thanks. Thanks to all who, through conversation, sermons, and exemplary behavior, have inspired me to get to the content of this book. Many thanks to all who have provided feedback to the drafts of this text. Above all, thanks to God for all He gave to achieve this book. May God provide us in being a Christian in our work.

Muel

Questions

- 1 Is it valuable for me to reflect on what it means to be Christian for and in work?*
- 2 How often do I reflect on what it means to be Christian for and in work? And is that enough or can or should it be*

- more? For example, how many times have I read the Bible on what it says about work? And when was the last time I read an article or book about being a Christian in work?*
- 3 How often do I talk to other Christians about the meaning of being Christian for and in work? Do I find these conversations valuable? Would I prefer to talk more with other Christians about the meaning of being Christian for and in work?*
 - 4 How often are there conversations, sermons, or prayers about being Christian in work in my community of faith? Do these encourage me? To what extent could I use them in my work and do I actually do so?*
 - 5 Do I agree with the claim that “Being Christian means that we are Christian in all facets of our lives, and, therefore, in our work as well”?*
 - 6 Do I keep notes of what being Christian means for my work? If so, do I even consult them? And if I don’t take notes, is it a good idea to start doing it?*
 - 7 What are important Bible verses to use as a source of inspiration for my work?*
 - 8 What are other important “seeds” (one liners, quotes) for me for my work? Have I come up with particular “seeds” that are helpful for being Christian in my work?*
 - 9 What are big questions for me with respect to being Christian in work?*
 - 10 How do I regard being Christian in work? Is it difficult and/or easy? Is it a blessing and/or a curse? Is it relaxing and/or stressful? Is it ... and/or ...?*

Part I:
The basis of work



1. Thank God

1. *Lord, You are great and good and Your works are great and good.*
2. *You created Earth, You give life, and You maintain the world.¹ Your works are unique and without equal.*
3. *Lord, You are the Worker. You were the first to work and You work incessantly.²*
4. *You invent and make. You care and help. You provide and guard. You correct and restore.*
5. *You are an example and a source of inspiration for our work.*
6. *You even gave us work. You give us opportunities to work, You give us the abilities to work, and You give meaning to our work.*
7. *We thank You for Your work and how You work in and through us.*
8. *We thank You that through Your work and that of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and Your Holy Spirit, we are allowed and able to work, that You entrust us with Your works, and that You trust us to work.*
9. *We thank You that You do not stop working, but that You continue to work for what is good and beneficial for us,³ until Your work is completed.*

¹ Deuteronomy 3:24, Psalm 104:1-25, Psalm 107:24, Hebrews 1:10

² Psalm 107

³ Romans 8:28-29

Thank God

10. *We thank You for the countless blessings that You give us in our work.⁴*
11. *We thank You that You are there in our work, that You do not abandon us, but lead, support, and drive us in our work.*
12. *We thank and praise You in and through our work.⁵*
13. *We thank You, oh God, that we can reflect on our work, that we can wonder what is good in our work and what good work is, and that we can be inspired by your Bible, Your Son, and Your Holy Spirit.*

Confession

14. *While You are great and good, we are limited and flawed in our work. While Your works are great and good, our own are humble and defective.⁶*
15. *We confess, therefore, our imperfection and guilt to You, oh Lord God.*
16. *We, who have received a lot from You in our work, have been ungrateful to You.*
17. *We, whom You have called to work with You, have been concerned with ourselves in our work; we have thought to be able to do our work on our own strength, and have hardly noticed Your presence in our work.*

⁴ Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Psalm 67

⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:18

⁶ Romans 3:23, Romans 7:14-26

Thank God

18. *We, who have been called by You to work for You, have been selfish and stubborn and were concerned with our own happiness and pleasure.*
19. *We, who have been called by You to serve our fellow human beings in our work, have been egocentric by focusing on our own needs and interests.*
20. *We, who have been called by You to take care of Your Earth, have neglected and disrupted Your Earth.*
21. *We, who have been called by You to develop and multiply the talents we have received from You, have abused and squandered our talents in our work.*
22. *We, who have been called by You to bear witness to You in and through our work, have neglected and avoided this and even disgraced You.*
23. *We, who have been created by You and belong to You, deny and dishonor You in our work. This fills us with sadness and remorse.*
24. *Lord, our God, forgive us in the name of the work that Your Son, Jesus Christ, has done for us. Please grant us Your mercy that we do not deserve or are entitled to and heal all our broken works and turn them for the good.*
25. *Liberate us from the burden of our guilt, so that we can enter the future fearlessly and follow the footsteps of Your Son in our work, strengthened by the knowledge of Your enduring love.*
26. *Teach us to follow Your will in our work, to see You fully in our work and let You fully work in it. Teach us to be Your ambassador in our works, so that we work for You, and You work in and through us. And teach us that they are*

Thank God

not our good works but Yours. Please give us you Holy Spirit for this.

Questions

- 11 Regarding my work, for what do I want to praise and thank God? What don't I endorse or recognize as praise and thanks from those mentioned above?*
- 12 Regarding my work, what sins do I want to confess to God? And what don't I endorse or recognize as guilt and sins from those mentioned above?*
- 13 Regarding my work, what do I want to ask from God?*
- 14 How often do I praise and thank God for what He gives me in my work? And how particular am I in my praise and thanks to God?*
- 15 How often do I confess my sins in my work to God? And how specific am I in pointing out my sins?*
- 16 If I were to pray now about my work, what would I say?*
- 17 Regarding praying: how often do I pray about my work? Do I do this before, after, and/or during my work? And do I pray too for the people with and for whom I work? Do I pray about the dilemmas that I encounter in my work, and do I pray for God's blessing of my work? And if so, do I experience the power of prayer?*



2. Work

1. God is the Stakeholder in our work, and through work we can take His stake to heart.
2. God, as creator of this world, is the ultimate owner of all there is on Earth.⁷ He has made us.⁸ Without God we would not have existed. Therefore, we are His property.⁹ God is our owner or 100% stockholder.
3. Without God we would not be able to work. God does not only like to work himself, but He also wants us to work too. God has made humankind initially in such a way that we can work. He has commanded us to work already before the Fall.¹⁰ God is our employer.
4. We cannot work without God. God has created us not just so we could work imitating Him, but also to work with Him. We are His co-creators, His co-producers. We are His coworkers.¹¹
5. Because all belongs to God,¹² everything we use to be able to work is God's. God provides us with resources to work. God is our supplier.

⁷ Colossians 1:16-17

⁸ Proverbs 22:2

⁹ Romans 14:8

¹⁰ Genesis 2:15

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 3:9

¹² 1 Chronicles 29:11

6. Because everything belongs to God, all our work belongs to Him. Everything we do, make, and deliver is for Him.¹³ To work is to return to God what we have received from Him. God is our client, our customer.
7. Because God is our stakeholder, God is in charge in our work. God is our master,¹⁴ our manager, our CEO. God is our boss.
8. To work as God intended is to work from God, with God, and unto God, so that our work is His work.¹⁵ By working as God intended, we are purposive, effective, and efficient. To work without God is aimless and godless. To work as God intended is rich with purpose. God is our guide: He goes in front; He is our leader.¹⁶
9. By working, we live. Working is an essential part of our lives. Life is not just about recreation but also creation; it is not just about resting, but also about working. We also live to work. Whether it is homework, domestic work, volunteer work, or paid labor. Partly through working, we give substance to what God created us for,¹⁷ we fulfill our destiny. Partly by working, we develop and get identity, we come into our own, and we give meaning to our existence. By working, we are human, humans according to God's will.

¹³ 1 Corinthians 10:31

¹⁴ John 13:13

¹⁵ Romans 11:36

¹⁶ Hebrews 12:2

¹⁷ Genesis 1:26-28

10. By working, we expand God's work, we realize His aims in the world, we build His Kingdom, we align the world with His intentions, and we repair His work that we broke. Our work, regardless how broken, is part of God's masterpiece. God deploys us to do the actual work.¹⁸ We are God's servants, His helpers, His ground crew.¹⁹
11. By working, we exploit, maintain, and develop the world—God's world, God's creation.²⁰ We continue what God initiated, we partake of God's creation, we fulfill His creative intentions, and fulfill His assignment. We are God's stewards, His implementers, His executors.²¹
12. By working the way God has intended, we reflect God's character, we show that we are created in His image,²² and fill our working place with His image. Work is a creative expression of who and what we are as image bearers of God the Creator. By working we testify about God to others.²³ We are God's ambassadors, His representatives, His agents, His lobbyists.
13. By working, we discover the many opportunities to do good works that God offers us and has intended for us.²⁴

¹⁸ Genesis 2:5, Genesis 2:15

¹⁹ 1 Peter 1:15-16

²⁰ Genesis 3:23

²¹ Luke 16:1-13

²² Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 8:6

²³ 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

²⁴ Proverbs 3:27, Ephesians 2:10

To work is to discover God's goodness. We are God's discoverers, His scientists, His researchers.

14. By working, we discover the talents that God has given us, and we can develop these talents. And by working we can deploy these talents for God and humanity within or outside of our work, now or later.²⁵ To work is to invest in God. We are God's investors, His entrepreneurs.
15. By working, we let God work in us and on us, so that He forms, refines, deepens, and fortifies our lives and our faith in Him. Work is a working place of God's Holy Spirit to work on our faith in Him. We are God's working place.²⁶
16. By working, we let God work through us.²⁷ By working God reveals himself. By working God shows himself to the people for whom and with whom we work. In our work we are God's conduit, His mouthpiece, His channel, His transmitter.
17. By working, we are tested, purified, and strengthened in our faith in God.²⁸ Work is an internship towards eternity.²⁹ We are God's interns, His trainees.
18. By working, we obey God. After all, work is demanded by God and by working in the way God intended, we obey

²⁵ Matthew 25:14-30

²⁶ 1 Corinthians 3:9b

²⁷ Psalm 57:3

²⁸ 2 Timothy 4:7, James 1:13

²⁹ 1 John 2:17

God.³⁰ Work is responding to what God demands of us. Work is saying “yes” to God. To work is to comply with God.

19. By working, we follow Jesus, who called on us to follow Him in His work on Earth.³¹ It is not for nothing that Jesus calls those who follow Him “laborers.”³² We follow by working. We are God’s followers.
20. By working, we use the gifts and qualities we received from God.³³ To work is to let God’s investment in us pay off. We are God’s investment, His yield, His returns.
21. By working, we can enjoy what God gives us in and through work.³⁴ Work offers us satisfaction, happiness, and joy. We are God’s enjoyers, His supporters, His admirers.
22. By working, we can please God. God loves work; therefore, He loves it when we work. God loves it when His children work as He intended. God can enjoy the esthetic creativity in our work. We are God’s artists.
23. By working, we offer God the possibility to take care of us and other people.³⁵ By us working, God ensures that we provide for our own livelihood and that of our neighbors,

³⁰ Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:15

³¹ John 9:4, John 15:16, Ephesians 4:17-24

³² Matthew 9:37-38

³³ Matthew 15:14-30

³⁴ Ecclesiastes 5:18-19, Isaiah 65:22

³⁵ 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8

among whom are those who cannot work and need help.³⁶ We are God's caregivers.

24. By working, we make it possible for God to alleviate us and our fellow human beings from the consequences of sin, like repressions, hunger, illness, and criminality. A doctor cures the ill; a police officer corrects injustice; a soldier brings peace, and a contractor builds dikes against floods. We are God's pressure alleviators, His rescue workers, His emergency troops.
25. By working, we enable others to work and develop and flourish according to God's plan. Work offers work. We are God's employers, His intermediaries.
26. By working, we spend our time wisely.³⁷ God did not create us to be lazy and let Him do all the work. We live only once on this world and our time is limited, so there is no time to lose. Working is a God-given use of time.
27. By working, we avoid committing sins that come from not working.³⁸ Idleness is the devil's workshop. Laziness leads to parasitic behavior.³⁹ Boredom causes hostility. Working is a weapon against sin.
28. By working, we show that we believe in God. After all, working from faith is a fruit of faith.⁴⁰ To work is to testify.

³⁶ Proverbs 19:17, Acts 20:35, Ephesians 4:28, Hebrews 13:16

³⁷ Ephesians 5:15-17

³⁸ Proverbs 21:25

³⁹ Proverbs 12:24, Proverbs 20:13

⁴⁰ James 2:17, James 2:26

29. By working, we assign value to God and His relationship with us. By working, we give meaning to what God means for us and we for Him. To work is to appreciate God; to work is to assess His value for us.
30. By working, we give thanks to God, show our gratitude for the work, and for the peace he made with us. Through work we sacrifice ourselves and the fruits of our labor to God. Work is an altar.⁴¹
31. By working, we worship God.⁴² To work is to praise, laud, honor, and to glorify God. Working toward God is to worship God. Our workplace is a place of pilgrimage, a place of worship.⁴³
32. By working, we have the opportunity to testify to God's goodness in situations and to people, which we would not have otherwise.⁴⁴ Work is place for evangelism.
33. By working, we can maintain, build, and expand, our community of faith: through the money and goods we receive from our work and the knowledge and experience acquired during our work.⁴⁵ To work is to work on our community of faith.

⁴¹ Romans 12:1

⁴² 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Corinthians 10:31

⁴³ Matthew 6:6

⁴⁴ 1 Peter 2:11-12

⁴⁵ Galatians 6:6

Questions

- 18 *Do I believe that God is the Stakeholder in work? If not, do I think that God has any interest in work? (#1)*
- 19 *With which role as stakeholder of God in work (i.e., owner, employer, supplier, client, supervisor, leader) do I identify most? And the least? Which roles do I experience most and least frequently in my work? (#2-8)*
- 20 *Described above are several aims of work. Which of these do I endorse? Which don't I endorse? Are there any aims missing from the list? (#9-33)*
- 21 *Described above are various roles that people can fulfill in work (e.g., caregiver, intern, investor). With which roles do I identify? And, more importantly, which roles do I experience in my work? For example, do I experience that I am God's artist in my work? (#4, #10-25)*
- 22 *If somebody were to ask me how I see work from my perspective as a Christian, how would I answer?*
- 23 *To what extent do I see (my) work as an altar, a place of prayer, and a place for evangelism? (#30-32)*
- 24 *Do I have any experience with the claim that laziness leads to parasitic behavior? (#27)*
- 25 *If God did not exist, how would that change my work?*
- 26 *If I could underline three sentences above to never forget them, which sentences would that be?*



3. Godsend

1. Due to all the opportunities that God gives in and through work, we may thank Him. We may thank Him for the work He gives us; we may thank Him for the fact that He wants to work through us and our work, and we may thank Him because He provides the means and the talents to do our work.⁴⁶
2. Each day that we are allowed to work is a great gift from God to us. If we may and can work, then we owe this to God. Without Him we would not exist and working would have been impossible. Our work is not our merit, but God's.
3. Let us realize that working is God's miracle. Just consider what is necessary to lift a stone, let alone to build a house. Consider what is necessary to stitch a cut, let alone to operate on a patient. Consider what is necessary to borrow money, let alone run a bank. How ingenious God is that He invented and designed people such that they can make, create, and produce. How ingenious is God that people can plow, sow, and harvest; that people can care and pamper; that people can create, arrange, and compile; that people can build, administer, and guard. Consider how ingenious God is that people cannot just work, but also work together, cooperate to live together, and create a society; and that people all in all can

⁴⁶ 2 Corinthians 9:8

think, feel, and move. God is masterful. Every day that we are allowed to work, or others are working for us, we may admire God; it is a godsend, a gift of general mercy, general grace.

4. Even though our work is impaired and stained due to original sin, work is not inherently sinful. If Jesus as a human worked as a carpenter for years without any sin, then working is not sinful by default. Work is not the consequence of original sin, even though work is cursed by original sin with difficulties and hardship.⁴⁷
5. That a lot of work, such as regulation, control, and guarding, is the result of original sin does not make them sinful. Otherwise, the work of a preacher would be sinful too.
6. Because of original sin, work has become more important for God: more work is needed to curb, endure, and repair the consequences of sin. Without all this work, the world would be hell. The world would be unlivable without doctors and nurses, without police officers and soldiers, without cleaners and repairers. Because there is so much sin in the world, a lot of work is necessary to combat the suffering. Our hands are full just with the fight against disease, poverty, and pollution alone.⁴⁸
7. Work is a blessing. It is a blessing from God that we may work, that He gives us work, and make us part of His masterpiece. Because work comes from God, it is a blessing.

⁴⁷ Genesis 3:17

⁴⁸ Romans 8:22-23

Work is a blessing, even though this does not guarantee that all our works will be blessed.

8. The biggest gift is not that we may work, but that God works⁴⁹ and that God the Father, through the redemptive work by Jesus Christ, gives us salvation and reconciliation.

Questions

- 27 *For what in my work do I give thanks to God? Do I do this often enough? And is there something in my work for which I forget to give thanks to God? (#1)*
- 28 *How big a gift from God do I think work is? (#2)*
- 29 *In my own words, why is working a miracle from God? And can I say the same about the work that I do and see around me? (#3)*
- 30 *Do I agree that work is not inherently or by definition sinful? (#4)*
- 31 *Is my current job the result of original sin? In other words, would my job exist if there had been no original sin? (#5)*
- 32 *Which sins does my work combat? (#6)*
- 33 *In what way does my work form a part of God's masterpiece? Or is it impossible or inappropriate to say? (#7)*
- 34 *Do I experience work as a blessing? And what are the blessings in my work? (#7)*

⁴⁹ John 5:17

35 *When we talk about people's work, can we talk about the work of God in this connection? Or is that totally incomparable? (#8)*



4. Motives

1. We do not work because it is without obligation, but because working is a gift from God that we cannot refuse with gratitude. Work as a gift renders us indebted. To work is a privilege, but also a duty. We cannot demand our work from God, but God demands our work.
2. We do not work for our own glory and fame, but for God's glory and fame.⁵⁰ Self-determination, self-glorification, or self-development are not the highest aims of working; it is self-realization in the sense of realizing what God intended for us. We do not work to bring glory to ourselves, but to bring glory to God. We do not work to elevate ourselves, but to elevate God. We do not work for ourselves but for God.
3. We do not work to prove ourselves or to make something of our lives, but to prove we belong to God and that He makes our lives. God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Reformer. When God accepts us as His child, He accepts us unconditionally. Work does not detract from or add anything to that. God will not look at us differently because of our efforts. He looks at us through Jesus Christ.
4. We do not work mindful of what people say about us, but mindful of what God says about us.⁵¹ If we work for God, then God is in charge. Working for God is not about what

⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians 1:31, 2 Corinthians 10:17-18

⁵¹ Matthew 6:4, Colossians 3:23

people think of us, but what God thinks of us. It is not about how people judge us, but how God judges us. It is not about whether we can justify our work to people without embarrassment, but whether we can do this to God. It is not even about what people say about us at the end of our life, but what God says about us and to us in the afterlife.⁵² This exit interview of our life, this assessment interview for eternity before God's throne, has only two possible outcomes: admission or rejection, hiring or refusal, in or out, glory or damnation, heaven or hell.

5. We work not to win but to lose ourselves in God.⁵³ By working we learn to trust God, to expect from Him our work and its fruits, to become more and more dependent on Him, and to know Him more and deeper.
6. We work not to become something, but because we are someone. A Christian is someone before he does anything; we are Christians before we work as Christians.
7. We work not to redeem ourselves, but we work from the redemption by Jesus Christ. Salvation is not about working but about resting in Jesus. The gospel is not about what we do for God, but what God does for us in Jesus Christ.⁵⁴
8. We work not for our own justification, but from God's justification of us. We live not by our work but by God's.

⁵² Romans 14:12

⁵³ Matthew 16:25

⁵⁴ Romans 3:23-24, Galatians 2:20

Our work matters not *to* faith and grace but *from* faith and grace. Only faith in Jesus Christ ensures preservation and salvation and gives true life.⁵⁵ We should know that our access to God does not depend on our works but on God's grace.⁵⁶ Through the work of Jesus Christ, God provides us with justification that is independent of our own works.⁵⁷

9. We work not to be saved by God but because we are saved by Jesus. Even when we work hard and well, there is no way we earn our salvation by it.⁵⁸ Our work is not beatific. We do not earn heaven with work.⁵⁹ Only by God's grace can we be saved. From our salvation through Jesus Christ, we work for God's glory.⁶⁰
10. We work not for peace with God but out of peace with Him.⁶¹ Peace with God is not the result of our work but its reason.
11. We work not to earn anything from God but to serve God. Our work and its fruits are not our merits but rather gifts from God. God can never be indebted to us; He owes us nothing. Those who work to earn something from God

⁵⁵ Romans 3:21-26, Romans 4:5, Romans 5:1, Romans 6:10-11

⁵⁶ Romans 5:15, Romans 11:6

⁵⁷ Titus 3:5

⁵⁸ Ephesians 2:8-10

⁵⁹ Matthew 20:1-16

⁶⁰ Romans 7:4

⁶¹ Romans 5:1, Hebrews 13:20-21

are using God to serve their own interest. We work selflessly for God, not for blessings in our work and rewards in heaven.

12. We work not to be blessed but because we are blessed by God. We are already blessed if we are able to work and especially if we perform our work for the glory of God. Whether God blesses us and our work is up to God. We cannot predict, force, or claim God's blessings. God blesses in His own way, and works when, how, and through whom He wants. He acts according to His plans, not according to our works.
13. We work not to perform in the eyes of God but to be in relationship with Him. God does not do performance measurement, performance appraisal, or performance-based reward. With God, it's not about being something only when we perform, but about who we are in relationship to Him. Because Jesus has redeemed us, we don't have to sell ourselves to God; we may come as we are. Jesus draws a line in the accounting of our sins not because of our blood, sweat, and tears in our work but because of the blood of Jesus in His work.
14. We work not to come to God but so God can come to us through work. Work is a way to experience God's presence, for God to seek us out, for God to reveal Himself to us.
15. We work not because God necessarily needs our work, but because we need God in His work. It is blasphemous to think that we can impress God or that God cannot do

without us and our work. That's why it is all the more admirable that God puts us to work anyway. We may thank God for allowing us to work and thus ask if we may help Him in His work.

16. We work not because it benefits God, but because God thinks working is beneficial to us. Humanity is not there for work, but work is there for humanity. God demands our lives and thereby our work because He has our best interests at heart.⁶² By working, God works on us.

Questions

- 36 *To what extent do I already know the sixteen motives listed? Or are there new ones for me? If so, which? (#1-16)*
- 37 *Which of the sixteen motives listed do I endorse or agree with completely? And which ones do I agree with less or not at all? (#1-16)*
- 38 *In my opinion, is there a priority in terms of importance of the sixteen motives listed? If so, which? (#1-16)*
- 39 *Which of the sixteen motives mentioned do I experience in myself and in how I work? (#1-16)*
- 40 *Which of the sixteen motives listed (that I agree with) do I find difficult or even impossible to live by? In other*

⁶² Ephesians 2:10

Motives

words, which ones are most under pressure or challenging for me? (#1-16)

41 Which of the sixteen motives mentioned will I express more in my work? And how will I do this concretely and hold on to them consistently? (#1-16)

42 By the way, are there any motives that I missed or not mentioned? (#1-16)

43 How would I feel if someone who does the same job as I do earns twice the income? (#2)

44 How would I feel if someone who does the same job as I do receives much more blessings? (#12)

45 How would I feel if it turned out that God accepts in grace someone who is professionally more successful than I am due to all kinds of improper conduct? (#13)

46 If I had one year to live and I could choose between continuing to work and stopping immediately, which would I choose?

47 How would I feel if there was only one working day and six rest days in a week?



5. Good works

1. Not all works meet God's expectations of us. Only good works are good for God. God wants us to do good works.⁶³
2. Good works are works done from faith in God, with and for God. God is the only source of value; He is the source of all who and what we are, of all that we have and all that we know. He is the only one who gives our work real meaning. God makes our work good. Good works are good not because we are good but because God is good. The value of work lies in how God values our work and therefore not how we or other people value it. Therefore, good works are in God.
3. Work that does not stem from a true vision of who God is and what He has promised is not true work. The point of reference for what good works are is God's good works. The point of reference for what a good worker is is God as the good worker. Good works reflect God's holy deeds. A good worker reflects God's holy character. Good works and good workers are according to God's word, law, and revelation, and they are according to His heart.
4. Good works are works that originate from our faith. Works without faith in God cannot be good;⁶⁴ after all

⁶³ Matthew 5:16, Matthew 7:21, Titus 2:14, Titus 3:8

⁶⁴ Romans 14:23

faith in God is a prerequisite for good works for God.⁶⁵ If we deny that God exist, then we thereby deny that we work for God.

5. Good works are works that come from our hearts.⁶⁶ Good works are not works that we do because we have to, or because others expect them of us, or because they will benefit us, but because we want to serve God by doing them. Our heart determines who we worship through our work. Therefore, works done out of purely unconscious habit cannot be good works, neither are works that are considered as checklists.
6. Good works are the result of acceptance by God and not the means or basis of our acceptance by Him. Good works are made possible by faith in Christ. Good works are our heartfelt response to God's grace in Jesus Christ. Our good works are the result of and response to Jesus' redemption work. We are saved by faith and grace and not because of our works.⁶⁷ But our works are of vital importance to God: He created us to work well. We are not saved by our works, but by Jesus' work so that we can work. In Jesus we have been recreated to do good works.⁶⁸ Through Jesus' good work we can do good works.

⁶⁵ Romans 3:20

⁶⁶ 1 Samuel 16:7, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 6:7

⁶⁷ Galatians 2:6, Ephesians 2:8-9

⁶⁸ John 15:16

7. Works are meaningless and senseless if they are not done unto God.⁶⁹ A good work is not good if God is not considered as its end. Works that are not good are a shame and a sin, no matter how good they are by earthly standards. Not seeing God's purpose in our work makes our work in vain, useless, and even harmful.⁷⁰
8. Ultimately the question is not whether we work well for God but whether God works in us. We do not work for God, but God works in and through us. It's about letting God work in our work, giving Him the leadership, putting Him in control over us and our work. God does not work with us, but we work together with Him.
9. Our work becomes divine when we worship God with it, when we serve God, see God as the highest purpose, experience Him as the ultimate source of our fulfillment and identity, when God comes into our work, and it becomes, is, and remains God's work. Even the lowest, tiniest, and most humble work embodies the highest and greatest purpose when done as an act of worship.
10. Since God is the source of good and of our work, the work is not the only gift from God to us, but so are all the good works we may do. Good works are not ours but God's. Work is therefore giving back and passing on what we receive from God. God gladly accepts good works. God's

⁶⁹ Psalm 127:1-2, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

⁷⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:58

blessing on our work is the seal of approval.⁷¹ With God's blessing, God says that our work is good. Every working day is a day of jubilation: that we give back to God the fruits of our labor.

11. Good works are not merely extraordinary works, rather they are precisely the ordinary, everyday works that God uses. However, good works are extraordinary because God is present in them.
12. Good works need not be perfect, exemplary works. Only God is perfect. Our work is burdened with sin; what we do is broken and imperfect. With God, good is good enough. Our work is often not good enough by earthly standards: it must be more, better, bigger, easier, and faster. God doesn't think like this. God accepts our works as long as we desire to serve Him with them.
13. Good works do not involve doing bad works. Bad works ignore God, offend Him, dishonor Him, demean Him.⁷² Bad works curse God because He is good. Bad works curse God for being good. Sin is when we act like a god in our works because then we ignore God, when we honor our works because then we dishonor Him, when we infringe on God's works because then we offend Him, when we do not put God first because then we demean Him.
14. Good works are more than just not doing bad works. Christian faith is not a passive assent to the truth of the

⁷¹ Psalm 90:17, Jeremiah 17:10

⁷² Romans 2:24

gospel. Christian faith is about being activated; it is not about doing nothing but doing something and doing the right things. Not doing that which is good when we know and can do it is not only a missed opportunity but also a sin.⁷³ Frequently missing opportunities to do the good is totally sinful.

15. Good works do not only take place in a community of faith or church. Everywhere we work, we can do good works. Good works is reserved not only for spiritual workers but for every person who works in God's Spirit.

Abundant

16. God is good; therefore, He loves good works and desires us to do good works. Bad works curse God's goodness, therefore He disapproves of them.
17. Because God always does good, He also wants us as His creatures, children, and workers to always do good;⁷⁴ and not do it half-heartedly, but fully, completely, and radically.⁷⁵ Serving God in our work is a full-time not a part-time occupation. To be a Christian in everything else except in work is impossible. Being a Christian permeates life, including works and occupation. To exclude God from our work is to exclude Him from our lives. Christianity is not a coat that we take off when we start working.

⁷³ James 4:17

⁷⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:15

⁷⁵ Proverbs 11:24-25, 2 Corinthians 8:2

18. Because God abounds in good works, He also wants us to abound in our good works.⁷⁶ He wants us to do not just some good works but to do plenty of them, to do them incessantly, and to create and use every opportunity to do good works. If we have the opportunity, we must never withhold good from others.⁷⁷ God desires that we always seek the good in everything.⁷⁸ Every work we do must contribute to God's work in the world. Seeking good is not seeking gold but seeking God.
19. By performing good works abundantly, we become rich, not by earthly standards, but in good works.⁷⁹ There is no better investment than performing good works. Good works on earth have heavenly value. We contribute to God's kingdom through good works, and God's dividend is of eternal value.⁸⁰
20. By performing plenty of good works, we are answering God's call to a holy life. When we are called to live holy lives, this also means to work in a holy way:⁸¹ to do good works in everything, to work ceaselessly for the glory of God, and to take advantage of opportunities to work well.

⁷⁶ John 15:8, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Galatians 6:9

⁷⁷ Proverbs 3:27, Galatians 6:10

⁷⁸ Amos 5:14, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Thessalonians 5:15

⁷⁹ 1 Timothy 6:18

⁸⁰ Isaiah 49:4, Matthew 6:19-20, Romans 2:6, 1 Corinthians 3:14, Colossians 3:23-24

⁸¹ Leviticus 11:45

21. Precisely because God cares so much about the work we do and the way we work, He gives many of us plenty of abilities and opportunities to do good works. God equips us to do good works. He trusts us to do good works and entrusts His creation to us.⁸² If God did not trust people to do their works, He would not have made people but robots.
22. God gives us the freedom to do good works so that we can work out of love for Him and His creation. However, this also gives us the freedom to do bad works. God gives us freedom and responsibilities. He trusts us to be faithful to Him in our work. Therefore, it hurts God when we misuse His trust in us, when we are unfaithful to Him.
23. God gives us the confidence to do good works.⁸³ In Christ, we already have what other people work for: preservation, life, peace, self-esteem, and acceptance. Thus, we can focus on doing good works. God accepts us regardless of our good works, thus allowing us to excel in good works. Our vindication frees us to serve God and humanity because we no longer have to worry about our own acceptance before God. God does not liberate us from work; He liberates us to work. In our work, we can exercise our freedom in Christ to honor God. Jesus saves us so that we strive to do good works.

⁸² Psalm 8:7

⁸³ 2 Corinthians 3:12

24. God's gospel makes us joyful to do good works because it means we can obey freely from our hearts, and not from fear of what God might do to us if we don't or from self-interest to please God with good works. Our vindication depends solely on God accepting us wholly and completely, regardless of our works, through our faith in Christ.⁸⁴ And precisely because God accepts us without any merit on our part, but out of pure, free grace, this leads to great and pure joy, love, and eagerness to do good works.⁸⁵ In our works, we can show our joy in Christ to honor God.
25. To the extent that we do our work well through God's grace, our work will be part of God's Kingdom. This motivates us once again to do our work as well as possible and to do as many good works as possible. We work in two worlds.⁸⁶ Although these worlds overlap, we work first for God and in His Kingdom, and second, for humanity and in the world. Therefore, we have a double passport, wear two hats, and the services we perform count double.
26. God can make good works even better.⁸⁷ Doing God's work in God's way will never lack God's support. God can fix the fracture in good works. God can even multiply the

⁸⁴ Titus 2:14

⁸⁵ Luke 7:47

⁸⁶ 1 Peter 2:11

⁸⁷ John 14:12

fruits of good works.⁸⁸ God can re-use work that is insignificant to us for the salvation and blessing of other people.

Questions

- 48 *Do I think that the above-given definition of “good works” is good, too limited, or too demanding? (#1-14)*
- 49 *Does the above-given definition of good works make sense to me or are there contradictions in it? (#1-14)*
- 50 *Do I think our work can become divine? (#9)*
- 51 *Is there a difference between working well and good works? (#4-13)*
- 52 *Is there a difference between working well and working in a holy way? (#20)*
- 53 *How do I define good works? (#1-14)*
- 54 *How do I define bad works? (#13)*
- 55 *Looking at my own work, to what extent is it good? And what, if anything, does it lack?*
- 56 *Would I be able to explain how my work can contribute to God’s Kingdom? And could I make this concrete for my past works? (#19 and #25)?*
- 57 *Do I think that God trusts me in my work? If so, how is this manifested? (#21-22)*
- 58 *Do I think a Christian can be abundant in good works? Or does God not require this of us? (#18)*

⁸⁸ Ezekiel 36:30

Good works

- 59 *Do I think of myself as being abundant in good works? Or to put it better: do I think God thinks I am abundant in good works? (#18)*
- 60 *If I think my work should and could be better, what should I concretely do to make it happen?*
- 61 *If I had to stop working now, what would I regret not having done more of? And is this then something I should prioritize as long as I still work?*
- 62 *Do I feel confident to do good works? If not, what needs to happen so I will? And what can I do about this? (#23)*
- 63 *Do I feel joy to perform good works? If not, what needs to happen so I will? And what can I do about it? (#24)*
- 64 *Do I think that a Christian works in two worlds? If so, does this also apply to me? And how is this manifested and how do I experience it? (#25)*
- 65 *Do I have (my own) examples of God multiplying the fruit of good works? (#26)*
- 66 *Having read this chapter, what will I say to God about it the next time I pray?*
- 67 *What other question would I like to ask myself after reading this chapter?*



6. God's image

1. Because we are creations and children of God, God loves that we reflect His character in our work. God desires for our character to resemble His unchanging character. He grants us that. Therefore, to work is also to let God work on our character so that we increasingly become His image bearer in our work. In the Bible, we see God at work and learn how God wants to work on us and how God wants us to work. By working in the way God works, we show that God is working in us.
2. Our mission and calling is to represent God in every dimension of our existence, including our work. We are designed by God to be His image bearers, to uniquely represent who God is to His world. God desires that we mirror His holiness, honor His intentions, and realize on earth the reign of His heavenly Kingdom. We are called to be holy because God is holy,⁸⁹ to be perfect because God is perfect,⁹⁰ to be outstanding because God is outstanding.
3. Because God the Father is faithful, He loves it when we are faithful in our work. Because God is just, He loves it when we are just in our work. Because God is merciful, He loves it when we are merciful in our work. Likewise,

⁸⁹ Leviticus 11:44-45, Leviticus 19:2, Leviticus 20:7, Leviticus 21:8

⁹⁰ Matthew 5:48

God loves it when we are enduringly truthful and gracious in our work. And because God is love, He loves it when we do our work with love. By reflecting His character in our work, we show that we truly love God.

4. Therefore, God loves it when journalists reflect Divine truth, when merchants reflect Divine faithfulness, when social workers reflect Divine mercy, and many other professions that reflect His Divine character.
5. As creations and children of God, God loves for us to mirror His works in our work.⁹¹
6. Because God saves and reconciles, He loves it when we save and reconcile in our work. Because God restores and heals, He loves it when we restore and heal in our work.⁹² Because God helps and shows mercy, He loves it when in our work we help and show mercy. Likewise, God loves it when we care and nurture, when we build and protect, when we train and teach.
7. God loves so many other works that reflect His works. God loves it when repairers repair, harvesters harvest, governors govern, regulators regulate, transporters transport, and shepherds herd. Likewise, God loves it when guards guard, stewards steward, drivers drive, advocates advocate, cooks cook, tuners tune, activists activate, and so many other professions.

⁹¹ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁹² Isaiah 58:12

God's image

8. God leads us through His work. We can model ourselves in our work after God *the Worker*. God is in all things *the Craftsman, the Artisan*.⁹³
9. God is *the Maker and Producer*. He is *the Designer, Architect, and Decorator*. He is *the Coach and Advisor*. He is *the Physician and Nurse*. He is *the Planner, Programmer, and Controller*. He is *the Caretaker and Maintainer*.
10. God is *the Creator*: He makes something out of nothing.
11. God is *the Artist*: With His Creation, He has made the most beautiful and most handsome things ever made.
12. God is *the Entrepreneur*: He entered the biggest and longest project ever, invested in it, and hired humanity.
13. God is *the Manager*: He created order, structure, and harmony out of chaos.
14. God is *the Lawgiver*: He drew up the best commandments.
15. God is *the Writer*: He wrote the most beautiful book there is.
16. God is also *the King, the Authority, the Commander*. He is *the Director, the Maternity Nurse, and the Undertaker*. Above all, God is *the Father*.
17. Through Jesus we learn who God the Father is.⁹⁴ Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus is the paragon whom God loves.⁹⁵ By following Jesus in our work, we are His

⁹³ Hebrews 8:2, Hebrews 8:5, Hebrews 11:10, Hebrews 12:23

⁹⁴ John 14:9, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Colossians 1:15, Colossians 2:9

⁹⁵ Matthew 3:17, Matthew 17:5

disciples. God loves it when we follow His Son in our work.

18. Jesus Christ, like God the Father, is an example for us in our work.⁹⁶ He is *the* Curator and Mediator: He rescues us from our impoverished state and bridges the gap between us and God. He is *the* Healer: He healed people and even resurrected dead people. He is *the* Purchaser: He bought us our freedom by giving His life. He is *the* Cleaner: He washes away our sins. He is *the* Preacher and Teacher: He preached and taught like no other.⁹⁷ He is *the* Supplier: He provides us the necessities of life. He is *the* Collaborator: He fully cooperated in God's plan. He is *the* Volunteer: He came to earth voluntarily to suffer for us.
19. We follow Jesus in our work by doing what He did. We can follow Jesus by mediating, by healing, buying, cleansing, preaching, delivering, cooperating, and volunteering. Following Jesus in our work means that we always ask ourselves what Jesus would do in our place.⁹⁸ Following Jesus in our work also means inviting and letting Him in our work.
20. We follow Jesus in our work by being who He is. We follow Jesus in our work when, like Him, we are loving, sustainable, service-oriented, humble, and just; likewise,

⁹⁶ Mark 7:37

⁹⁷ Isaiah 9:5

⁹⁸ Matthew 7:12

when we are peaceful, compassionate, merciful, and hospitable; when we are truthful, faithful, modest, and testimonial, and when we are forbearing, joyful, hopeful, and sober. Following Jesus in our work means that we always ask ourselves how and what Jesus would be and do in our place.

21. The Holy Spirit, like God the Father and God the Son, is also an example for us in our work. The Holy Spirit is life, liberation, and renewal.⁹⁹ The Holy Spirit gives life, liberty, and renewal. If the Holy Spirit lives in us, then we are alive, liberated, and renewed, also in our work. If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, then we grow and flourish in our work; we are not slaves to our work, and we are different in our work. If the Holy Spirit dwells in us, then we bring life, liberty, and renewal in our work. If we are full of the Holy Spirit, then we radiate this and cause a different wind to blow and a different light to shine in our work.
22. The work of the Holy Spirit causes us to bear fruit in our work.¹⁰⁰ The Holy Spirit inspires us, gives us strength and wisdom.¹⁰¹ The Holy Spirit is our charismatic leader. The Holy Spirit gives us the talents, gifts, and virtues to do good in our work. The Holy Spirit also gives us the mind, the conscience, the insight to know what is good.¹⁰² The

⁹⁹ Galatians 5:18

¹⁰⁰ Galatians 3:5, Galatians 5:16, Galatians 5:22-24

¹⁰¹ John 16:5-15, Romans 8:14

¹⁰² 1 Corinthians 2:12

Holy Spirit gives us the energy, the motivation, the vitality, and the courage to do good. If the Spirit blesses us, then we can be a blessing to others in our work.

23. In everything that we are and in what we do in our work, let us reflect God, be His image bearer, His ambassador, representative, and role model;¹⁰³ let us reveal His handiwork and presence. Our work becomes priestly and evangelic when it proclaims God's goodness, when it is a window to God and His work, and when it is a positive representation of who God is. Good works make God's goodness and His works attractive to others.¹⁰⁴
24. Every day that we are able to work, we have to ask ourselves whether we have shown something of God's character and His works. Likewise, as we survey our professional lives, we have to ask ourselves whether we increasingly display His character and His works.
25. From a Christian perspective, a professional career means growing in faith and thus increasing its fruit in the profession. It is therefore crucial that work does not weaken but rather strengthens our faith in God. If our Christian practices are slightly watered-down each time we work, we will have no Christian practices left by the end of our working lives. On judgment day, it would not matter whether we were furniture sellers, restroom cleaners, prostitutes, accountants, presidents, CEOs, or

¹⁰³ Titus 2:7

¹⁰⁴ Titus 2:5

sports heroes. What would matter then is our faith in God and whether we bore fruit from it.

Questions

- 68 *To what extent can I speak from experience that "To work is also to let God work on our character so that we increasingly become His image bearer in our work"? (#1)*
- 69 *What do I learn from the Bible about how God works and how He wants us to work? (#1)*
- 70 *Do I agree that we are called to be bearers of God's image in our work? If so, in what respect? If not, why not? (#2)*
- 71 *Do I think we may translate the attributes or virtues of God into the type of work God loves? If so, could my work also be related to one of God's virtues, and could I mirror this virtue in my work? (#3-4)*
- 72 *Do I think we can translate the works of God into the type of work God loves? If so, could my work also be related to the work of God, and could I say that God loves the type of work I do? (#5-7)*
- 73 *Do I think that we may speak about "God the Worker"? (#8)*
- 74 *Do I think we are allowed to speak about God being the Worker in many ways? Or do I think this means we are not doing God justice? (#9-16)*
- 75 *Does God as the Worker lead me in my work? If so, in what type of work? How can I reflect this in my work? (#9-16)?*

God's image

- 76 *In the type of works Jesus Christ does, is He an example to me in my work? If so, how? If not, how can Jesus become one? (#18-20)*
- 77 *How often do I ask myself how and what Jesus would be and do if He were in my position at work? (#20)*
- 78 *To what extent is the Holy Spirit an example to me in my work, and particularly which characteristics of the Holy Spirit? (#21-22)*
- 79 *In my work, what attributes of the Holy Spirit do I impart to others? (#21-22)*
- 80 *In which ways do I think my work is or could be priestly/evangelical? Do I think that my work makes the goodness of God (more) attractive to others within my work? (#23)*
- 81 *Do I think that I should ask myself every workday the question whether I have shown something of God's character and demonstrated something of His works? If so, do I? If so, what did I show the last time I worked? (#24)*
- 82 *How do I describe my career from a Christian perspective? Have I grown in my faith since my first job? More concretely, if I were to write a resume for God right now, what would I include in it? (#24-25)*



7. Occupational choice

Vocation

1. The more important work is to our lives, the more important is our choice of an education and profession. God gives us only one chance to live in this life, therefore we have only one lifetime to work for God. If we are called or compelled to work, and we have the freedom to choose an education and profession, God asks of us to take this choice to Him and His glory.
2. We do not have to make this choice of an education and profession all on our own;¹⁰⁵ God helps us with it. Therefore, this choice cannot be made without prayer and thorough reflection.
3. The choice of a profession is not about what we earn from it, but whether we serve God with it; nor is it about what blessings it brings us, but whether we are a blessing to others; nor about how much fun we get from it, but whether we are in a position to honor God. God does not look at our paycheck, title, position, or ranking but directly at our heart.
4. Our vocation is the guide for our choice of education and profession.¹⁰⁶ We do not choose our profession ourselves

¹⁰⁵ Psalm 32:8

¹⁰⁶ 1 Corinthians 7:17

but are called to it.¹⁰⁷ God calls us towards dignified work, and He calls us through the needs in the world, the talents He gives us, and through available opportunities.

5. In our vocation for a certain education and profession, we should realize that our primary calling is our conversion to God. We are called first and foremost to be someone, not to be something or anything. But from our conversion follows God's call to live a godly life. From this follows our specific calling, our vocation, to do those works that God asks of each of us.
6. Our vocation fits somewhere in God's story. Each person has a unique, eternal role in God's story. We are all missionary workers: we work with a mission, a mission that we don't invent ourselves but discover in the purpose God has in mind for us. In determining our education and profession, we do not begin with ourselves but with God.
7. Answering God's call in our choice of education and profession requires self-denial and self-deprecation. It is God, not us, who is central. Our vocation is not a choice among many options but a commission.¹⁰⁸ By following our calling, we show how God works in our life.¹⁰⁹ To ignore God's calling is to bypass God.
8. It is important to ask ourselves what God is calling us to not only when choosing an education and profession but

¹⁰⁷ Proverbs 20:24, Ephesians 4:1

¹⁰⁸ 1 Corinthians 7:17

¹⁰⁹ Philipians 2:13

also when changing professions, as in a new job or position. Changing jobs or positions only to benefit oneself does not testify to a calling.¹¹⁰ Even though we are free to change jobs, we are bound in Jesus.¹¹¹

9. In choosing a profession, we must pay attention to whether God calls us through other people and through our ordinary situations. God uses our actual circumstances. We must embrace the specific opportunities we are given. It is not necessarily in waiting for the possibility that we can do something great for God but in honoring God in the position we are in.
10. When God calls us to a task or position, He is not necessarily thinking only of us. He may choose us because of the effect our work will have on other people.¹¹² Moreover, God may be calling us to do something now in preparation for what He will call us to do later.
11. Social status and earthly prestige mean nothing to God. Therefore, we cannot expect God to take these into account when He calls on us.

Dignified

12. The choice of profession involves the choice of dignified work. Not all work reflects God's dignity. Not every type of work is God's work. We cannot choose a profession

¹¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 7:20

¹¹¹ Colossians 4:3

¹¹² 2 Chronicles 36:22-23

that dishonors God. We must avoid those professions that avoid God.¹¹³

13. If Jesus, had He not been a carpenter, would not perform our job, then we do not have the right job. Similarly, if Jesus could not be our customer, then we probably have the wrong job. Moreover, if Jesus would not invest in our organization, then we probably are working at the wrong organization. Faith in Jesus excludes certain professions and jobs.
14. The fact that Jesus sought out certain professions does not mean that He valued these professions. He came precisely to save these people.¹¹⁴
15. Work is not worthy of God if it brings us and humanity further from God. Work is worthy of God if it brings us and humanity closer to God. If our work disturbs our relationship with God, then we must either work on our relationship with God or find other work. We must always prevent our work from breaking our relationship with God.
16. Professions that are in themselves undignified, by definition, violate God's commandments. For example, assassins violate the sixth commandment not to kill, brothel

¹¹³ Colossians 1:10

¹¹⁴ Luke 19:1-10

owners violate the seventh commandment to not commit adultery, and criminals violate the eighth commandment not to steal.¹¹⁵

17. Even professions that are not in themselves unworthy of recognition could be unworthy of recognition. God does not call us to professions that exploit people, encourage hedonistic lifestyles, and that incite infidelity and envy.¹¹⁶ Professions that are unworthy of man are also unworthy of God. Likewise, God does not call us to professions that encourage idolatry and blasphemy. Professions in which we try to sit on God's throne, build a tower of Babel, and pretend to be God, are unworthy of God.¹¹⁷

Needs

18. God calls us through the needs in the world. The necessities in the world are God's direction indicators for our calling. We are called to meet the real needs of humanity and thereby honor God. In both the big and small social and individual problems, God calls us in His desire to remedy these problems. In job selection, we should not be blind to poverty, disease, and oppression, or to spiritual and psychological distress, injustice, and social ills. A guiding question we can ask ourselves is: If Jesus were

¹¹⁵ Exodus 20:13-15, Deuteronomy 5:17-19

¹¹⁶ Leviticus 25:14-17

¹¹⁷ Genesis 3:5-9, Genesis 11:4-9

living on earth now, which problems would He name, stand up, and work for?

19. Following Christ in our work means that we are committed to the needs of the world. When we do our work in accordance with God's vision, we have a beneficial impact on the world and on those who live in it.
20. With God, it is not about our social position, but whether we contribute responsibly to society. God does not rank jobs or professions. God sees everyone's work in a larger context, from the totality. For a society to function, many types of professions and jobs that cannot exist without each other are needed. Therefore, one profession or job is not more or better than another.
21. For God, there is no difference between blue- and white-collar jobs. They both come from God.¹¹⁸ God Himself instituted both physical and intellectual work in paradise.¹¹⁹ Jesus himself performed both physical and intellectual work on earth.¹²⁰
22. Honoring God can be done precisely in jobs that are low in social esteem and that are at the bottom of the social ladder. It is precisely as a toilet cleaner that we can honor God; it is precisely as a mine worker that we can honor God; it is precisely as an assembly line worker that we can

¹¹⁸ Exodus 31:1-11

¹¹⁹ Genesis 2:15, Genesis 2:19

¹²⁰ Mark 6:3

honor God. The more subservient and humble our work is, the smaller we make ourselves and the greater is God.

23. God does not call everyone to become a spiritual worker. If there were only pastors, a society could not function. With God, there are no such things as second-class callings. We are worthy of our calling if we are committed to God and look to Him alone for leadership and strength.¹²¹

Talents

24. Our vocation depends on the talents God gives us. God enjoins us to use our talents for productive purposes.¹²²
25. God provides us with unique skills, abilities, and qualities.¹²³ Every human being is unique. If God had not wanted us to be so, then He would have created us identical with each other. God gives us the amazing diversity of talents needed to serve one another and build our communities. God is at work all over the world, using the work of all kinds of people. Because God gives us our talents, these do not determine our salvation.
26. People tend to have more talents than they can utilize; therefore, we cannot fully develop our potential. However, the more talents we have received from God, the more we must use them to do good. We offend God

¹²¹ Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11-16

¹²² Matthew 25:14-30

¹²³ Romans 12:6, 2 Corinthians 3:5

when we do not use these talents in our work.¹²⁴ What is important is not what is the most that we can get out of them but what is the most we can give with them. The profit from our work is the extent to which our talents serve God and humanity.¹²⁵ We excel in our work when we let our God-given talents shine. God gives us talents in the hope that we will profit and excel.

27. God gives us the responsibility to discover our talents, to recognize that they came from Him, to develop them through education and formation, and to use them to glorify Him. This includes the responsibility to discover which talents we use in particular, and which talents best suit our God-given personality. Finding a profession requires finding our God-given talents. Therefore, training is important for discovering and developing our talents. God holds us responsible for what we do with what we have received from Him, even though our fate does not depend on this.
28. God gives us everything we need to do what He calls on us to do. God gives us specific talents to fulfill our calling. God does not overcharge us. Therefore, when we choose profession, we are guided by what God gives us.
29. At the same time, we should not be too picky in choosing a profession; we must do what needs to be done.¹²⁶ We

¹²⁴ Luke 21:1-4, James 1:17

¹²⁵ Luke 19:11-27

¹²⁶ Ezra 10:4, Ecclesiastes 9:10

must be willing to do any work, even the most socially despicable one as long as it is dignified work.¹²⁷ It is a privilege to be able to employ talents in our work, but it is not a breach of God's promise if this is not possible. Nowhere in the Bible has God promised that we can fully develop all our talents in our work.

Unemployed

30. Although work is quite important, those who are unable to work are no less important to God. Unemployment is a sin when it excludes from the labor process people who want to and can work. Unemployment is a sin when we are not willing to work even though we are called to do so.¹²⁸
31. If we cannot find paid work, we can still work in God's Kingdom by praying for the work that others do, by volunteering and doing other unpaid work.
32. If we are disabled, it does not mean that we are unfit for God. Our fitness for God does not depend on our works but on our faith. And although we are disabled, we can be a blessing to our neighbors in many other ways.
33. Being physically or mentally limited to work does not mean we are limited before God. The more severely restricted we are, the more beautiful God considers the

¹²⁷ Titus 3:1

¹²⁸ 2 Thessalonians 3:10

works we can still do.¹²⁹ The more limited our abilities are, the more telling, brilliant, and better are the good works we nevertheless do.¹³⁰

34. When we are sick, God permits us to suspend our work because God does not require us to put our work above our health.¹³¹
35. God permits us to retire. Even when God calls us to lay down our work, we can still commit ourselves to those who do work by praying for and coaching them. By passing on to others our lessons and experiences being a Christian worker, we give future generations the opportunity to grow in the faith.

Questions

- 83 *How important is the choice of an education and profession? What role does being a Christian play in it? Does being a Christian make the choice of an education and profession more or less important? (#1)*
- 84 *How intensely do I involve God in my choice of education, profession, and other work? Do I ever spend enough time on this choice? (#2 and #8)*
- 85 *Do I think that guiding the choice of an education and profession is my (specific) vocation? (#4-5)*

¹²⁹ 2 Corinthians 12:9

¹³⁰ Matthew 25:23

¹³¹ Isaiah 28:12, Matthew 11:28

- 86 *How does my calling, my vocation, fit into God's story (#6)?*
- 87 *In general, what do I think God's call consists of? What does God's calling to me consist of? (#9-11)*
- 88 *Does my (intended) work reflect God's dignity? (#12-17)*
- 89 *Is my (intended) work environment an appropriate place for God's holy presence? (#13)*
- 90 *If Jesus were to seek me out in my work, would it be to encourage me in my work or to spur me on to other work? (#14)*
- 91 *Are there any other professions, besides the above mentioned, that are contrary to any of God's commandments? (#16)*
- 92 *Is someone who has a God-unworthy profession necessarily godless (#17)?*
- 93 *In my work, are there so-called towers of Babel that I am building on? (#17)*
- 94 *Am I ashamed to God for the work I do (#14-17)?*
- 95 *Which needs do my (intended) work remedy (#18-19)?*
- 96 *Do I think that with God there is (isn't) a ranking of professions and jobs? (#20-23)*
- 97 *If God calls me to do so, am I willing to accept any job? In other words, am I willing to accept for God's sake even the socially lowest job? Or would I feel too important to work in God's Kingdom? (#22 and #29)*
- 98 *What specifically are my talents (#24-25)?*
- 99 *What, with all due respect, is the return on my work-related talents? (#26)*

Occupational choice

- 100 *What do I do to (permanently) develop my work-related talents? Do I spend enough time and attention on this? (#27)*
- 101 *Am I in my right place in my job? How sure am I? (#28-29)*
- 102 *What is my view on unemployment? (#30-31)*
- 103 *What is my view on occupational disability? (#32)*
- 104 *What is my view on physical or mental occupational impairment? (#33)*
- 105 *What is my view on inability to work due to illness? (#34)?*
- 106 *What is my view on retirement? (#35)*



8. Sin

1. No matter how beautiful, blessed, or great a privilege work might be, it is blemished with sins, steeped in evil, and subject to God's curse. Work is both a blessing and a curse.¹³²
2. Because of the Fall, work has been disrupted and our works have been violated and broken. Where there is work, there is sin; it is inescapable and unavoidable.
3. Work goes hand-in-hand with struggle, stress, and setbacks. With frustration, pain, and sorrow. Work fails, degenerates, and backfires. People get stuck, exhausted, and burned out or even die.
4. Wherever people work, there will soon be inequality and injustice, lovelessness and cruelty, opportunism and selfishness, materialism and nihilism, self-promotion and self-glorification.
5. What we make is subject to decay and ruin, destruction and annihilation, and abhorrence and oblivion.
6. We are, in our work, flawed and imperfect, and even full of weaknesses and tendencies to evil. We are a vessel full of contradictions and susceptible to corrupt influences.
7. It is blasphemous and foolish to think that we can do our work without God. Godless work comes from the desire to depend only on ourselves in our work and to work only for ourselves and our immediate neighbors. Devout work

¹³² Genesis 3:17-19

is the willingness to depend on God's guidance in our work and the will to be a blessing to all the people with and for whom we work.

8. Where we work, the devil works. The devil is our greatest opponent at work. He is out to take over with hostility, to make himself our boss, to make our work an idol, and to turn us away from God. The devil tries to bring us down through temptations. If we consider doing evil in our work, the devil is already in us. The devil tries to distort God's call in our work. When we invite Jesus into our work, the devil closes in. Therefore, work is fighting against the devil. And good works are victories over the devil.
9. Sin is opposing God and working alone without God. Sin is also profiting from the sins of others or inciting others to sin. It is also sin when we misuse God: misusing Him to gain prestige, earn money, and make a career.¹³³
10. If we use another's sin to justify our own, we only worsen both our sin and that of the other. We cannot use the sins of another to justify our own. Surely God does not use our sins to justify His own sinning either. On the contrary, He remains without any sin despite our countless sins.

Coping with sin

11. Even though there is so much sin in our work, we should know that God wants us to come to Him with it. The sin

¹³³ Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11

in our work should not take us further from God, but rather closer. God does not expect us to work sinlessly in this sinful world. He does expect us to come to Him with our sins. God accepts our imperfect work.

12. Even though we must deal with so many sins in our work, we should know that these are references to God's goodness and greatness and to our badness and weakness. Sins are the result of our fall and yet God has given us a second chance. Our sins in our work make us aware of our dependence on God. All lovelessness in our work brings us to God's love, all injustices to His justice, all unfaithfulness to His faithfulness. We need not become cynical from all the sins, but we may long for God even more.
13. Even though we face so much wickedness in the work, we should know that God is still present. God is everywhere and especially where we need Him.¹³⁴ God is present in our workplace; more than this, God is at work in our workplace.¹³⁵ He is always with us wherever we work.
14. Even though we face so many temptations in our workplace, we should know that a firm faith in God resists them.¹³⁶ Evil can be resisted by deriving satisfaction from what is good, *the Good*. Evil can be resisted by knowing that God is not only looking over our shoulders but is also fighting along with us.

¹³⁴ John 21:1-14, Hebrews 13:5-6

¹³⁵ Psalm 139:1-3

¹³⁶ Matthew 6:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Thessalonians 3:3

15. Even though our work is so bad, we should know that God can turn it around for the better. God uses our brokenness to save us and others. God can work on us even when we are unfaithful to Him. Only God knows if brokenness comes into work because of our faith or the lack of it. From faith we may know that God purifies, cleanses, and restores our broken works. We take with us the scars and wounds we suffer in our work to eternity, where God will heal them.
16. Even though not every job is blessed by God, we should know that He can still bless the work it involves. However, if in our work we do not have the space to follow Jesus Christ and we cannot create or claim this space, then we should seriously consider seeking other work.
17. Even though we work in a sinful environment, we should know that God may still want us to continue working there. Our responsibility to do what we can to help others and reduce evil seems more important to God than our responsibility to remain morally pure.¹³⁷ Detaching ourselves from sin should not cause us to stop doing good works.
18. Even though the sins in our work environment may be very threatening, we should know that these sins provide opportunities to bring God's goodness. If everything around us were perfect, we would not be able to make a

¹³⁷ 1 Kings 18

difference. Any badness in our work is an invitation to do good works.

19. Even though our work is transient, we should know that all that is for God's glory endure. Good works last into eternity.
20. Even though we fear that evil will win in our work, we should know that the goodness of God conquers.¹³⁸ Evil, no matter how strong and great, always draws the short straw in the long run.
21. Even though others are very sinful in their work, we need not become envious or callous, for we should know that God judges every sin.
22. Even though we keep committing sins in our work, we should know that God offers us a new opportunity every working day. God does ask us to learn from our sins each time. Learning from our sins is getting to know ourselves and God better.
23. Even though we make our hands dirty in our work, we should know that Jesus Christ wants to wash our dirty hands.

Questions

107 Do I consider work a curse? Do I consider my work a curse? Why or why not? (#1)

¹³⁸ John 16:33, Romans 12:17-21

- 108 *How often do I curse during my work and/or about my work? Have I ever cursed my work? (#1)*
- 109 *Which specific sins are present in my work environment? (#2-5, #9 and #10)*
- 110 *How would I describe my own imperfection/sinfulness in my work? (#6)*
- 111 *What are the temptations (forbidden fruits) in my work environment? Which temptations am I especially susceptible to? Do I dare to put these temptations on paper or even discuss them with others and God? If so, have I done so already? (#6)*
- 112 *How often do I work without God? (#7)*
- 113 *How does the devil manifest himself in my work? (#8)*
- 114 *Do I consider the devil as my biggest adversary in my work? (#8)*
- 115 *How do I cope with sin in my work? (#11-23)*
- 116 *Which of the described ways of dealing with sin in work appeal to me? (#11-23)*
- 117 *Which of the described ways of coping with sin in work will I use more from now on? What does this mean specifically? (#11-23)*



9. Spiritual light

1. In our work, we can properly distinguish between good and bad if God's Holy Spirit dwells in us.¹³⁹ God's Spirit opens our eyes to what is good and bad in our work. God's Spirit frees our mind, enlightens our thinking, grants us moral wisdom to know what is good and bad.¹⁴⁰ What is good is after all not what people think is good but what God thinks is good. God's will is the law in our work.¹⁴¹ Therefore, it is important to strive for spiritual maturity to be able to discern good and evil.
2. Faith helps us ask in our work how God once intended the work to be and how He intends it to be now.
3. Faith helps us see our work from God's perspective. Looking at work with God's eyes helps us see the good. If we perform work that we are ashamed of to God, then it cannot be good work.¹⁴² If we make decisions on which God cannot sign off, then these are not good decisions.¹⁴³ If our job would shock Jesus when He comes back to earth, it is not the right job. Determining what is good is not just about whether something can bear the light of day, but whether it can bear the divine light.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, we

¹³⁹ 1 Kings 3:9, 1 Kings 4:29, Romans 12:3

¹⁴⁰ Micah 6:8, 1 Corinthians 2:12-15

¹⁴¹ Ephesians 5:17

¹⁴² 2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁴³ Colossians 3:17

¹⁴⁴ John 3:19-21

work in the world with the thought that we are doing it in heaven before God.

4. Faith helps us do our work as if we were directly working for Jesus. By seeing Jesus in the people we work with, we cooperate with Him in our work, care for Him, help Him, purchase from Him, sell to Him.¹⁴⁵ Seeing other people in this way helps us in determining what is good. Thus, it is Jesus and not the devil who works at the competitors; it is Jesus and not the devil who works at the regulators; it is Jesus and not the devil who works at the activist groups.
5. God does not prescribe in detail how we should behave in our work; He has given us divine wisdom to determine this for ourselves. If God did not trust us in this, He would have made a detailed rule book for work.
6. God does not whisper to us either what we should always do in our jobs. If God were to dictate our behavior, it would block our path to moral wisdom and maturity. Instead, God gives us His Bible, a conscience and mind, prayer, and a community of faith. In this way, God empowers us to determine what is right and wrong in our work.¹⁴⁶ With our renewed thinking through faith,¹⁴⁷ God gives us discernment so that we can determine the best course of action in our work.

¹⁴⁵ Matthew 25:34-46

¹⁴⁶ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁴⁷ Romans 12:2

7. The renewal of our thinking does not mean God demands that we become a totally new person. God created us as authentic beings; our personalities remain part of our identity here on earth and later in eternity. Therefore, we do not have to succumb to the temptation of finding our identity in a stereotype of the ideal working Christian. Following Jesus Christ does mean allowing Him to curb the excesses of our personality.
8. God rules in our work through His moral laws. God created the world so that what is good is not only good for God but also for the world. Good works are not only appreciated by God but are also valuable to the world. By doing good, we ourselves function better, and so do our communities and society. Sin in the work leads to destruction because God has made the world in such a way that the bad ultimately punishes itself. By learning the moral laws in our work, we learn to know better God's will.
9. If we want to work with God rather than against Him, we must choose to observe the boundaries He sets instead of trying to realize everything possible in work. Being God's image and likeness requires learning to discern where blessings are to be found in observing the boundaries He sets.
10. God loves ethics in our lives and works because He is ethical. He is the source of what is good. Ethics without Him is without foundation.

11. Although we cannot and do not need to think about God all the time during our work, we may know that God does think about us all the time.
12. The way we discern God's will for our behavior and the way we apply it in the workplace are encompassed by the relationship God has established with us. We love God because He first loved us, and we show that love in how we treat others.¹⁴⁸ Love is the heart of work ethic.¹⁴⁹

Questions

- 118 *Does the Holy Spirit give me moral wisdom in my work? And if so, which moral wisdom? If not, why not (yet)? (#1 and #5)*
- 119 *When I look at my own (intended) work, how did God (ever) intend that work? (#2)*
- 120 *How often do I look at my work from God's perspective to determine what is good and bad? (#3)*
- 121 *Now if I were to look at my work with the eyes of God, would I see bad things happening and good things not happening? (#3)*
- 122 *Do I perform any work that would shock me if Jesus were to come back to earth at that very moment? If so, would it not be better to stop or change this work? (#3)*

¹⁴⁸ 1 John 4:19-21

¹⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 13

Spiritual light

- 123 *Do I see Jesus in the people at my work? What does this mean for what I do and allow in my work? (#4)*
- 124 *In my work, do I treat others as if they were Jesus? (#4)*
- 125 *In my work, do I treat organizations as if Jesus were working there? (#4)*
- 126 *To what extent am I utilizing the resources God gives me to nurture and develop my moral wisdom? (#6)*
- 127 *What are God's moral laws in my work? (#8)*
- 128 *What are the moral boundaries that God has set in my work? (#9)*
- 129 *Do I think God loves ethics? If so, to what extent would God love the ethics at my work? (#10)*
- 130 *How would I describe the role God has in determining what is ethical and unethical in my work? (#1-12)*
- 131 *What are the things in my work that I refuse based on my Christian faith but that others accept? In other words: What do I do in my work that a non-Christian would not do; what do I not do that a non-Christian would do?*

Part II: Work guidelines





1. Loving

1. Being a Christian in work is being loving. To follow Jesus Christ in our work means being loving because Jesus is love. Jesus, as well as His Father, is love. Jesus loves us as well as His Father.¹⁵⁰ We love Jesus as well as His Father. From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work lovingly.¹⁵¹
2. If everything that we do in life we do out of love, then the same applies to our work.¹⁵² Work is charity, not in the sense of deeds for nothing, but deeds out of love. Charity, therefore, is our work.
3. By loving the people in our work, we are following God's commandment to love our neighbors.¹⁵³ To love our neighbors in work means to love everyone who depends on our actions.
4. By loving the people in our work, we recognize their humanity, God as their Creator, and Jesus who also died for their sins. To disregard someone's humanity is unloving and a denial of God.
5. By loving the people in our work, we show love for what God has created. To love God means to love what He has made.

¹⁵⁰ John 3:16, 1 John 4:16

¹⁵¹ Romans 5:5

¹⁵² Luke 10:25-28, Romans 12:10, Romans 13:8, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3,
1 Corinthians 16:14; Galatians 5:6, Galatians 5:22

¹⁵³ Matthew 5:43-45

Loving

6. By loving the people in our work, we pass on the love God gives us.¹⁵⁴
7. By loving the people in our work, we reciprocate the love God gives us.¹⁵⁵
8. By loving the people in our work, we follow Jesus who himself even loves the greatest sinner.¹⁵⁶
9. By loving the people in our work, we bestow to them the most beautiful thing God created us with: our heart.
10. By loving the people in our work, we mirror who God is, namely love.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, it damns God if we hate anyone in our work. This is why God damns hate.
11. Real love toward the other means continuing to love the other even though they continue to hate, deceive, and frustrate us. Even if someone treats us badly at work, real love requires we continue to treat them as a creation of God's goodness. Even if they have ill will towards us, we continue to be kind to them; if they are so unreasonable, we remain reasonable; if they are the devil himself, we continue to spread Jesus' love.
12. Jesus' command to love our enemies means, with regards to work, loving our greatest competitor, our greatest adversary, and our greatest threat.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ John 7:38

¹⁵⁵ 1 John 4:7-21

¹⁵⁶ Ephesians 5:1-2

¹⁵⁷ 1 John 4:16

¹⁵⁸ Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:35

13. Love means we do not treat the other person heartlessly. When we make decisions that affect others, we do not do so indifferently. When we make decisions that hurt others, we do so with pain in our hearts.
14. Love is the beating heart of our work.¹⁵⁹ We do our work not grudgingly but wholeheartedly;¹⁶⁰ not numbly but passionately.¹⁶¹ We do our work to show our love towards God¹⁶² and humanity¹⁶³.

Questions

- 132 *Which Bible verse about love do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working lovingly means (to me)?*
- 133 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working lovingly means?*
- 134 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working lovingly means? If so, which ones?*
- 135 *How would I personally describe what working lovingly means for Christians?*
- 136 *How would I describe concretely what working lovingly means for me?*

¹⁵⁹ Luke 10:25-28

¹⁶⁰ Ephesians 6:6

¹⁶¹ Titus 2:14

¹⁶² Matthew 22:37

¹⁶³ Matthew 22:39

Loving

- 137 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that loving is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 138 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that loving is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 139 *To what extent is loving an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 140 *How do I experience the importance of love in my work?*
- 141 *Do I work to bring love? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 142 *To what extent can I work lovingly in my work?*
- 143 *How often have I recently brought love to my work?*
- 144 *How loving am I in my work? How does it show?*
- 145 *To what extent do I use loving as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 146 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more loving in my behavior?*
- 147 *To what extent do people I work with think I act lovingly in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 148 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act lovingly in my work?*
- 149 *How can I become and act more lovingly in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 150 *Which elements of working lovingly am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 151 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working lovingly?*



2. Sustainable

1. Being a Christian in work is being sustainable. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being sustainable because Jesus looks after nature,¹⁶⁴ has authority over nature¹⁶⁵ and asks us to do what pleases His Father. We deal with nature sustainably in our work because nature belongs to God, God loves nature, He shows Himself in it, He gives us the assignment to do so and we honor God with it.¹⁶⁶ An eye for creation begins with an eye for the Creator. Christian faith offers the most fundamental and appealing reasons to go for a green world.
2. We work sustainably with nature in our work because nature belongs to God. God created the earth and therefore He is its owner.¹⁶⁷ The earth is on loan for us to work with it and on it. The earth is not a consumer product. All the resources, minerals, energy sources, and materials that we use in our work are components of God's creation. Without light, air, and water, we would not be able to work. Therefore, to pollute nature is to steal from God. In our work, we are not only workers in God's creation but also of His creation. All our work has an impact on nature.

¹⁶⁴ Matthew 6:26, Mark 1:13

¹⁶⁵ Matthew 14:32-33, Mark 4:41-43, John 2:7-9

¹⁶⁶ Genesis 2:15, Psalm 8:7

¹⁶⁷ Psalm 24:1

Therefore, we should not leave nature worse than how we found it.

3. We treat nature sustainably in our work because God is a lover of nature.¹⁶⁸ God loves animals and plants, mountains and seas, clouds and soil. God created a green world because He loves greens, and He is green. To love God means to love what God loves and what God made. Therefore, being a Christian in our work means being the most ardent and fervent lover of nature in our work. Environmental problems concern us because they concern God and because all environmental problems are a result of our sins. Without the fall of man there would not have been any environmental problems. That nature suffers is our fault.¹⁶⁹ That the earth is not sighing now but even screaming is our fault. Had Jesus lived on earth today, wouldn't He have preached strongly about today's environmental problems, our guilt and eventual repentance for them?
4. We treat nature sustainably in our work because God shows Himself in nature. Nature displays God's divinity, His constant presence, His infinite power, and His given order.¹⁷⁰ Nature shows God's creativity, beauty, and versatility. Nature shows God's sovereignty and supremacy: without God, no flower can bloom. In nature blossoms

¹⁶⁸ Psalm 50:10-11

¹⁶⁹ Romans 8:21

¹⁷⁰ Psalm 19:2, Hebrews 1:10

God's nature. The earth contains God's nature. In nature, God speaks to us. By managing nature sustainably, we give present and future generations a picture of God's general revelation. To preserve nature is to preserve creation's testimony about the Creator. When we spoil nature, we spoil God's universal revelation and deprive ourselves and others of a proper view of God through His creation. Destroying nature is like destroying the Bible, God's religious revelation. By polluting the environment, we are hiding God from the world, silencing Him.

5. We treat nature sustainably in our work because God instructs us to do so. God loves nature so much that He asks us to maintain and conserve it.¹⁷¹ In fact, natural conservation was the first command God gave to humankind.¹⁷² God appointed humankind not only to maintain the world, but also to mine and develop it. God created the world with much potential for us to create. Our behavior in our work should promote the fertility of creation. We should deal with nature in our work as God desires, as God asks of us: not to dominate but to rule.
6. We treat nature sustainably in our work because by doing so we honor God. We honor the Creator by taking care of His creation. Sustainable development is not only for the benefit of present and future generations, but it is first and foremost for the benefit of God. We dishonor God

¹⁷¹ Luke 16:1-8

¹⁷² Genesis 2:15

when we neglect His creation. Making nature suffer because of unbridled human pursuit of prosperity and well-being is an assault against God and an indictment of mankind. To disturb, exhaust, degrade or even destroy nature is to disregard and deny God. To pollute nature is to bargain with God's natural laws and with God himself. Through sustainable handling of nature, we honor God by referring to His intention to one day restore the entire earth.¹⁷³ Nature conservation is taking a forward step toward God's new earth.

7. Working sustainably means that in our work, we may extract minerals and energy from nature. After all, God has given us the task of developing nature as well as possible, and this task cannot be done without minerals and energy.
8. Working sustainably means minimizing the damage to nature resulting from our work. God appreciates it when we use energy sparingly in our work, reuse and recycle materials, reduce our ecological footprint, make and use sustainable products, take responsibility for the environmental performance of the entire chain of which we are a part, and when our production and consumption of environmentally damaging products are becoming lesser. Moreover, God is the ultimate recycler: He will one day renew the earth instead of throwing it away.

¹⁷³ Revelation 21:1, Revelation 21:4

9. Working sustainably means we do not cause permanent damage to nature, we compensate for this damage, and we also improve, develop, restore nature. God appreciates it when we replant devastated areas, clear up waste, and purify water, soil, and air. God, however, denounces when we accept environmental problems. Accepting deforestation, land and water degradation, and global warming is a contempt for God who created nature perfectly.
10. Working sustainably means treating animals humanely. Whoever neglects the welfare of animals, disparages God. God created animals with feelings for a reason. Animal abuse is a sin.
11. Working sustainably means maintaining biodiversity. Diversity is inherent in every aspect of God's creation. God created the world with limitless natural diversity. Reducing biodiversity is eradicating God's creation.
12. Working sustainably means being mindful of our work's short- and long-term effects on nature. God does not let go of what He made because God is of the long term. To God, the earth is not a disposable commodity. "After me, the flood" is a shameful thought.
13. Working sustainably means that we can only do so if we believe in God. Environmental problems are signs that we are going beyond the boundaries God has set for His creation. Environmental problems are, above all, signs of our sinfulness. The root of environmental problems is our hearts. Without renewing our hearts, we cannot work to

make the world more sustainable. Faith in God is essential to solving environmental problems. From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work sustainably.

Questions

- 152 *Which Bible verse about sustainability do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working sustainably means (to me)?*
- 153 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working sustainably means?*
- 154 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working sustainably means? If so, which ones?*
- 155 *How would I personally describe what working sustainably means for Christians?*
- 156 *How would I describe concretely what working sustainably means for me?*
- 157 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that sustainability is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 158 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that sustainability is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 159 *To what extent is sustainability an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 160 *How do I experience the importance of sustainability in my work?*

Sustainable

- 161 *Do I work to bring about sustainability? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 162 *To what extent can I work sustainably in my work?*
- 163 *How often have I recently brought sustainability to my work?*
- 164 *How sustainably do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 165 *To what extent do I use sustainability as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 166 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more sustainable in my behavior?*
- 167 *To what extent do people I work with think I act sustainably in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 168 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act sustainably in my work?*
- 169 *How can I become and act more sustainably in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 170 *Which elements of working sustainably am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 171 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working sustainably?*



3. Service-oriented

1. Being a Christian in work is being of service. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being of service because Jesus is the Servant who came into the world to serve but not to be served, and who has shown Himself to be a perfect servant to us.¹⁷⁴ Work is a service, whether paid or unpaid. We are servants in our work. By serving humanity, we serve God.¹⁷⁵ We work in the service of God.¹⁷⁶ Service is the active form of love.¹⁷⁷ Serving with love is the consequence of faith.¹⁷⁸ When we serve people because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we are serving Jesus.¹⁷⁹ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to be service-oriented in our work.
2. Being service-oriented in our work means that we put other people's interests before ours. God gave us everything, so why should we be self-centered in our work? During His life on earth, Jesus was completely in the service of others and never had Himself in mind, so why should we? Jesus came to earth to serve; therefore, we live on earth to serve. When we put our individual interests above those of other people, we have made our own

¹⁷⁴ Matthew 20:26-28, Romans 15:3

¹⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 6:7

¹⁷⁶ Romans 6:13, Romans 6:22

¹⁷⁷ John 15:17

¹⁷⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:7-9

¹⁷⁹ Colossians 3:24

interests our god. Opportunism, selfishness, and egotism in our work do not fit with following Jesus in our work because we are then following our self-interest.¹⁸⁰

3. Being service-oriented in our work means that we see each person as a unique human being created by God. If we see another human being as an obstacle to overcome, a means to get what we want, or just neutral objects with which we must deal, then we cannot serve the other person because we put ourselves above them and thereby say to God that we consider ourselves more important than other human beings He also created.
4. Being service-oriented in our work means focusing not on being better than another but on doing good for another. Serving is about giving instead of taking, engaging instead of disengaging, granting instead of gaining, sharing instead of acquiring. If we are servants in our work, then we are fully focused on the interest of the other person, truly inclined to serve them.¹⁸¹
5. Being service-oriented in our work means sacrificing ourselves.¹⁸² We are all priests who are called to sacrifice¹⁸³ and thereby follow Jesus who sacrificed himself completely for us. Sacrifice means offering our time, talents,

¹⁸⁰ James 5:12

¹⁸¹ 1 Corinthians 10:24

¹⁸² Romans 12:1

¹⁸³ 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 2:9

and energy to God in our work, effacing ourselves, giving up our own agenda, needs, and interests.¹⁸⁴

6. Being service-oriented in our work means that we treat the other as a full human being, as a creation of God, created in His image. This excludes suppressing,¹⁸⁵ extorting,¹⁸⁶ blackmailing, undermining, subverting, belittling, denouncing, or even exterminating. Intimidation and manipulation are also unworthy of man and therefore unworthy of God. Whoever dishonors a person dishonors his maker, namely God.¹⁸⁷ That is why God considers it so bad when people are abused, corrupted, and raped in their work.
7. Being service-oriented in our work means that we reject child labor. That God as Father allows us as His children to work does not mean that we should allow children to work for us.
8. Being service-oriented in our work means that we make products and provide services that serve others. The value of our work comes not from putting in the hours but from the extent to which our goods or services serve others. Serving the neighbor is not doing what the neighbor desires but doing what they need; it is about what is good for the other rather than what the other wants. Therefore, products and services should meet actual and

¹⁸⁴ Philippians 2:7

¹⁸⁵ Proverbs 14:31

¹⁸⁶ Luke 3:13-14

¹⁸⁷ Proverbs 14:31

legitimate needs of people. Products and services that respond to greed or even stimulate them have no place here;¹⁸⁸ neither do products and services that increase instead of relieve people's burdens, that put people in distress or make them addicted.¹⁸⁹ Offering unsafe and unhealthy products and services is not helpful either.

9. Being service-oriented in our work means we make products and provide services that serve God. We resemble God but we should not imagine ourselves to be God or play God in our work. There is no room for technologies that aim to perfect life or to be omnipresent and omniscient like God. Neither is there room for products and services that encourage or profit from a way of life that is diametrically opposed to the Christian way of life. We must guard against the promotion of materialism, hedonism, and consumerism.
10. Being service-oriented in our work means bringing out the best in others. God seeks the best in us, so if we are His instrument, we should also bring out the best in others. In so doing, we activate and actualize the dignity of another.
11. Being service-oriented in our work means that when we are leaders, we are servant-leaders. We follow Jesus by being leaders in our work. Jesus is the servant-leader par

¹⁸⁸ Exodus 20:17, Deuteronomy 5:21

¹⁸⁹ Deuteronomy 15:1-11, Matthew 18:23-35

excellence.¹⁹⁰ That Jesus chose to lead His disciples means that Christians may also choose to lead in their work. Following Jesus as a leader means serving those we lead. Jesus is a model for leaders: He worked with His disciples, He inspired, taught, and cared for them, gave them their own responsibilities, trusted, protected, and corrected them, and He bore the final responsibility.

12. Being service-oriented in our work means that we put our power in our work at the service of God and humanity. Power is not a free pass but a responsibility. God is a role model on how to handle power in our work.¹⁹¹ God does not abuse His monopoly position. He is not narcissistic or power-hungry, but He continues to seek us out and offer grace. We have our power to harness under God's omnipotence. Even when we have so much power, we are all servants of God.¹⁹²
13. Being service-oriented in our work means that we are subservient to the people we employ. Just as God created a world in which people can achieve their full potential, so should employers create a work environment in which the employees can achieve their full potential. This means that employees are not encouraged to sin but to be provided with good working conditions¹⁹³ such as

¹⁹⁰ 1 Peter 4:1-2

¹⁹¹ Psalm 8

¹⁹² Ephesians 6:5-9

¹⁹³ Deuteronomy 24:6-22, Colossians 4:1

good pay,¹⁹⁴ safe working conditions, ample opportunities for development, and meaningful work. If it was God's will to protect Israel from exploitation, even slavery, what does God expect followers of Jesus Christ to do for those who suffer the same oppression, or worse, today?

14. Being service-oriented in our work means doing ample volunteer work. By volunteering generously, we show that God wants to work through us not only if it is paid or necessary work. By volunteering for others, we refer to all the work that Jesus voluntarily did for us. Commercialization and economization of volunteer work is at odds with this.
15. Being service-oriented in our work means that we give others room to serve us. We must allow service so others can serve. Serving and being served are two sides of the same coin.
16. Being service-oriented in our work means that we are not under the spell of money, goods, gains, and authorities. Avarice, greed, and selfishness hinder serving God¹⁹⁵ and humanity. God does not love being half-hearted.¹⁹⁶ He is Himself whole. Jesus says, for a reason, that by serving Mammon we cannot serve God. It is one or The Other. When we are in danger of becoming obsessed with

¹⁹⁴ Deuteronomy 24:15, Lukas 10:7, Colossians 4:1, James 5:4

¹⁹⁵ Matthew 6:24, 1 Timothy 6:9-10

¹⁹⁶ Colossians 3:23

money, we may think of the money, the currency, with which Jesus set us free.¹⁹⁷ When we are in danger of becoming obsessed with possessions, we may think of Jesus who left all His possessions for us. When we are in danger of becoming obsessed with ourselves, we may think of Jesus who freed us from ourselves by giving up Himself.

Questions

- 172 *Which Bible verse about being service-oriented do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what being service-oriented in work means (to me)?*
- 173 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what being service-oriented in work means?*
- 174 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what being service-oriented in work means? If so, which ones?*
- 175 *How would I personally describe what being service-oriented in work means for Christians?*
- 176 *How would I describe concretely what being service-oriented in work means for me?*
- 177 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that being service-oriented is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 178 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that being service-oriented is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*

¹⁹⁷ Matthew 20:28

Service-oriented

- 179 *To what extent is being service-oriented an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 180 *How do I experience the importance of being service-oriented in my work?*
- 181 *Do I work to bring about service-orientation? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 182 *To what extent can I be service-oriented in my work?*
- 183 *How often have I recently brought service-orientation to my work?*
- 184 *How service-oriented do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 185 *To what extent do I use being service-oriented as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 186 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more service-oriented in my behavior?*
- 187 *To what extent do people I work with think I am service-oriented in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 188 *To what extent do I think God thinks I am service-oriented in my work?*
- 189 *How can I become more service-oriented in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 190 *Which elements of being service-oriented am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 191 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about being service-oriented in work?*



4. Humble

1. Being a Christian in work is being humble. Emulating Jesus in our work means being humble because Jesus humbled himself for us.¹⁹⁸ Like his Father,¹⁹⁹ Jesus wants us to humble ourselves and not others.²⁰⁰ If Jesus wanted to be *the* Least despite His completeness, shouldn't we all the more want to be the least precisely because of our incompleteness?²⁰¹ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work humbly.
2. Working humbly means prioritizing the other person, wait our turn, and know our place. To work humbly means we do not try to get ahead, elbow aside others, or cut-off someone. To work humbly is to be meek²⁰²—just as Jesus was meek²⁰³—by not being demanding or stepping on anybody's toes.
3. Working humbly is being content with what we get. Always wanting to get more is arrogant because it suggests that we deserve more than we merit. Greed and avarice are also opposed to humility. Our wealth and possessions mean nothing to God; neither do productivity, prestige, and popularity.

¹⁹⁸ Philippians 2:8

¹⁹⁹ Isaiah 57:15; Ezekiel 21:26

²⁰⁰ Isaiah 57:15; Ezekiel 21:26

²⁰¹ Philippians 2:1-11

²⁰² Matthew 5:5, Galatians 5:22, Titus 3:2

²⁰³ Matthew 11:29

4. Working humbly means being modest. Even though we perform and earn much, we do not merit these ourselves; they are purely due to God's goodness, greatness, and grace. When we take pride in our work, we claim the honor that belongs to God.²⁰⁴ This is likewise true of boasting, grandstanding, and haughtiness.²⁰⁵ We are not pleased with ourselves but with God. Attributing success to ourselves leads to hubris that disrupts our relationship with God. To those who are inclined to boast, remember, nobody is better than the most menial of workers.
5. Working humbly means not allowing ourselves to be worshipped. If we allow this because of work, then we disrespect God and hinder Him from working in us. When we allow ourselves to be put on a pedestal, we elevate ourselves and bring down God. Working is not about us being glorified but God. Working is not about achieving name recognition but whether our name is known to God. Working is not about building towers of Babel but building altars to God.
6. Working humbly means considering the other to be more wonderful than ourselves.²⁰⁶ We are not humble, but haughty, when we think that we are better or know better than others or that we are superior and more important than others.²⁰⁷ When we look down on others we

²⁰⁴ Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 16:18-19, Proverbs 21:4, Proverbs 29:23

²⁰⁵ Romans 1:29-31

²⁰⁶ Philippians 2:3-4

²⁰⁷ Romans 12:3

cannot look up to God. When we pretend to be better than others at work, we are arrogant and demean God. It is arrogant to think that we are not arrogant.

7. Working humbly means listening to what others say. To listen to others is to esteem the other more highly than ourselves. When we do not listen attentively to what others say to us, we deprive God of the opportunity to speak to us through others.
8. Working humbly does not mean letting others walk all over us.²⁰⁸ Jesus also stood firm for His Cause. Being a Christian worker does not mean being a doormat or a lackey. If someone does walk all over us anyway, then let us be a doormat for them towards God.
9. Working humbly does not mean we disdain work. If Jesus humbled himself by leaving heaven and dying on the cross, why should we feel that any task or job to be too much and below our dignity?²⁰⁹ Though we humble ourselves a lot, we never stoop as low or as deeply as Jesus did to save us. Contempt for work is awful and dreadful. Even though others might look down on us and our work, the important thing is that we look up to God in our work.
10. Working humbly means being honest about ourselves. We are spiritually bankrupt and without God we cannot fulfill what we were created for. We are incapable of becoming happy and blissful by our own strength alone. If

²⁰⁸ Matthew 7:6

²⁰⁹ Philippians 2:5-8

we are spiritually poor, then we know how tempting it is to have an inflated view of ourselves and how difficult it is to correct that and to accept who we are.²¹⁰ Even though we are confirmed in our faith, our works are far from good.²¹¹

11. Working humbly means admitting our own weaknesses to others. By admitting mistakes, we show that we are not concerned with our own image and self-preservation but with our image and dignity with God. By showing our vulnerability, we show our dependence on God. By making ourselves small, we endorse that the purpose of our lives is not to make something great of ourselves. By confessing our slip-ups, we offer God the opportunity to put us back on the right track. By openly and frankly admitting our own faults, flaws, and lapses we show that no human being is without sin.
12. Working humbly means recognizing our own responsibility for failures. Though the pressure and temptation to do bad things are great, giving in to them is our own fault. Our work environment does not corrupt us; our own desires and weaknesses do.²¹²
13. Working humbly means speaking great of others. When we speak ill of, gossip or slander others, we are proclaiming that we are better than others.²¹³ Even God does not

²¹⁰ Matthew 5:3

²¹¹ Mark 10:18, Romans 3:12

²¹² James 1:13

²¹³ Ephesians 4:29, James 1:26, James 3:1-12

speaking ill of us when He has every reason and opportunity to do so.

14. Working humbly means being deeply in awe of nature. The magnificence of nature makes us small. God created nature in the first five days and man in only one day.
15. Working humbly means granting others prosperity. Jealousy obstructs humility. Working for Jesus frees us from the tyranny of comparing ourselves to others to feel good about ourselves. Even if the greatest sinner is the only one doing well, it is not our place to call God to account. As long as God saves our lives, we do not need to be jealous of others.²¹⁴
16. Working humbly does not mean not having a desire to be recognized, acknowledged, and valued. In fact, such desire is good. God created this deep desire in us for us to focus on Him, to want to be near and with Him. Our desire for significance is the great desire that only God can fulfill. The solution to avoiding pride is not to desire less, but to desire God more.
17. Working humbly means not idolizing work by thinking that we can save ourselves with it,²¹⁵ but that we know ourselves to be totally dependent on God's grace and blessing. God's two greatest competitors in our work are: the work and ourselves. The humbler we are, the more room we give God in our work.

²¹⁴ Romans 2:1

²¹⁵ Habakkuk 2:18

Questions

- 192 *Which Bible verse about humbleness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working humbly means (to me)?*
- 193 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working humbly means?*
- 194 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working humbly means? If so, which ones?*
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- 200 *How do I experience the importance of humbleness in my work?*
- 201 *Do I work to bring about humbleness? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 202 *To what extent can I work humbly in my work?*
- 203 *How often have I recently brought humbleness to my work?*
- 204 *How humbly do I do my work? How does it show?*

Humble

- 205 *To what extent do I use humbleness as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 206 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become humbler in my behavior?*
- 207 *To what extent do people I work with think I act humbly in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 208 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act humbly in my work?*
- 209 *How can I become and act more humbly in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 210 *Which elements of working humbly am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 211 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about work humbly?*



5. Just

1. Being a Christian in work is being just. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being just because Jesus is the Just One.²¹⁶ God is a God of justice.²¹⁷ We work justly because God is just,²¹⁸ God loves justice,²¹⁹ and God desires that we do justice.²²⁰ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work justly.
2. With every injustice in the world we do God an injustice. With much injustice, we do God much injustice. With all the injustice in the world, such as poverty, famine, illiteracy, loneliness, exploitation, and wars, we do God unimaginable injustice.
3. Injustice in the world is not God's fault but ours. Injustice undermines God's world; therefore, we have a responsibility to fight injustice and foster justice both in and outside of work.
4. By committing our work to the fight against injustice and the promotion of justice, we testify that God once created the world right and will one day make it right again.

²¹⁶ Luke 23:47

²¹⁷ Daniel 9:14, Romans 2:5, 2 Thessalonians 1:5, Hebrews 6:10, Revelation 16:5

²¹⁸ Psalm 146:7-9

²¹⁹ Psalm 37:28, Isaiah 61:8, Hebrews 1:9

²²⁰ Isaiah 10:1-2, Isaiah 56:1, Jeremiah 22:3; Matthew 23:23, Romans 6:18-20

Injustice can be a blessing in disguise if it brings us to its elimination.

5. Working justly means paying attention to the people who are being wronged. By being a bright light in our work, we can illuminate our environment to see where injustice is. To isolate ourselves from injustice is to avert ourselves from God.
6. Working justly means respecting each other's autonomy. Autonomy is necessary to be human, to exercise our free will, to have freedom of choice, and to decide for ourselves whether and how to follow Jesus. We are not to dictate, direct, command or program people to behave in particular ways. We deny God when we design people in our image.
7. Working justly means treating others humanely. The inhumane treatment of people is ungodly because people were created in God's image and likeness. It is inhumane if in our work we humiliate, ignore, belittle, or insult; if we pressure, exploit, or extort; or if we mishandle, mistreat, or mutilate anyone. A person is not a lemon to be squeezed. People are not disposable items to be discarded after use. That is why we should treat people in our work at least as well as we want to be treated ourselves, by other people and by God.²²¹
8. Working justly means treating others respectfully. Every person, as the image and likeness of God, has the right to

²²¹ Matthew 7:12

be treated in an honorable manner. “Honorably” means treating the other with reverence as if the other were Jesus Himself. God commands reverence for humanity because this is about reverence for God. Human rights are God’s rights.

9. Working justly means giving what someone is entitled to. Anything that is crooked is not straight. Doing justice in our work²²² means that we deliver quality in our work, we don’t do half a job, and we deliver our work on time. We work as if our lives depend on it.
10. Working justly means treating people equally. Because before God every person is of equal value,²²³ we treat every person equally,²²⁴ we do not judge based on a person’s standing,²²⁵ and we ban privileges in work.
11. Working justly means treating equal cases equally. In our work, we disapprove of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, religion, and origin because it discriminates where God does not. God never discriminates, not even at the gates of heaven, because heaven or hell is the result of our choice to believe or not in God.
12. Working justly means distributing benefits and burdens justly.²²⁶ Because of our fall from grace, there is scarcity,

²²² Micah 6:8

²²³ Romans 2:11

²²⁴ Leviticus 19:15

²²⁵ James 2:9

²²⁶ Leviticus 19:13, Luke 10:7, Titus 5:18, James 5:4

and this gives rise to justice. With just distribution of benefits and burdens, of joys and pains, and of profits and losses, we give what belongs to each. Whoever takes part in bringing about any benefit must also proportionately share in the benefit obtained. Profiting and bargaining may be acceptable; but exorbitant prices, wages, and profits are unacceptable. The only acceptable occupational excess is excess of talents.

13. Working justly means demanding a reasonable fee for paid labor. Reasonable compensation is not determined by supply and demand; thus, it is not market-based. Reasonable compensation is determined by what is a reasonable margin on the costs incurred. We may earn money according to God, but anything that we earn too much is something we unlawfully take from another. Price gouging is a scam and a swindle.
14. Working justly means compensating those we harm. What we do for the harmed we do to Jesus.²²⁷
15. Working justly means acting against those who commit injustice. To tolerate an unjust person is to accept and justify his injustice. To respond to an unjust person is to uphold justice, to allow neighborly love to speak for oneself, and to take care of the unjust. By being our brother's keeper, we reconcile justice, neighborly love, and service.
16. Working justly means protecting the health and safety of others and of ourselves. Those who expose others or

²²⁷ Matthew 25:40

themselves to unnecessary physical risks at work are attacking God's Holy Spirit. After all, our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit.²²⁸ Illness, disability, and death due to unnecessary risks at work are unworthy both of man and of God.²²⁹ We therefore must avoid dangerous and unhealthy work as much as possible.

17. Working justly means being justified first by faith. The best antidote to injustice in work is justification by faith in God. We can only really do justice in our work if we are justified by God.²³⁰ At the same time, we must ask ourselves whether the many occupational injustices are because of lack of belief or because believers have so little commitment to a more just world.

Questions

- 212 *Which Bible verse about justice do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working justly means (to me)?*
- 213 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working justly means?*
- 214 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working justly means? If so, which ones?*

²²⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

²²⁹ Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17

²³⁰ Romans 6:22

- 215 *How would I personally describe what working justly means for Christians?*
- 216 *How would I describe concretely what working justly means for me?*
- 217 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that justice is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 218 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that justice is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 219 *To what extent is justice an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 220 *How do I experience the importance of justice in my work?*
- 221 *Do I work to bring about justice? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 222 *To what extent can I work justly in my work?*
- 223 *How often have I recently brought justice to my work?*
- 224 *How justly do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 225 *To what extent do I use justice as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 226 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more just in my behavior?*
- 227 *To what extent do people I work with think I act justly in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 228 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act justly in my work?*

229 How can I become and act more justly in my work? How would I do this concretely?

230 Which elements of working justly am I going to bring more of in my next working day?

231 What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working justly?



6. Peaceful

1. Being a Christian in work is being peaceful.²³¹ Following Jesus Christ in our work means being peaceful because Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace.²³² Jesus is our Peace;²³³ in Him we have peace.²³⁴ God is the God of peace;²³⁵ He is the source of peace.²³⁶ God calls us to have peace with Him and with each other.²³⁷ That is why God sent His Son into the world to make peace.²³⁸ From this, we may make peace in and through our work. Our work provides opportunities to make peace. From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work peacefully.
2. Working peacefully means being peaceful in our work, not bridge-blowers but bridge-builders, not agitators but appeasers, not troublemakers²³⁹ but peacekeepers, not peace-breakers but peacemakers.²⁴⁰
3. Working peacefully means bringing peace in our work. Whenever possible, we bring concurrence where there is

²³¹ Romans 14:19

²³² Isaiah 9:5

²³³ Romans 5:1, Ephesians 2:14-17

²³⁴ John 16:33

²³⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 1 Corinthians 14:33

²³⁶ John 14:27, Romans 8:6, 2 Thessalonians 3:16, James 3:17

²³⁷ Mark 9:50, Romans 12:18, 1 Corinthians 7:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:13

²³⁸ Luke 2:14, Colossians 1:19-20

²³⁹ Matthew 5:22, Romans 13:13, Philippians 2:14

²⁴⁰ Matthew 5:9

disagreement, unity where there is discord, harmony²⁴¹ where there is strife, cooperation²⁴² where there is opposition, consultation where there is backbiting, order where there is disorder,²⁴³ rest where there is unrest, contentment where there is discontent, and reconciliation where there is conflict.

4. Working peacefully means seeking connection with others in our work. Just as God searches for inner and intimate connection with people, so must we search for connection with people by looking for what binds and brings together, from the awareness that we are all created by one God.²⁴⁴
5. Working peacefully means being constructive. We don't have to be destructive in our work because the devil already is.²⁴⁵ Work is not warfare, or playing hardball, or eat-or-be-eaten, or cutthroat competition. Work is making peace, developing relationships, being there for each other. Being constructive is also restoring nature, improving the disturbed relationship between man and nature, making whole what is broken in nature, and helping nature to flourish further.

²⁴¹ Romans 12:17

²⁴² Acts 4:32-35, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

²⁴³ 1 Corinthians 14:33

²⁴⁴ Malachi 2:10

²⁴⁵ 1 Peter 5:8

6. Working peacefully means not cursing in our minds people we work with but blessing them with the peace of Jesus Christ.²⁴⁶ Even in situations where peace seems impossible, we can expect a surprising peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.²⁴⁷
7. Working peacefully means having peace with ourselves. Even when people in our work perceive us to be a sucker, a loser, or a failure, we should accept ourselves because God accepts us just as we are.²⁴⁸ Our sense of self is in God. A low self-image is unnecessary because we have been created in God's image and likeness. We should not be despondent or feel inferior; on the contrary, we should feel contented with ourselves because God is at peace with us.
8. Working peacefully means having a clear conscience. By confessing our sins to God and asking forgiveness for them, we can come to terms with God. Through forgiveness God grants us peace. Walking around with unconfessed sins creates discontent.
9. Working peacefully means being self-controlled. Self-control is not being irascible or agitated, but being able to control our anger, irritation, and frustration.²⁴⁹ Self-control begins with the realization that God is tremendously patient with us. God has complete control of His

²⁴⁶ Proverbs 11:11, Luke 6:27, Romans 12:14, 1 Peter 3:9

²⁴⁷ Philippians 4:7

²⁴⁸ Romans 15:7

²⁴⁹ Proverbs 29:11, 1 Corinthians 13:5, James 1:19

powers and faculties.²⁵⁰ People who challenge our self-control have a great need for us to pass on to them God's love.

10. Working peacefully means creating a workplace in which we and others can have peace with God. Such a workplace is one in which faith in God can be expressed and practiced,²⁵¹ in which God may be present without fear and shame, and in which Jesus could work in the same manner.
11. Working peacefully means giving those who victimized us the opportunity to do so again. By offering a second chance or turning the other cheek,²⁵² we show our willingness to make peace and give the other person the opportunity to repent.
12. Working peacefully means experiencing peace from our relationship with God. Even in very hostile work environments we can experience peace. After all, peace is not dependent on the circumstances but on our relationship with God. At the heart of our work is this inner peace.

²⁵⁰ Psalm 103:8-10, Jonah 4:1-2

²⁵¹ Exodus 1:8-14

²⁵² Matthew 5:39

Questions

- 232 Which Bible verse about peacefulness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working peacefully means (to me)?
- 233 To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working peacefully means?
- 234 Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working peacefully means? If so, which ones?
- 235 How would I personally describe what working peacefully means for Christians?
- 236 How would I describe concretely what working peacefully means for me?
- 237 To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that peacefulness is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?
- 238 To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that peacefulness is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?
- 239 To what extent is peacefulness an important virtue and principle for me in my work?
- 240 How do I experience the importance of peacefulness in my work?
- 241 Do I work to bring about peace? Do I do so wholeheartedly?
- 242 To what extent can I work peacefully in my work?
- 243 How often have I recently brought peace to my work?
- 244 How peacefully do I do my work? How does it show?

Peaceful

- 245 *To what extent do I use peacefulness as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 246 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more peaceful in my behavior?*
- 247 *To what extent do people I work with think I act peacefully in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 248 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act peacefully in my work?*
- 249 *How can I become and act more peacefully in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 250 *Which elements of working peacefully am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 251 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about work peacefully?*



7. Compassionate

1. Being a Christian in work is being compassionate. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being compassionate because Jesus looked after people in need. Jesus is compassionate; He did various works of compassion;²⁵³ He bestows compassion upon us.²⁵⁴ Jesus calls us to be compassionate because God is compassionate.²⁵⁵ By showing compassion, we become the means by which God provides to the needy.²⁵⁶ Compassion touches the core of our being, our heart. From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work compassionately.
2. Working compassionately is evident in what we do for those who cannot reciprocate, in the help we offer to those who have nothing to offer back to us, and in the time, money, and attention we devote on those who can give us nothing.²⁵⁷ What we do in our work for the most unimportant, insignificant, and powerless person is what we do for God.²⁵⁸
3. Working compassionately means caring for the weak, the lowest, the vulnerable, the marginalized, disadvantaged,

²⁵³ Matthew 9:36, Matthew 12:18-21, Mark 1:40-41, Mark 8:1-3

²⁵⁴ Jude 1:21

²⁵⁵ Exodus 34:6, Psalm 68:6, Psalm 103:8, Psalm 145:14, Psalm 147:3, Matthew 5:7, Luke 6:36, Luke 10:29-37, 2 Corinthians 9:7, 1 Peter 3:8

²⁵⁶ Romans 9:15

²⁵⁷ 1 John 3:16-17

²⁵⁸ Matthew 25:40, Matthew 25:45

underprivileged, and the oppressed.²⁵⁹ In our work, we must take care of the poor, the undernourished and underdressed, the homeless, the sick, those with physical or mental disability, the mentally weak, the uneducated, the work-disabled, the unemployed, immigrants, foreigners, refugees, starters, pensioners, the dead, the bereaved, widows, orphans, the unborn, the children, future generations, animals, and many other groups. Jesus championed the weak and vulnerable, so why should we always choose the strong and the resilient in our work?²⁶⁰

4. Working compassionately means going to extremes to help others.²⁶¹ After all, Jesus also went to great lengths to help us.
5. Working compassionately means alleviating the needs around us. If Jesus were working in our place today, wouldn't He be committed to fighting hunger, poverty, inequality, for a cleaner environment, better quality education, and better access to health care? Would He not then fight for better working conditions and employment benefits in many countries, for the eradication of corruption and fraud, and for the curbing of consumerism and materialism?

²⁵⁹ Deuteronomy 15:7-11, Isaiah 58:7-10, James 1:27

²⁶⁰ Ephesians 4:32, James 2:13

²⁶¹ Matthew 5:38-41

6. Working compassionately means involving in the workforce people who have difficulty accessing the labor market. Just as God tries to embrace every human being, so should employers include people who, because of a handicap, disability, or disadvantage, have difficulty entering the labor market. After all, such people are fully part of the human community and therefore may and could contribute to that community.
7. Working compassionately means being sympathetic to needy people we encounter in our work. We cannot show compassion if we remain unmoved by the needs of others. If the suffering of others does not touch us, then we cannot show compassion. If we love God, then we sympathize with the one whom God loves and whose life is not going well; that is, every disadvantaged person in our work environment.
8. Working compassionately means carrying each other's burdens.²⁶² We are willing to take over somebody else's difficult work, to relieve and support them. Jesus also carried our burdens.
9. Working compassionately means being generous. Doing paid work allows us to give up some of our income for the needy and less fortunate. Giving up asks nothing of us if we realize that all our resources have been given by God. Thus, giving up some money or goods is not giving away

²⁶² Romans 15:1, Galatians 6:2

but passing them on to another.²⁶³ Generosity is not a free option for us; it is part of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Generosity is not giving what we have left over but giving what we have received first. By giving to God first, we acknowledge that God is the owner of everything that we have.²⁶⁴

10. Working compassionately means giving amply from the fruits of our labor.²⁶⁵ God makes our work fruitful, so it is appropriate that we offer the fruits of our labor to God. God disapproves of miserliness and avarice because we are then keeping the benefits of our talents to ourselves when those talents came from God. Besides, God is not stingy. He is generous, affluent, and munificent.²⁶⁶ He gives us much without our deserving it. He even gives us that which is dearest to Him: His Own Son. Jesus, in turn, gave the best He could give: His life.

Questions

252 Which Bible verse about compassion do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working compassionately means (to me)?

²⁶³ Leviticus 23:22, Corinthians 9:11

²⁶⁴ Numbers 18:13

²⁶⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:58

²⁶⁶ Deuteronomy 28:11, John 10:10, Romans 8:32, Ephesians 3:20-21

- 253 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working compassionately means?*
- 254 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working compassionately means? If so, which ones?*
- 255 *How would I personally describe what working compassionately means for Christians?*
- 256 *How would I describe concretely what working compassionately means for me?*
- 257 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that compassion is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 258 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that compassion is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 259 *To what extent is compassion an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 260 *How do I experience the importance of compassion in my work?*
- 261 *Do I work to bring about compassion? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 262 *To what extent can I work compassionately in my work?*
- 263 *How often have I recently brought compassion to my work?*
- 264 *How compassionately do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 265 *To what extent do I use compassion as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*

Compassionate

- 266 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more compassionate in my behavior?*
- 267 *To what extent do people I work with think I act compassionately in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 268 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act compassionately in my work?*
- 269 *How can I become and act more compassionately in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 270 *Which elements of working compassionately am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 271 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working compassionately?*



8. Merciful

1. Being a Christian in work is being merciful. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being merciful because Jesus is *the* Gift of Mercy. God's mercy is made visible through Jesus' death. By God's mercy we can live; He gives us His mercy.²⁶⁷ From the Holy Spirit we the heart, wisdom, and strength to work mercifully.
2. Working mercifully means judging leniently. Judging leniently means not paying attention to every little problem, or not magnifying the mistakes and failures of others, or not condemning their misdeeds outright. If we know our own sins, then we are lenient towards the sins of others. We know from experience how hard it is to do good and how easy it is to do bad. Every time we judge another in our work, God judges it. Every time we judge another too harshly, God condemns it.
3. Working mercifully means not condemning another. It is up to God to condemn people. We can only condemn their behavior, but only when there is irrefutable evidence, and we actually have a right to speak. Whoever unjustly condemns the behavior of another, condemns his own behavior.
4. Working mercifully means never cursing anyone or their behavior. It is only up to God to do this. Even if we were God's representatives or have the authority to dismiss,

²⁶⁷ John 1:14-17, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 2:5

punish, or censure someone at work, still we do not have the right to curse or damn anyone. Only God can deny anyone access to heaven.

5. Working mercifully means confessing our sins to one another. Confessing to each other in our work allows us to forgive each other's mistakes and strengthen the relationship between us.²⁶⁸
6. Working mercifully means punishing mildly. We punish mercilessly when we punish unfeelingly, without regard to the person and the circumstances. Every person is sinful; no one is virtuous. God does not punish us according to our sins. Those who are harsh have their hearts in the wrong place.
7. Working mercifully means seeing every injustice done to us at work as an opportunity to show our forgiveness. Without injustice, we cannot show our forgiveness. The greater the injustice, the greater the forgiveness we can show.
8. Working mercifully means forgiving each other's sins.²⁶⁹ If God wants to forgive our sins, why shouldn't we, in our work, forgive other people's sins? If we cannot forgive each other's sins, then why do we expect God to forgive ours?²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ James 5:16

²⁶⁹ Matthew 18:21, Mark 11:25-26, Luke 17:3-4

²⁷⁰ Matthew 6:12, Matthew 6:14-15

9. Working mercifully means forgiving each other's sins forever. This means we do not harp on it or continue blaming. God doesn't do that with our sins either; He washes away our sins. For God, once it is forgiven, it is eternally forgiven.²⁷¹
10. Working mercifully means giving people what they have not earned. Mercy is not only not giving what others deserve but also giving what others do not deserve. By God's grace we receive blessings that we have not earned. Therefore, to work mercifully is not just to punish less or not punish at all when it is deserved.
11. Working mercifully means answering evil with good. Whoever in their work retaliates evil with evil makes things from bad to worse and plays into the hands of the devil. Mercy, however, negates evil. We can counteract evil by doing what is eminently good, by sacrificing ourselves. This way we follow Jesus. The cross Jesus bore is God's mercy because Jesus is not the sinner but the One who makes the sacrifice. Therefore, we make a sacrifice when we don't make someone who wronged us pay but instead, we waive the damage and harm. We make a sacrifice when we don't break the relationship with someone who has abused us but instead, we intensify it; and when we forgive someone without a quid pro quo. God's grace includes all the good that God wants to give, without anything in return.

²⁷¹ Micah 7:19

12. Working mercifully means offering God's mercy. In the face of injustice done to us, we need not explode in wrath and revenge,²⁷² because injustice provides opportunities to extend the mercy of Christ. Forgiveness in our work not only provides forgiveness of evil but also provides the best response to evil, which is love, God's love.
13. Working mercifully means giving offenders another chance. By not taking immediate action against transgressors, we give them time and opportunity to repent themselves. God gives us a lifetime of repeated opportunities to repent our sins. So why should we give an offender no more than a second chance?
14. Working mercifully does not mean that we condone all sins. By acting against sins, we show where the line is drawn. God does not condone our sins either. He punishes those who are not in Christ and rebukes those who are.²⁷³
15. Working mercifully means we are willing to take responsibility for the failures of others. Jesus even took full responsibility of all our failures.
16. Working mercifully means working mercifully with everyone in our work. God is not constrained in bestowing grace. With God, grace abounds. His grace is available to all people of all times. Therefore, the grace or mercy we show should not be time-bound or exclusive.

²⁷² James 1:19

²⁷³ Romans 8:1, Hebrews 12:7-11

17. Working mercifully means God's mercy motivates us in our work. Our life and work are purely out of mercy. God's mercy, His inexhaustible source of endless goodness, is our motivation to unceasingly do good works.
18. Working mercifully means accepting ourselves in our work. Because God accepts us, we may accept ourselves.²⁷⁴ We don't have to feel inferior or disdainful of oneself. God loves each of us; He believes in us and values us. He accepts us in our faith, and He accepts our works that come from our faith, however imperfect we and our works may be. Therefore, God is the solution when we experience inferiority complex, burnout, or depression.

Questions

- 272 *Which Bible verse about mercifulness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for working mercifully means (to me)?*
- 273 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working mercifully means?*
- 274 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working mercifully means? If so, which ones?*
- 275 *How would I personally describe what working mercifully means for Christians?*
- 276 *How would I describe concretely what working mercifully means for me?*

²⁷⁴ Psalm 139:14, Ecclesiastes 5:18-19, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 5:29

Merciful

- 277 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that mercifulness is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 278 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that mercifulness is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 279 *To what extent is mercifulness an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 280 *How do I experience the importance of mercifulness in my work?*
- 281 *Do I work to bring about mercy? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 282 *To what extent can I work mercifully in my work?*
- 283 *How often have I recently brought mercy to my work?*
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- 287 *To what extent do people I work with think I act mercifully in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 288 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act mercifully in my work?*
- 289 *How can I become and act more mercifully in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 290 *Which elements of working mercifully am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*

Merciful

291 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working mercifully?*



9. Hospitable

1. Being a Christian in work is being hospitable. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being hospitable because Jesus preaches hospitality²⁷⁵ and God desires it of us.²⁷⁶ We must be hospitable toward each other.²⁷⁷ From the Holy Spirit we the heart, wisdom, and strength to work hospitably.
2. Working hospitably means being friendly in our work. Doing so, we are pointing to God's friendly face and follow Jesus as *the* Friend.²⁷⁸ Friendliness in our work is more than being polite to one another. We are friendly when we are not unapproachable but kind, not distant but engaging, not cold but warmhearted, not harsh but gentle.²⁷⁹
3. Working hospitably means addressing people by their names. Just like Jesus who as the Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name,²⁸⁰ so we call those with whom and for whom we work by their names. The other individual is not just a number but a person, a human being. Addressing people using their names recognizes the other as a

²⁷⁵ Matthew 22:1-4, Luke 14:12-14

²⁷⁶ Leviticus 19:33-34, Hebrews 13:1-2

²⁷⁷ Romans 12:13, 1 Peter 4:9

²⁷⁸ 2 Corinthians 6:4-6, Philippians 4:5

²⁷⁹ Proverbs 15:1

²⁸⁰ John 10:3

person and makes the contact personal. We abuse someone's name when we insult, besmirch, or ridicule it,²⁸¹ or when we flaunt it, steal it, or run away with it.²⁸²

4. Working hospitably means showing interest in each other. Showing interest in one another means empathizing and sympathizing, without it turning into a cross-examination. After all, God is eminently interested in us. We cannot be hospitable if we do not know our guests, the people in our work.
5. Working hospitably means being relationship oriented. God wants us to have a relationship not only with Him²⁸³ but also with the people around us, including those in our work. Our work is about building and maintaining relationships with people. These relationships are not practical, instrumental relationships but personal, collegial ones between persons. God is a personal God.
6. Working hospitably means interacting with each other when we meet. A work-related meeting is not only about arranging and delivering things; it is also about coming together and being together, where we are connected with each other and we relate to each other. A work meeting is not just working through agenda items but also investing in each other.

²⁸¹ 1 Corinthians 13:5

²⁸² Proverbs 17:5

²⁸³ Matthew 1:23

7. Working hospitably means collaborating with each other. To work is to collaborate and co-exist. Isolating ourselves or others is not how God envisions life.²⁸⁴ Besides, there are no isolation cells and bubbles in heaven. To work together is to invite the other to participate and to make sure that the other truly participates and continues to do so.
8. Working hospitably means building and maintaining communities. In a community, just like in a hospital, people feel safe, at home. In a community, people work on common goals that are based on common beliefs. Through the community spirit, we build communities in which we can live and work. A family that is not a community is unfamiliar; a work unit that is not a community is disunited; an organization that is not a community is disorganized; a society that is not a community is unsocial.
9. Working hospitably means seeking out other Christians in our work. Because we understand each other as equals in the same work environment, we can encourage and discuss problems with each other. Meeting regularly to pray and meditate about our work gives extra strength. Especially when there are only a few Christians in our workplace then it is even more important to know each other and to strengthen each other into being Christian

²⁸⁴ Genesis 2:18

workers. Every meeting with a Christian is an opportunity to discuss what it is to be a Christian in practice.

10. Working hospitably means encouraging diversity of identities. We not only must respect but also stimulate the identity of others. If God had not wanted diversity in identity, He would have created us all identically. Stimulating identity means giving the other the space to be themselves, to express themselves, and to develop and expand themselves. Stimulating identity is good only if we do not deny God's identity.
11. Working hospitably means supporting inclusiveness and inclusion in our work. Jesus did not write off or exclude anyone. He was open to everyone, welcomed everyone, and sought out those who were marginalized.²⁸⁵ We are hospitable in our work if we integrate rather than segregate minorities, if we include rather than exclude marginal groups, if we welcome rather than despise dissenters. We can be hospitable because we know what it is to be invited and welcomed, to be outside and then be let in, to be included and be safe.

²⁸⁵ Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; Luke 14:15-24, John 2:1-11; John 6:1-14, John 21:12-13

Questions

- 292 *Which Bible verse about hospitality do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working hospitably means (to me)?*
- 293 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working hospitably means?*
- 294 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working hospitably means? If so, which ones?*
- 295 *How would I personally describe what working hospitably means for Christians?*
- 296 *How would I describe concretely what working hospitably means for me?*
- 297 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that hospitality is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 298 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that hospitality is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 299 *To what extent is hospitality an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 300 *How do I experience the importance of hospitality in my work?*
- 301 *Do I work to bring about hospitality? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 302 *To what extent can I work hospitably in my work?*
- 303 *How often have I recently brought hospitality to my work?*
- 304 *How hospitably do I do my work? How does it show?*

Hospitable

- 305 *To what extent do I use hospitality as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 306 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more hospitable in my behavior?*
- 307 *To what extent do people I work with think I act hospitably in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 308 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act hospitably in my work?*
- 309 *How can I become and act more hospitably in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 310 *Which elements of working hospitably am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 311 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working hospitably?*



10. Truthful

1. Being a Christian in work is being truthful. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being truthful because Jesus is the Truth. If we love the Truth, we also love all truth. Because God is truthful, He loves it when we are truthful and work truthfully.²⁸⁶ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work truthfully.
2. Working truthfully means being pure at heart.²⁸⁷ We have a pure heart when we are sincere, when we truly love and genuinely want to serve God and humanity in our work. Genuineness means that we are undivided, that it comes from our whole being. Purity of heart does not come from the perfection of our will but from accepting God's will.
3. Working truthfully means not just saying what people want to hear. If we do this, we silence our God-given conscience.²⁸⁸
4. Working truthfully means being completely honest in what we say. We work honestly always and everywhere.²⁸⁹ God abhors dishonesty,²⁹⁰ falsity,²⁹¹ and lies.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ John 7:28, Romans 3:4

²⁸⁷ Matthew 5:8

²⁸⁸ Colossians 3:22

²⁸⁹ Ezekiel 28:16-18

²⁹⁰ Proverbs 20:10

²⁹¹ Deuteronomy 5:20, Proverbs 11:1

²⁹² Proverbs 12:22

Lying prevents other people from functioning fully as human beings and therefore as God's creatures.²⁹³

5. Working truthfully means telling the truth. Telling the truth is not only being honest about what we tell but also telling what the other person should know. God hates when we misrepresent, mislead, and deceive.²⁹⁴ To not tell the truth is to cheat and exploit others.
6. Working truthfully means telling nothing but the truth.²⁹⁵ Telling the truth is nothing but telling the only and whole truth. By telling too much, we mislead the other. By exaggerating, we mislead just as much.²⁹⁶
7. Working truthfully means being unprejudiced. Prejudices prevent a clear view. Prejudices prevent us from giving people a fair chance. We can be less prejudicial by seeing and continuing to see ourselves and every other person as creatures of God. Fortunately, God has no prejudices.
8. Working truthfully means working honestly. Working honestly is working without bribery, corruption, or other forms of undesirable influences. A bribe corrupts both the heart²⁹⁷ and the work. God does not take bribes or engage in favoritism.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ Leviticus 19:11, Leviticus 19:13

²⁹⁴ Exodus 20:16

²⁹⁵ Matthew 12:36

²⁹⁶ Matthew 5:37

²⁹⁷ Ecclesiastes 7:7

²⁹⁸ 1 Peter 1:17

9. Working truthfully means not falling for ostentation. God sees and takes us as we are.²⁹⁹ He doesn't like it when we make ourselves out to be better, prettier, and bigger than we actually are, either to Him or to others. This goes against God. Working truthfully is favoring the inside not the outside, the content not the packaging, the deeds not the (big) words.
10. Working truthfully means addressing injustice. Because we work as God's representatives, we have a duty to assess whether the things that happen in our work environment serve or hinder God's purposes. God calls upon us to act as prophets when we observe injustice.³⁰⁰ By addressing injustice in the workplace, we show that we disapprove of and combat evil.³⁰¹ We cannot tolerate evil because evil blasphemes Jesus Christ. We can however accept the one who commits the evil because Jesus Christ, despite our wickedness, also accepts us. Covering injustice under the cloak of love is therefore misplaced love. Addressing and reprimanding one another is neighborly love.
11. Working truthfully means contradicting and confronting others with the love of Jesus Christ. When we rebuke another, we do so as Jesus Christ would. Moreover, we re-

²⁹⁹ 1 Samuel 16:7

³⁰⁰ Amos 8:4-7

³⁰¹ Romans 1:32, Ephesians 5:11

alize that God can use us to speak to this person; therefore, it is quite offensive when we confront another with hostility or false accusations.

12. Working truthfully means being willing to blow the whistle. Jesus was *the* whistleblower: He blew the whistle about our brokenness. Sincere whistleblowers love the truth. However, we only blow the whistle externally after we have tried unsuccessfully to solve the problem internally. After all, God does not display publicly our own dirty laundry.

Questions

- 312 *Which Bible verse about truthfulness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working truthfully means (to me)?*
- 313 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working truthfully means?*
- 314 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working truthfully means? If so, which ones?*
- 315 *How would I personally describe what working truthfully means for Christians?*
- 316 *How would I describe concretely what working truthfully means for me?*
- 317 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that truthfulness is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*

Truthful

- 318 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that truthfulness is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 319 *To what extent is truthfulness an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 320 *How do I experience the importance of truthfulness in my work?*
- 321 *Do I work to bring about the truth? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 322 *To what extent can I work truthfully in my work?*
- 323 *How often have I recently brought the truth to my work?*
- 324 *How truthfully do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 325 *To what extent do I use truthfulness as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 326 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more truthful in my behavior?*
- 327 *To what extent do people I work with think I act truthfully in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 328 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act truthfully in my work?*
- 329 *How can I become and act more truthfully in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 330 *Which elements of working truthfully am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 331 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working truthfully?*



11. Faithful

1. Being a Christian in work is being faithful. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being faithful because Jesus is the Faithful One. Jesus is faithful to His Father, even in His death. God is faithful.³⁰² He is reliable and can be trusted in everything.³⁰³ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work faithfully.
2. Working faithfully means being faithful to God in our work, which means putting God's priorities first. God's fidelity to us helps us not to collapse under time pressure, peer pressure, and competitive pressure. His fidelity enables us to persevere. The motivation or ability to work does not come from ourselves, but from God.
3. Working faithfully means guarding against work possessing us and determining our self-worth, and against becoming more dependent on our work than on Christ.
4. Working faithfully means keeping our promises and not breaking them lightly.³⁰⁴ A deal is a deal, and a contract is a contract. After all, to break promises is to be unfaithful. If we do everything in the name of Jesus,³⁰⁵ then breaking the promises we made in His name is a serious matter; so is pressuring or tempting others to break their promises.

³⁰² Genesis 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:4, Philippians 1:6

³⁰³ Proverbs 3:5, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Titus 2:9-10

³⁰⁴ Matthew 5:37

³⁰⁵ Colossians 3:17

5. Working faithfully means not making promises that we cannot or do not intend to keep.³⁰⁶ By keeping promises, we signal God's reliability. However, if we fail to keep promises at work, how can our behavior convince people that God will fulfill His promise of eternal life?
6. Working faithfully means not putting ourselves in a position where others have power over us and could manipulate and corrupt us. We must prevent our dependence on others from getting in the way of our dependence on Jesus.
7. Working faithfully means being devoted to our work. For how can we be dedicated to our work and yet not be dedicated to God? If we do our work in the awareness of God's presence, then we can handle everything in our work from that fundamental devotion.
8. Working faithfully means loyally representing the interests of those for whom we work. We are loyal in carefully and lawfully handling the tasks and responsibilities assigned to us.³⁰⁷ After all, to shirk one's duties and responsibilities is to pass them off to God. We faithfully respect and manage the property of others.³⁰⁸ This does not include theft, embezzlement, dereliction of duties, fraud, corruption, and criminality.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Matthew 5:33-37

³⁰⁷ Matthew 24:45-51, Matthew 25:23

³⁰⁸ Titus 2:5, Titus 2:10

³⁰⁹ Exodus 20:15, Ephesians 4:28

9. Working faithfully means persevering in keeping our promises. Just when the pressure and temptation are strong, our faithfulness is proven when we remain steadfast and keep our promises. Jesus overcame His greatest and last enemy, the devil and death, through His faith in His Father.
10. Working faithfully means working diligently.³¹⁰ No one came into the world to be lazy.³¹¹ There is so much misery in the world that we need to be conscientious in our work. There is so much reason to be grateful to God for our salvation that we do need to be industrious. As disciples of Jesus, we are disciplined in doing good works. Since everything in work is temporary, we must make the best use of our time.³¹²
11. Working faithfully means others can confide in us. Just as we can trust Jesus, so should people be able to depend on us, trust us, and entrust us with something. Jesus' fidelity gives us the confidence to be faithful in our work.
12. Working faithfully means being obedient to authority. Faithfulness is wholeheartedly obeying superiors with legitimate authority.³¹³ God commands us to respect authority because there is no authority but from God.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ 2 Chronicles 15:7, Titus 2:14

³¹¹ Proverbs 24:30-34, Galatians 6:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:13

³¹² Romans 12:11, Ephesians 5:16

³¹³ Romans 13:1-7, Ephesians 6:5-6, Colossians 3:22, 1 Timothy 6:1, Titus 2:9

³¹⁴ Romans 13:1

Obedience to authority is limited by obedience to God. We are obedient to God in all things, and within this, we are obedient to those above us. God is the ultimate authority; we are ultimately accountable only to Him. Strikes and work stoppages are only allowed if continued work is sinful and negotiations have failed.

13. Working faithfully means faithfully following all government laws and regulations. In our work, we are not above the law but under its authority. It is a privilege to be able to comply with the law when the government is established by God.³¹⁵ The law has authority over us because of our awe of God.³¹⁶ It is not a matter of blind obedience but of enlightened submission. We do not compulsively comply with the law but obey it freely from our hearts. Paying taxes to the government we do sincerely.³¹⁷ If we do not comply with the laws in our work, how can we comply with God's laws?³¹⁸
14. Working faithfully means exceeding the requirements of governmental laws. Jesus offered a new perspective on the law: fulfilling the law is not about exactly adhering to rules but about pursuing the purposes for which God created the law. This means that we fulfill the laws of our

³¹⁵ John 19:10-11

³¹⁶ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

³¹⁷ Matthew 22:16-22, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25, Romans 13:1-7

³¹⁸ Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-15

government exceptionally well³¹⁹ by exceeding, not ignoring, the letter of the law. If we want to be faithful to the spirit of the law, then we must begin by learning what the relevant laws actually say and be inspired by the Holy Spirit. However, those who seek the edges of the law are seeking the devil.

Questions

- 332 *Which Bible verse about faithfulness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working faithfully means (to me)?*
- 333 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working faithfully means?*
- 334 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working faithfully means? If so, which ones?*
- 335 *How would I personally describe what working faithfully means for Christians?*
- 336 *How would I describe concretely what working faithfully means for me?*
- 337 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that faithfulness is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 338 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that faithfulness is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*

³¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 12:31

Faithful

- 339 *To what extent is faithfulness an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 340 *How do I experience the importance of faithfulness in my work?*
- 341 *Do I work to bring about faith? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 342 *To what extent can I work faithfully in my work?*
- 343 *How often have I recently brought faith to my work?*
- 344 *How faithfully do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 345 *To what extent do I use faithfulness as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 346 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more faithful in my behavior?*
- 347 *To what extent do people I work with think I act faithfully in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 348 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act faithfully in my work?*
- 349 *How can I become and act more faithfully in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 350 *Which elements of working faithfully am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 351 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working faithfully?*



12. Modest

1. Being a Christian in work is being modest. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being modest because on earth, Jesus was modesty personified. His modesty is an inspiration for how we live and work. Jesus also calls us to a moderate lifestyle.³²⁰ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work modestly.
2. Working modestly means keeping away from materialism and consumerism. We do not work to possess or consume as much as possible or to persuade or enable others to do so. God, not pleasure, is the highest good. Jesus chose to live in simplicity; He denounced attachment to wealth. Those who want to become rich will not only fall into temptation but have already fallen into temptation.³²¹
3. Working modestly means being sober. The more pomp and circumstance, or luxury and excesses, the more we advocate for a heaven on earth and the less this demonstrates a desire for heaven. Christians who maintain an economic system of opulence damage their testimony of devotion to God.³²² Simplicity is the simplest testimony.

³²⁰ Matthew 19:21

³²¹ Proverbs 11:24, 1 Timothy 6:9

³²² 1 Corinthians 14:40, 1 Timothy 2:9

4. Working modestly means using resources sparingly.³²³ God gives abundantly but He does not like to waste and squander. Wasting and squandering destroy what God has given us and make worthless what is valuable to God. Those who work efficiently have more resources to serve God.
5. Working modestly means not being motivated by status, honor, or fame.³²⁴ We do not work to be worshipped but work to worship God in it. After all, to work is to worship. Working is not about our honor, but God's honor; it is not about our glory, but God's glory. Whoever allows himself to be worshipped, pushes God away. Those who allow themselves to be glorified are being ungodly to God because our work is about glorifying Him. The only standing that matters is how we stand before God.³²⁵
6. Working modestly means being moderate in our dealings and actions. We may be ambitious, but we do not have to go to the extreme. Wanting to be the biggest, fastest, smartest or best is not a goal, neither is being the most popular, most productive, most profitable, and richest. Work is not a competition that revolves around winning and beating the opponents.³²⁶ Moderation means going for what is right, using our talents to the extent to which

³²³ Luke 15:8

³²⁴ 1 Corinthians 5:6

³²⁵ Exodus 20:3-6, Deuteronomy 5:6-10

³²⁶ Galatians 5:22

we have received them,³²⁷ and being content with what we achieve.

7. Working modestly means being content with what we earn. Everything we earn we get from God, so dissatisfaction with what we earn is ungratefulness towards Him.³²⁸ If God did not exist, then we would not earn anything. Those who constantly want to earn more offend God. We should realize this when we go on strike to earn more.
8. Working modestly means being satisfied with what we possess.³²⁹ All our possessions are on loan from God, so dissatisfaction is ingratitude towards Him. We are poor when our wealth cuts us off from relationship with God and people. We should use our wealth to glorify God.³³⁰ Wealth becomes a blessing when the poor and other needy share in it.

Questions

352 Which Bible verse about modesty do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working modestly means (to me)?

353 To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working modestly means?

³²⁷ Romans 12:3

³²⁸ 1 Timothy 6:6

³²⁹ Hebrews 13:5

³³⁰ 1 Chronicles 29:1-21

Modest

- 354 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working modestly means? If so, which ones?*
- 355 *How would I personally describe what working modestly means for Christians?*
- 356 *How would I describe concretely what working modestly means for me?*
- 357 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that modesty is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 358 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that modesty is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 359 *To what extent is modesty an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 360 *How do I experience the importance of modesty in my work?*
- 361 *Suppose I was allowed to take with me all my earthly possessions to the afterlife, would I still be not greedy and materialistic?*
- 362 *Do I work to bring about modesty? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 363 *To what extent can I work modestly in my work?*
- 364 *How often have I recently brought modesty to my work?*
- 365 *How modestly do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 366 *To what extent do I use modesty as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 367 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more modest in my behavior?*

Modest

368 *To what extent do people I work with think I act modestly in my work? What have they said to me about this?*

369 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act modestly in my work?*

370 *How can I become and act more modestly in my work? How would I do this concretely?*

371 *Which elements of working modestly am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*

372 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working modestly?*



13. Testimonial

1. Being a Christian in work is being testimonial.³³¹ Following Jesus Christ in our work means testifying to the gospel because Jesus did and He calls on us to do the same.³³² From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work testimonially.
2. Working testimonially means believing in the importance of testimonials. Faith in God and acceptance of Jesus make a world of difference and make a difference in the world. Our testimony makes a difference in our workplaces.³³³ If we doubt this, then we misunderstand the difference that the gospel makes in the world. If Christians in their work were not different from non-Christians, then being a Christian means nothing.³³⁴ We are a blessing to others in our work if we enable others to see and experience something of Jesus Christ.³³⁵ Following Jesus has visible consequences for our work.
3. Working testimonially means believing that we can be witnesses at work. The workplace is the perfect place to testify about Jesus. Our behavior maybe for our colleagues the only Bible they will ever read. That's why we do not live inside a "bible bubble". It is precisely in the

³³¹ Romans 15:9

³³² Acts 1:8, Acts 20:24

³³³ Matthew 5:13-14

³³⁴ Luke 6:43-45

³³⁵ 2 Corinthians 9:11-13

workplace, with all the temptations, pressures, and uncertainties, where we can show what following Jesus means.

4. Working testimonially means testifying in our work. Testifying in our work does not mean talking about our faith all the time; it means demonstrating our faith in who we are and what we do. If colleagues we work with closely do not know that we are Christians, then this is a missed opportunity; a missed opportunity to show how wonderful and powerful God is and what faith in Him really means.
5. Working testimonially means working according to the principles of God's Kingdom. Even if our work does not get us heaven on earth, we can show something of heaven on earth through our work.
6. Working testimonially means that we are transparent enough in our work to allow something of God's light to come through. Our work reveals our close connection with Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.³³⁶ We don't advertise good works, but we do show them to "sell" the gospel.³³⁷
7. Working testimonially means being role models. In our work, we may convey through our exemplary behavior the example Jesus gives us. If we are His representatives,

³³⁶ John 3:20-21

³³⁷ Matthew 5:16

then we represent Him in our actions. If Jesus is an example to us, then we may follow Him by being an example of His image to others.³³⁸

8. Working testimonially means ensuring that others have nothing bad to say about us because this could prevent them from having a pure view of God.³³⁹
9. Working testimonially means working in such a manner that non-Christians can respect us for our Christian faith,³⁴⁰ if at all possible, appreciate us for our Christian beliefs, and, ideally, be converted to the Christian faith.
10. Working testimonially means seeking out situations where there is darkness and destruction.³⁴¹ We can only be a shining light in dark places. We can only be salting salt in places where there is decay.³⁴² We are not called to withdraw from our work and isolate ourselves from society to live purely and blamelessly.³⁴³ For God, making a difference in the world is more important than to keep our hands clean. We must be careful, however, not to seek out situations where our light is extinguished or we ourselves become depraved.³⁴⁴ The darker and more malicious the workplace, the more god-fearing and godly

³³⁸ Titus 2:7

³³⁹ Titus 2:8

³⁴⁰ 1 Peter 2:15

³⁴¹ 1 Peter 2:12

³⁴² Romans 2:19

³⁴³ 1 Corinthians 5:9-10

³⁴⁴ Matthew 5:13-14

people are needed there. Praise be to those who continue to bear witness to God in a dark and malevolent work environment.

11. Working testimonially means believing that God can work anywhere. If we think that our workplace is too secular, too hostile to the faith, and too full of greedy, hedonistic, and self-centered people, then this may be exactly where the cross of Christ stands. God's grace can bring reconciliation and justice to any workplace; to any factory, office building, boardroom, or shack; to any casino, coffee shop, or brothel.
12. Working testimonially means realizing that ideal workplaces do not exist. Some workplaces are more challenging than others to be witnesses of God. But even in such workplaces, we can still be faithful witnesses of God, both in the quality of our presence and our work.
13. Working testimonially means sharing successes and setbacks. By sharing our success with others, we offer them the opportunity to admire the goodness of God. By sharing our setbacks with others, we offer God the opportunity to help us through the others.
14. Working testimonially means speaking openly about God.³⁴⁵ God creates opportunities in our work to speak about His gospel, so let us then speak openly about Him.

³⁴⁵ Colossians 4:6

At work, we are not ashamed of our faith.³⁴⁶ When people ask what motivates and inspires us in our work, we are open and testify about who God is and what God means to us.³⁴⁷ In doing this, we must realize that the more we speak about God, the more others will scrutinize whether our behavior is consistent with what we say. We disgrace the name of Christ when we speak much about Him but neglect our work at the same time.

15. Working testimonially means not being different at work for the sake of being different. Witnessing is not about being different from non-Christians, but about being in the Other and strongly desiring that everyone else believes in the Other as well. Our difference from non-Christians is that our ultimate responsibility is to God, not to shareholders, customers, or anyone else. Our mission, our exalted and holy purpose, is redemption by and reconciliation with God, and not making a profit or satisfying human needs. For our work, experiencing the newness of life means integrating redemption and reconciliation into our work.³⁴⁸
16. Working testimonially means seeing everyone in our work as God's creation. Christians are distinguished by how they see and treat people they work with. The fellow human being is not a being that is primarily looking for

³⁴⁶ 2 Timothy 1:7-8

³⁴⁷ 2 Timothy 1:7-8

³⁴⁸ Matthew 5:24

pleasure and happiness. The fellow human being is God's creation with a soul. Nor is the fellow human being an instrument, obstacle, means of production, expense, or source of money.

17. Working testimonially means not pretending to be better at our work than others are. Being a Christian worker is not about competing to be better than non-Christians. The goal is not to be better, but to be saved by grace and thereby do good. Therefore, our work is not better than others'. It is through God's grace that we are even aware of our wickedness.
18. Working testimonially means not opposing other believers or unbelievers. Every human being is created in God's image. We can learn about God from every human being in our work. If we think this is not the case, we are arrogant and misguided in placing ourselves above other persons.

Questions

- 373 *Which Bible verse about testimony do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working testimonially means (to me)?*
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- 376 *How would I personally describe what working testimonially means for Christians?*

Testimonial

- 377 *How would I describe concretely what working testimonially means for me?*
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- 387 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more testimonial in my behavior?*
- 388 *To what extent do people I work with think I act testimonially in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 389 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act testimonially in my work?*

Testimonial

390 How can I become and act more testimonially in my work? How would I do this concretely?

391 Which elements of working testimonially am I going to bring more of in my next working day?

392 What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working testimonially?



14. Forbearing

1. Being a Christian in work is being forbearing. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being forbearing because Jesus is forbearing. He bore His cross patiently, suffered willingly. Suffering in our work gives us the opportunity to follow in Christ's footsteps,³⁴⁹ to show our love,³⁵⁰ and to point to God the Father who is forbearing.³⁵¹ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work forbearingly.
2. Working forbearingly means realizing that we can suffer in many ways because of our work.³⁵² We may suffer because our work is boring, humiliating, or exhausting. We may be underpaid, threatened, or discriminated against. Our work may be compulsory or under high performance pressure. We may be abused, oppressed, or repressed. We may be fired and be unemployed for long periods of time. We may be injured and psychologically and physically drained by our work. In addition, we may be pressured to violate God's principles, or even be opposed or be eliminated because of our faith.
3. Working forbearingly means that in our suffering we do not have to doubt God and our faith in Him. God does not

³⁴⁹ 1 Peter 2:21

³⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians 13:4

³⁵¹ Luke 18:7, Romans 2:4, Romans 3:25, 2 Peter 3:9

³⁵² 2 Corinthians 6:4-5

promise that faith in Him and following Jesus will lead to happiness and prosperity in our work.³⁵³ If faith in God depends on Him rewarding our faith, then our faith is superficial at best and empty at worst. God makes use of all sorts of things to work for His Kingdom, but not necessarily for our prosperity.³⁵⁴

4. Working forbearingly means that through suffering we profess God. Suffering at work for the sake of God is to profess Him; it shows the price we are willing to pay to follow God and what He means to us. Suffering at work may therefore be seen as a privilege to honor God because of our faith and through our suffering.³⁵⁵
5. Working forbearingly means accepting God's punishment of humanity because of the Fall. By willingly suffering in our work, we acknowledge our brokenness and that of the world.
6. Working forbearingly means not becoming rebellious when we suffer. We don't have to grumble³⁵⁶ and curse at work because then we curse at God. If we blame God for our pain and setbacks, we are using God's name in vain. Frustrated and irritated people are not ambassadors of God's appealing and comforting gospel.
7. Working forbearingly means not complaining when we suffer. If Jesus did not complain when He carried His own

³⁵³ 1 Peter 4:12

³⁵⁴ Romans 8:28

³⁵⁵ Acts 5:41

³⁵⁶ Philipians 2:14-16

cross and faced His death, where do we get the right and the sense to whine and whimper about our work?³⁵⁷ Those who moan and groan about work are dissatisfied with their work and do not accept that God is leading us.³⁵⁸ Moreover, God can use our suffering to make us better.³⁵⁹ If we would file a complaint or lawsuit in our work, then let us do so only if we feel supported by God and we can show forbearing toward the defendants during and after the process.

8. Working forbearingly means renouncing ourselves. Even if the work becomes so unbearable, we may know that the cross that we carry is nothing compared to the one Jesus carried. We may look up to this cross when we look up to our work. If we have won the grand prize in life, then the devil has been defeated, and we can survive any setback in our work. If we must carry a cross in our work, then we should know that in doing so we are following Jesus and denying ourselves.³⁶⁰
9. Working forbearingly means that in our suffering we acknowledge that we are infused with God's grace³⁶¹ and strength to endure the suffering. Moreover, when our suffering at work seems threateningly heavy, we should

³⁵⁷ Ephesians. 6:7, Colossians 3:23

³⁵⁸ Philippians 2:14

³⁵⁹ Job 23:10, Job 23:14, Matthew 5:10-12, Romans 8:18, Philippians 1:29, Philippians 3:10, 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 4:12-16

³⁶⁰ Luke 9:23

³⁶¹ Matthew 5:10

know that Jesus wants to share in these burdens and pains or even to bear them by Himself.

10. Working forbearingly means being resigned to the suffering that others cause us. We do not need to re-act angrily, bitterly, and vindictively when others cause us to suffer.³⁶² By resigning ourselves to the injustice done to us, we bear witness to the peace we find with God. Our heavenly happiness and bliss do not depend on our earthly well-being and prosperity. By resigning ourselves to the injustice done to us, we can testify to neighborly love and service as we work to address the injustices of others rather than ourselves.
11. Working forbearingly does not mean being passive in the face of our suffering. If in our work we are treated unjustly and even abused, know that God supports us to fight this. God suffers with every injustice and God fights with everyone who fights injustice.
12. Working forbearingly does not mean seeking suffering in our work. To seek suffering in or at work is not to profess faith in God, for then the suffering is not for the sake of God but of ourselves. God does not ask for self-chastisement. If we do not have to suffer in our work, then we must ask ourselves whether we are sufficiently professing our faith. If we don't have to suffer in our work, then we have to fight to make sure that our faith doesn't weaken.

³⁶² 1 Peter 2:21

13. Working forbearingly means we may look to Jesus when our suffering threatens to become too much. Even if the hostility in our work is so great, we should know that Jesus faced even greater hostility but that He endured and withstood it.³⁶³

Questions

- 393 *Which Bible verse about forbearance do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working forbearingly means (to me)?*
- 394 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working forbearingly means?*
- 395 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working forbearingly means? If so, which ones?*
- 396 *How would I personally describe what working forbearingly means for Christians?*
- 397 *How would I describe concretely what working forbearingly means for me?*
- 398 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that forbearance is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 399 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that forbearance is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*

³⁶³ Hebrews 12:3

Forbearing

- 400 *To what extent is forbearance an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*
- 401 *How do I experience the importance of forbearance in my work?*
- 402 *Do I work to bring about forbearance? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 403 *To what extent can I work forbearingly in my work?*
- 404 *How often have I recently brought forbearance to my work?*
- 405 *How forbearingly do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 406 *To what extent do I use forbearance as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 407 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more forbearing in my behavior?*
- 408 *To what extent do people I work with think I act forbearingly in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 409 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act forbearingly in my work?*
- 410 *How can I become and act more forbearingly in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 411 *Which elements of working forbearingly am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 412 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working forbearingly?*



15. Joyful

1. Being a Christian in work is being joyful. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being joyful because Jesus is our source of joy.³⁶⁴ Jesus knew joy³⁶⁵ and He gives us joy.³⁶⁶ God is our greatest joy.³⁶⁷ From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work joyfully.
2. God has made us in such a way that we can enjoy; that we can enjoy the beauty that work offers and the beauty that we bring about in work.³⁶⁸ We may look to our work for the enjoyment that God gives us about our work.³⁶⁹ Our work itself does not give us satisfaction and enjoyment, but glorifying God in our work give us satisfaction and enjoyment.
3. Working joyfully means enjoying our work. God enjoyed His creation when He had made it and saw that it was perfect.³⁷⁰ Therefore, we are ungrateful if we do not enjoy His creation, His world, and what He provides to our work, even if the world is imperfect after the Fall. If we do not enjoy what God gives us in our work, then that is ungratefulness toward God. And if we only begin to enjoy

³⁶⁴ John 17:13

³⁶⁵ Luke 10:21

³⁶⁶ John 15:11

³⁶⁷ Psalm 16:11, Psalm 43:4, Psalm 92:5, 1 Peter 1:8

³⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 12:18

³⁶⁹ Matthew 5:12, 1 Timothy 6:17

³⁷⁰ Genesis 1:31, Psalm 104:31

our work after the fact, then we have begun to enjoy it too late.

4. Working joyfully means enjoying what God gives. We may rejoice that God puts us to work, that He needs us, that He has confidence in us.³⁷¹ Therefore, we are not concerned with what pleasures in our work we miss, but we enjoy what we do have received from God.
5. Working joyfully means glorifying God.³⁷² God can only enjoy our work if we ourselves enjoy it; and we can only enjoy our work if we realize that God enjoys it. We glorify God by enjoying who God is and what He gives us. By enjoying God in our work, we glorify Him. By rejoicing in God during our work, we glorify Him. We are truly happy in our work when we are blessed, when we work as God intends work to be. Working with God is already a joy in itself.³⁷³ When we enjoy our work and its fruits that praise God's glory, this is a foretaste of the new heaven and earth.
6. Working joyfully means doing even the most joyless work with joy. Our joy is not based on circumstances, but on the presence of God in our lives. With joy we may obey laws and rules,³⁷⁴ work overtime, do the nastiest and

³⁷¹ Matthew 5:13-14, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 28:19, Mark 12:31, Romans 12:16, Galatians 5:13, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 3:15, 1 Peter 4:10

³⁷² Ecclesiastes 2:24

³⁷³ Psalm 73:28

³⁷⁴ Psalm 119:111

most obtuse work. No matter how unproductive our work may seem, God is with us and is present in our work, and He gives us a joy that even the worst working conditions cannot completely defeat. We may also rejoice at the incomplete things in our work that God completes.

7. Working joyfully means that suffering in our work gives us joy. When we show joy in our suffering, we show that we can and want to carry our cross and that we do not have to do it alone but with Christ. Enduring suffering gives us joy, pure joy even.³⁷⁵ Doing our work out of and for the love of God, no matter how heavy and painful this work is, gives relief and joy. The heavier and more painful our work is, the louder our joy.
8. Working joyfully means working cheerfully.³⁷⁶ If cheerfulness makes life a celebration,³⁷⁷ then this also applies to our work. We are not joyful if we are always gloomy and grumpy when doing our work. Neither are we cheerful if our joy is not wholehearted, if it is contrived, and artificial. By being cheerful we show that we have been revived.
9. Working joyfully means bearing fruit. The Holy Spirit fills us with joy and is our joy.³⁷⁸ To show joy at work is therefore a fruit of the Holy Spirit, as is enjoying the fruits of

³⁷⁵ Luke 6:22-23, James 1:2, James 1:12

³⁷⁶ Romans 12:8

³⁷⁷ Proverbs 15:15

³⁷⁸ Acts 13:52

our work. If we can no longer enjoy the fruits of our work, then we are its slaves rather than its master.

10. Working joyfully means witnessing God's nearness.³⁷⁹ By doing our work with joy, we show our gratitude to God and to everyone in our work.³⁸⁰
11. Working joyfully does not mean that always whistling and glowing while doing our work. When there is suffering or serious problems then seriousness is appropriate. But even then, we may find joy in the awareness that God is there and that He carries us.
12. Working joyfully means receiving a three-fold gift from God: that we can work, that we can enjoy, and that there is in the work reason to enjoy.³⁸¹ Working for God makes us happy in the sense that we get to experience God's constant provision for our needs.
13. Working joyfully means being thankful. Because joyful work is a three-fold gift from God, we may be grateful to God for giving it to us. Gratefulness is an abiding focus on God, searching for what He gives to us in our work. Gratitude is the fuel for our joy. Gratitude helps us to get out of our victim role and to be freed from the focus on what we lack.³⁸²
14. Working joyfully means wanting to do good works. Our salvation creates joy that makes us eager to serve God

³⁷⁹ Philippians 4:4-5

³⁸⁰ Ecclesiastes 3:22, Ephesians 6:5-9, Colossians 3:23

³⁸¹ Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

³⁸² Philippians 4:6

and humanity. The more we seek our joy in God, the more strength we receive to do good, and the more joyful we become when our work bears fruit.³⁸³

Questions

- 413 *Which Bible verse about joyfulness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working joyfully means (to me)?*
- 414 *To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working joyfully means?*
- 415 *Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working joyfully means? If so, which ones?*
- 416 *How would I personally describe what working joyfully means for Christians?*
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- 418 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that joyfulness is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 419 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that joyfulness is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
- 420 *To what extent is joyfulness an important virtue and principle for me in my work?*

³⁸³ Nehemiah 8:11

Joyful

- 421 *How do I experience the importance of joyfulness in my work?*
- 422 *Do I work to bring about joy? Do I do so wholeheartedly?*
- 423 *To what extent can I work joyfully in my work?*
- 424 *How often have I recently brought joy to my work?*
- 425 *How joyfully do I do my work? How does it show?*
- 426 *To what extent do I use joyfulness as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 427 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more joyful in my behavior?*
- 428 *To what extent do people I work with think I act joyfully in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 429 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act joyfully in my work?*
- 430 *How can I become and act more joyfully in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 431 *Which elements of working joyfully am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 432 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working joyfully?*



16. Hopeful

1. Being a Christian in work is being hopeful. Following Jesus Christ in our work means being hopeful because Jesus is *the* hope, and He offers hope.³⁸⁴ The fact that Jesus is risen and we are with Him infuses our life, and therefore also our work, with hope. Following Jesus means that we can be hopeful in and about our work. From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work hopefully.³⁸⁵
2. Working hopefully means knowing that God is out there. When there is darkness at work, know that God is light; when there is much sin, know that God is good and perfect; when we are afraid, know that God's children are safe with Him.³⁸⁶ When we are in danger of succumbing to temptation and pressure, we may draw strength from the knowledge that God lives. When we look forward to our work, know that God goes along and works with us. We never work alone, but God always works with us.
3. Working hopefully means knowing that God sees everything.³⁸⁷ God sees everything in our work, even when no

³⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:19, 1 Timothy 1:1

³⁸⁵ Romans 15:13

³⁸⁶ Psalm 27:1, 1 Peter 3:13-14

³⁸⁷ Proverbs 15:3

one else sees it. Our undiscovered gifts, our unappreciated work, and our forgotten names all matter. They matter to God. They are part of His masterpiece.

4. Working hopefully means knowing that God provides everything. Where the world is dominated by uncertainty, may we be ensured by God. Where the world is dominated by distrust, we may trust in God.³⁸⁸ Where the world is dominated by change, may we know that God is stable. God in His infinite wisdom chooses to work in this world through instruments, and these are people, us. If we are an instrument for God, then God will use us where He wants to use us, make us work where He wants us to work, help us where He wants to help.
5. Working hopefully means knowing that God gives strength.³⁸⁹ We do not get strength from ourselves or from those around us, but from God, who is the only true source of strength. Our work is not the result of our own efforts, but God's work in us gives us our energy. What we do in work is an expression of God's redemptive work through Christ. By God's grace we have the power to accomplish all that God has in store for us in Christ, who declares that nothing is impossible for us.³⁹⁰ When we give God power over our work, it gives us power to do our work.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 7:24-27

³⁸⁹ Psalm 46, Philippians 4:13

³⁹⁰ Matthew 17:20, Luke 18:27

³⁹¹ Colossians 1:29

6. Working hopefully means knowing that God is working. God continues to work in and among us until His work is completed, which is when the day Jesus Christ returns. Only upon Christ's return will God's work be complete. God is always at work redeeming His creation from the effects of the Fall.³⁹²
7. Working hopefully means knowing that God will take over our work. If we do our best to make the most of what God gives us, then we may surrender our work to God. If our work is of God, then He will take over our work. God does not let go of His work. When we are an instrument in God's hands, we are liberated and at peace because the consequences of our work are in God's hands.³⁹³ We need not be anxious in or about our work because we can place all that concerns us in God's hands.³⁹⁴ Working is not hoping for the best; it is knowing that our work is blessed.
8. Working hopefully means knowing that God will make our work pay off. God's promise that our work will bear fruit gives us confidence that our work is worthwhile even in the most adverse situations. We can rarely see in advance how God can use our work to fulfill His promises, but God's power goes far beyond what we can see.

³⁹² Romans 8:28

³⁹³ 1 John 4:15-18

³⁹⁴ Matthew 6:34

9. Working hopefully means knowing that God can change everything for the better. God can fix our weaknesses and forge our failures to accomplish what He Himself has prepared for us who love Him. We need not become despondent even if our work fails because we may surrender to God's promise that He transforms all things to good.³⁹⁵ God can use even ungodly work for His and our neighbors' glory. He can make valuable valueless work. God is not only a guardian or custodian of faith; He can provide salvation and renewal when we fail in our work.
10. Working hopefully means knowing that salvation is with God. We need not despair when in our work we fail in the eyes of the people we work with; we are who we are as children of God.³⁹⁶ However, we should not blame our failure as being God's failure. Self-reproach is also out of place. Self-reproach is a disregard for God for we should know that God works in us and through us. Hardships and failures can still spoil our work, but God's response is not condemnation but redemption. Even if we may be bound to our work, in Jesus we are free.
11. Working hopefully means knowing that God will put an end to all the injustice in our work. Injustices and wrongdoings in our work are temporary. This knowledge is a source of both comfort and challenge. It is a source of comfort because we are not responsible for correcting

³⁹⁵ Romans 8:28

³⁹⁶ Romans 8:14-17, Romans 8:38-39

every evil in our workplace and because the evil we suffer at work is not the ultimate reality of our work. Evil is a source of challenge because we are called upon to resist evil within our spheres of influence. All evil will be completely annihilated; therefore, we need not become dejected and despairing about all the sins at work, for these are only temporary.³⁹⁷ In heaven there is no injustice and unfairness, no trickery and deceit, no waste and pollution, no power struggle and competition.³⁹⁸

12. Working hopefully means knowing that one day everything will be restored. We do not have to be pessimistic but rather optimistic. Because one day Jesus will come back to this earth and make everything whole. Moreover, if God had been a pessimist, he would not have given Adam and Eve a second chance after their fall. The more there is evil and injustice at work, the more we can look forward to the new heaven and new earth where there will be no evil and injustice at all.³⁹⁹ The evil we see around in our workplaces points us to God's goodness and His grace. We may be working with our feet in the mud, but with our heads in heaven. God's curse of deterioration and decline entreats us not to think that we are immortal and do not need God. Our brokenness is good because it shows our badness and makes us dependent

³⁹⁷ 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

³⁹⁸ Revelation 21:1, Revelation 21:4

³⁹⁹ Acts 3:21, Romans 8:19-21

on God who is perfectly good. To the extent that things in the world are broken and we help fix them, they point to God. God will one day renew and perfect His entire creation, including work, in Jesus Christ.⁴⁰⁰ Christ reconciles all things to Himself.⁴⁰¹ This means that our work can contribute to the redemption of all life. In fact, work is an important means of expressing that redemption. We may live and work in the knowledge of Jesus' return. Adversity is relative; obstructions and limitations are relative; even sin is relative. We have a progressive faith: we believe that each day is a day closer to heaven.

13. Working hopefully means knowing that in heaven everyone has the freedom to work from the core of their unleashed talents. In heaven we will be called to the higher service where we will work perfectly before God. We may look forward to the day when we will work in perfect harmony before God.⁴⁰²
14. Working hopefully means knowing that the work we do in the name of God will find its true destination in the new heaven and new earth. God uses our ordinary, daily, earthly work to forge eternity. God is making the most forgotten, rejected, and despised person into an immortal heir of and hero in His Kingdom.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ Philippians 1:6

⁴⁰¹ Colossians 1:20

⁴⁰² Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, Ecclesiastes 4:4, Ecclesiastes 5:19, Isaiah 65:21-23, Colossians 1:5

⁴⁰³ 1 Corinthians 15:12-58

15. Working hopefully means knowing that in heaven there is eternal rest. Even if our work tires, exhausts, and burns us out, in heaven we can rest eternally.
16. Working hopefully means thinking big. Just thinking small is not Christian. God is a big God.⁴⁰⁴ He has given us a gigantic task,⁴⁰⁵ and He is able to lavishly do more than we can even ask or imagine.⁴⁰⁶ That is why we are ambitious in the holy sense: we gladly want to do things that God wants us to do.

Questions

- 433 *Which Bible verse about hopefulness do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working hopefully means (to me)?*
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⁴⁰⁴ Jeremiah 32:27

⁴⁰⁵ Matthew 28:18-20

⁴⁰⁶ Ephesians 3:20

Hopeful

- 438 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that hopefulness is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?*
- 439 *To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that hopefulness is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?*
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- 449 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act hopefully in my work?*
- 450 *How can I become and act more hopefully in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 451 *Which elements of working hopefully am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*

Hopeful

452 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working hopefully?*



17. Sober

1. Being a Christian in work is being sober. Following Jesus Christ in our work means to be sober because Jesus is sober. Jesus rested from His work,⁴⁰⁷ put His good works in perspective, and transferred His work to His Father.⁴⁰⁸ God the Father is also a God of rest. God rested on the seventh day of his creation work and He commands us to rest. God created and recreated. God is a god of creation and recreation. From the Holy Spirit we receive the heart, wisdom, and strength to work soberly.
2. Working soberly means realizing that our work is not our soul and salvation. Our work is not everything. If we put our heart and soul in our work, our soul will have no salvation. Our work matters, but our soul and salvation do not depend on it. Jesus grants our soul salvation. Work does not give what is most important in life; only Jesus gives that. Through His life, death, and resurrection He has paid the highest price to give us our true destiny and joy. If we believe that our work can give us salvation, then we forget the gospel and believe a lie.
3. Working soberly means putting our work into perspective. Faith puts our work into perspective: there are al-

⁴⁰⁷ John 9:4

⁴⁰⁸ Luke 23:46

ways more important things. To praise our work is nonsense. It is a vain hope that our work brings us meaning, purpose, or certainty of happiness. God's work is much bigger than our own work.⁴⁰⁹ Our work depends on God's work, not on our own effort and creativity. God does not want that we are fully satisfied by our work, because then our work would come between God and us. God Himself is the real satisfier of human basic needs,⁴¹⁰ while He does not need us or our work for his dignity and glory.

4. Working soberly means putting ourselves in our work into perspective. Faith in God puts our work into perspective: we are with our work mere channels and passers-by. Faith is not about what we do, but about how God works in and through us. Our work is temporary because we are on our way to eternity. When our work stops, another takes over.
5. Working soberly means our work does not define our identity. Even though our work is so important, it does not define who we are. We are not who we are in our occupation or in the kind of work we do, but we are who we are before God. Through the gospel, we are, first of all, a child of God. We don't need work to give us an identity. We have our identity through Christ. Neither do we need work to make us feel accepted, valued, or loved. All of these is ensured by Jesus.

⁴⁰⁹ Micah 4:1-7

⁴¹⁰ Isaiah 55:1-13

6. Working soberly means not making our work into an idol. Our work is not vain, but neither is it an idol. Work is an idol if it keeps us from God. God does not want us to idolize anything or anyone in our work. When we are full of our work, there is no room for God. When work becomes our slave driver, it drives us away from God. When we work for Jesus, the tendency to worship our work disappears.⁴¹¹ When we follow Jesus in our work, then Jesus is at the center of our work, and He then completes our work.
7. Working soberly means not being addicted to our work. The more we make ourselves dependent on our work, the more vulnerable our relationship with God becomes. Therefore, we must avoid becoming addicted to our ambitions in our work. We must not become addicted to status, power, and income.⁴¹² Likewise, we must avoid making other people dependent on us and on their work that we thereby make it more difficult for them to turn to God.
8. Working soberly means being realistic. As long as Jesus has not returned yet, then there is sin in the world. No matter how well we design our work, our organizations, and the world, they are and will remain broken because there is always scarcity and selfishness. We do not save the world with our work. Therefore, when we design our

⁴¹¹ Revelation 14:9-11

⁴¹² 1 Corinthians 7:23

work, we must consider that people are sinners. Communities cannot function properly if we think that people are perfectly virtuous and will always do good. It is unrealistic to think or suggest that we can design the world and our work as a kind of heaven on earth.

9. Working soberly means entrusting our work to God. Allowing God to lead in our work means that we must be able to let go of things in our work. Letting go of things does not mean letting them run their course but entrusting them to God. The Holy Spirit helps us to surrender ourselves to God, to listen to God's taking the lead in our work, and to place our work in God's hands. Trying to bend everything to our will is a sign of unbelief, as if God is not there, does not matter, does not provide. We can trust that God is working, and therefore we can work in a relaxed way. Even if we work hard, we cannot reduce our dependence on God even a fraction.⁴¹³
10. Working soberly means being cautious about making long-term plans, hoarding resources, and insuring every risk, for it is God who rules and provides.⁴¹⁴ The future is in God's hand.⁴¹⁵ Those who attempt to determine the future are trying to sit on God's throne. Therefore, we should not be obsessed with career planning. Our career

⁴¹³ Proverbs 10:22

⁴¹⁴ Matthew 6:26, Matthew 6:34

⁴¹⁵ James 4:15

does not matter to God, but He does plan our career for us.

11. Working soberly means not letting our trust in God depend on the success of our plans. Trust in God is independent of whether our work plans succeed or fail.⁴¹⁶ Even when we make our plans with God,⁴¹⁷ our trust in God should not depend on the success or failure of our plans.
12. Working soberly means not taking a passive attitude toward God. Trusting God does not mean sitting on our hands waiting for magical solutions to our problems. God doesn't just help us when we are in need; He also helps us by preventing needs. By taking safety measures, we can reduce accidents. By taking health measures, we can reduce diseases. By building up reserves, we can cope with setbacks. Thus, we give God the space to also take care of us in this manner.⁴¹⁸ If we trust God to provide for everyone's needs, then it discourages us from working for the needs of others. But if our trust in God does not propel us to work for the needs of others, this suggests that we do not really trust God. That God helps when we are in need means we must not abuse this by becoming reckless in our work.

⁴¹⁶ Proverbs 16:3

⁴¹⁷ John 4:13-17

⁴¹⁸ Proverbs 6:6-11, Proverbs 12:27, Proverbs 21:20, Proverbs 30:25

13. Working soberly means realizing that while working is unique in our lives, it is not the only thing. God does not expect us to only work. We have also been given other duties and responsibilities.
14. Working soberly means having leisure time. Leisure time, like work, is a gift from God.⁴¹⁹ Leisure is the time to rest from all the fatigues and worries that work brings and to recharge for our upcoming work. This recharging is not only physical and mental, but also spiritual.⁴²⁰ Work and rest belong together.⁴²¹ Creating and recreating go hand in hand with God. Those who cannot rest from work are slaves to their work.
15. Working soberly means having enough time for our family, health, and faith community. We must avoid being so busy with our work that we neglect these important things. We do not have to work ourselves to death. We do not honor God when we go too far with work and destroy ourselves or loved ones. To work is to worship God; to work excessively is to worship the work. If we get absorbed in our work, then we forsake God.
16. Working soberly means honoring Sunday as a day of rest. God rested after the creation not because He needed rest, after all God cannot get tired, but to set an example for us to rest ourselves.⁴²² God could rest after creation

⁴¹⁹ Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Mark 2:27

⁴²⁰ Ecclesiastes 4:6

⁴²¹ Psalm 104:19-23, Mark 6:31-32

⁴²² Hebrews 4:9-10

because He had done everything right. We need to rest because there is so much that we do not do well. The day off is to recognize this and to bring us closer to God. Therefore, humanity began its active life not with its own work but with celebrating the day of rest. First comes the day of rest, only then comes the first day of work. First there is time to hear that God says yes to creation and to humankind, and then there is plenty of time left to go to work. So, we work from the day of rest, God's Day of rest. The day of rest points ahead to the eternal, genuine rest that the believers will have with God. When we work on the day of rest, we are saying to God that eternal rest is not necessary for us either. By rejecting the day of rest, we are not only rejecting God's command to rest⁴²³ but also His gift to enjoy in a unique way His blessings on this day. Moreover, we then do not trust God's providence that He will take care of us. Sunday rest is evidence that we trust God. It is also a visible testimony that God is at the center of life and that human production and consumption take place in a world that is ordered, blessed, and restrained by the God of all creation.

17. Working soberly means working as little as possible on the day of rest. The day of rest is meant not only to recover and recharge but also to consciously take time to reflect about God and our relationship with Him.⁴²⁴ Since

⁴²³ Exodus 20:8-11

⁴²⁴ John 15:4, Hebrews 4:10, 1 John 3:19

the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the day of rest has been a Feast Day celebrating His resurrection. The day of rest is an ideal way to remind ourselves that our work is not an endless cycle of drudgery that leads nowhere, but rather it is a purposeful activity that is interrupted by worship and rest. Therefore, as much as possible, we avoid work that interferes with this Feast Day, and if we do engage in paid work on this day, we must have very good reason. Works of mercy, necessity, and proclamation of the gospel are permissible as Sunday work.⁴²⁵

18. Working soberly means using our faith community to equip us to work from faith. The Christian faith community maintains a way of working for those who challenge and seek to change the fallen world. Leaders in faith communities have an important responsibility to equip their members to be Christians in their work. Even though the work may still occupy us so much, we must watch out that our work does not continue to occupy us during our faith community's meetings, especially worship services.
19. Working soberly means studying the Bible. The Bible not only gives insight and direction for work, it also comforts, liberates, and heals. We can only work well if we are biblically well versed so that we can work in the world according to God's will and to His honor. We remain disciples in our work because God wants to continue to teach

⁴²⁵ Isaiah 58:13-14, Matthew 12:12

us.⁴²⁶ Our work must not come at the expense of our Bible study. If our work comes before reflection time for and with God, then it is high time to make other choices.⁴²⁷

20. Working soberly means praying for our work. After our work we should not only rest but also pray, pray that our work may bear fruit.⁴²⁸ If we do not pray for and about our work, then we are saying to God that we do not need Him in our work. It is also good to begin our workday with prayer about our work so that we are reminded for whom and in whose presence we are working. In prayer we can speak to God about our joys and thanks, doubts and dilemmas, temptations and sins in our work.⁴²⁹ We may pray that God will give us discernment of good and evil in the work. We may pray that God will prosper the communities where we work.⁴³⁰ We may pray that God will lead us and our colleagues.
21. Working soberly means working prayerfully. It is not only praying and working but also working prayer and prayerful work. To work to God is to worship God. Our workplace, like any other place, is a place where we may pray while we are busy. If in our works we know ourselves to

⁴²⁶ Isaiah 28:26

⁴²⁷ Luke 10:38-42

⁴²⁸ Matthew 11:28

⁴²⁹ Acts 1:15-26, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

⁴³⁰ Jeremiah 29:7

be called by God, then we may call upon Him when our works do not work.

22. We may pray this before we start our work:

*Lord God, You who own and care for the world,
We thank You that we may be Your property and
that You give us work and talents.*

*Lord, without You we are nothing and our works are
nothing.*

*Therefore, please grant us Your Holy Spirit so that
we may do our work.*

*Bless our work so that it may be for Your glorifica-
tion and a testimony to you, for the service of other
people, and for the development of society.*

*This we ask for Jesus' sake, who is also our example
in our work and whose love we wholeheartedly
want to pass on.*

Amen

23. We may pray after our work:

*Lord God and Father,
Having come to the end of our work, we want to
thank You for all that You have given us in it.*

*Thank You that we may and can work and that You
give meaning to our work.*

*LORD, we ask You to bless our work and forget eve-
rything that was not for Your glory.*

*Please give us an opportunity later to rest and enjoy
the work we have done for You today.*

Amen

Questions

- 453 Which Bible verse about sobriety do I find particularly appealing and provides guidance for what working soberly means (to me)?
- 454 To what extent do I agree with the above summary of what working soberly means?
- 455 Are there any missing elements in the above list of what working soberly means? If so, which ones?
- 456 How would I personally describe what working soberly means for Christians?
- 457 How would I describe concretely what working soberly means for me?
- 458 To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that sobriety is an important characteristic/virtue for Christians in their work?
- 459 To what extent do I subscribe to the idea that sobriety is an important guideline/principle for the behavior of Christians in their work?
- 460 To what extent is sobriety an important virtue and principle for me in my work?
- 461 How do I experience the importance of sobriety in my work?
- 462 Do I work to bring about sobriety? Do I do so wholeheartedly?
- 463 To what extent can I work soberly in my work?
- 464 How often have I recently brought sobriety to my work?
- 465 How soberly do I do my work? How does it show?

Sober

- 466 *To what extent do I use sobriety as a principle for my behavior in my work? Could I illustrate this using the decisions I have recently made in my work?*
- 467 *When I look back at my working life, could I say that I have increasingly become more sober in my behavior?*
- 468 *To what extent do people I work with think I act soberly in my work? What have they said to me about this?*
- 469 *To what extent do I think God thinks I act soberly in my work?*
- 470 *How can I become and act more soberly in my work? How would I do this concretely?*
- 471 *Which elements of working soberly am I going to bring more of in my next working day?*
- 472 *What am I going to say in a prayer to God about working soberly?*



Closing questions

- 473 *To what extent do I find the above list of seventeen virtues and principles for work to be complete? Which virtues/principles are missing?*
- 474 *In my work, what are the greatest threats to my being a Christian? Which virtues and principles are at stake?*
- 475 *Among all the virtues and principles relevant to being a Christian in work, which ones are the most challenging for me?*
- 476 *Among all the virtues and principles relevant to being a Christian in work, which ones give me the greatest room for improvement?*
- 477 *Among all the virtues and principles relevant to being a Christian in work, with which could I make the most difference in my work?*
- 478 *If I had just one more working day to live, which of the principles I violated in my work am I going to set right? What would I do if I had six months left to work?*
- 479 *Is there a way to visualize the virtues and principles that I find important for my being a Christian in work so that I can have them at hand to reflect and direct my attitudes and behaviors?*
- 480 *How can I (better) help other Christians in their being Christian in work? What would this mean for the coming period?*
- 481 *Any further questions I would want to ask myself? Any further questions I would want to ask God?*

“Here I am.”

1 Samuel 3:4

BEING A CHRISTIAN IN WORK

Being a Christian in work is not only a gift from God but also a quest and a struggle. After all what does being a Christian in work mean to me specifically, and how do I act accordingly with all the pressures, limitations, and temptations in my work? This book offers inspiration for answering these questions.

This is not a reading book but a workbook. It does not ruminate on the answers but presents short thoughts. With these thoughts and accompanying questions you can get started. Alone and/or in groups. For when you are working, considering working, or no longer working.

The many references to the Bible are invitations to further explore what being a Christian in work is all about.

The author has been a professor of work ethics since 2002 and an advisor in work ethics since 1991.