

In daily life - towards imitation

Mark gave the example of accountant Simon and how he might develop a “baptized imagination” for his work: Simon is an accountant who works for a small business and understands his work in terms of the cultural mandate. How can we unfold and serve creation as accountants? He could suggest that the firm should employ more disabled people and give very good economic reasons for doing this. Simon also wants to challenge the idea that all that matters is the profit factor. He is profit sensitive without being profit driven. He says that you have to make profit but not with tunnel vision. He wants to resist what he calls a cynical mindset. He describes putting together a report for the CEO. This isn't just reeling off facts and figures but infusing the report with local colour and human drama. Simon contends that the accountant can feel the pulse of the business and she can make positive suggestions which can steer the company in good, wise and responsible directions. For example showing love to the cleaners by going in to bat for them re pay and conditions. You might get knocked down but you have planted an idea in someone's head. He was also asked to manage a young autistic man. This requires sensitivity and thoughtfulness.

STUDY QUESTIONS – EXPLORING THE INFORMATION

Gen 1: 26-28; 2: 19-20. Why is understanding the cultural mandate so important for loving God in all of life?

2 Thess 3: 6-13. What principles are there here about work and how do we apply them?

Ephesians 6: 5-9: What is the motive for work and how can we practise living in it?

What does having a baptized imagination mean?

Living it out

The classic jazz album, A love Supreme by John Coltrane, contains these words in its liner notes: “This album is a humble offering to Him. An attempt to say "THANK YOU GOD" through our work, even as we do in our hearts and with our tongues. May He help and strengthen all men in every good endeavor.” How could your work be a humble offering tomorrow?

Prayer suggestion:

Talk about your work, this time tomorrow, and pray for each other.

Joining a group and other resources:

We encourage everyone to join a group if possible. We have daytime or evening groups and youth cells. If you would like to know more, please visit our website, or contact Guy on 01423 504160. There are many great resources to help you pray and enjoy the Scriptures on a daily basis.

www.pray-as-you-go.org A 12 minute guided prayer and meditation to listen to.

<https://www.wordlive.org> Many excellent daily reading approaches, available as an app.

<http://www.sacredspace.ie/> A short guided prayer and meditation to read.

Or download the app from Soul Survivor, with short daily videos: <http://bible.soulsurvivor.com/>

www.smcn.org.uk

INSPIRE

LOVING GOD IN ALL OF LIFE: THE AIR WE BREATHE & THE WORK WE DO

A TEN WEEK TEACHING COURSE ON MAKING FAITH A NATURAL PART OF ALL OF LIFE
FROM SEPTEMBER 20TH 2015

Everywhere...in everything

**Weekly discipleship and spiritual growth resources for all ages, groups and individuals.
Follow up material on Sunday's teaching for groups and individuals.**

Week beginning: 18th October 2015.

GROWING AT HOME

Three suggested discipleship activities suitable for all ages to help you grow, based on up - to God; in - to each other; out - to mission

Up

When you are together in one room, light a candle one evening, and switch off the electric lights. Look at the flame and remember: Jesus is the light of the world! Say together, "Thank you, God that in You there is no darkness at all."

In

Jesus said "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10) Why not blow up some balloons and put them up to remind you that, through Jesus, God invites each of us to His party in heaven.

Out

Please pray that persecuted Christians will keep trusting Jesus, and thank God for the freedom we enjoy.

DAILY READINGS AND PRAYERS.

These daily readings are the same as the ones used in church every morning from 9 - 9.30. Feel free to join us, or use them at home. Read one or both of the readings asking yourself, "What is God saying to me, personally?" and, "How can I respond today?" If you are pressed for time there is a focus verse from the passages. Try reading the verse slowly, three or four times, allowing God to shape your heart and mind through His word. You can use these together with our daily prayer diary from the monthly newsheet.

Monday 19th October

Readings: Psalm 123, John 15: 1-11. Focus verse: 5 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Tuesday 20th October.

Readings: Psalm 132, John 15: 12-17. Focus verse: 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: love each other.

Wednesday 21st October

Readings: Psalm 119: 153-end, John 15: 18-end. Focus verse: 18 'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

Thursday 22nd October

Readings: Psalm 143, John 16:1-15. Focus verse: 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'

Friday 23rd October.

Readings: Psalm 142, John 16: 16-22. Focus verse: 20 Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.

Saturday 24th October.

Readings: Psalm 147, John 16: 23-end Focus verse: 33 'I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'

SUNDAY'S TEACHING: RESOURCES FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS.

First thoughts:

In what way is your work a blessing to you?

This week's teaching in a nutshell:

Work can be done to the glory of God! Genesis 2:15-20 & John 5:16-17

God is a worker and he calls us to work in His wonderful but broken world. Many find it surprising that God works but Jesus makes this very clear in our passage in John. "My father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working." John 5:17 So both God the Father and God the Son are workers.... G.K. Chesterton tells a story about God working...making daisies and delighting in the work of his hands! God gets so excited about daisy-creation that he has to do it 'again and again'. Before you know it there are millions and millions of daisies all over the world.....bringing delight to God and humans (Proverbs 8:30-31)

Now God expected Adam and Eve to bear fruit by working - making tools, building houses, writing poems, looking after cows and designing work places. Eventually they and their offspring would split the atom (without damaging creation)! Theologians call this the cultural mandate. To understand the cultural mandate we need to take a closer look at Genesis. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day. Gen 1:28

Let's look briefly at these Hebrew words - kabash and radah (subdue and rule) Kabash is drawn from a Hebrew word meaning to tread down or bring into bondage. The other word radah comes from a word meaning to trample on and conveys the image of treading grapes in a wine-press. As His image-bearers God expects us to rule and unfold creation in good and wise ways. We turn grapes into wine...trees into chairs....sounds into music....words into books....sand, stones and wood into offices. Imagine Adam and Eve walking in the garden and they see a melon high up in a tree. Eve finds a branch and cleverly turns it into a garden tool by which to harvest the luscious fruit. This is ruling and unfolding creation. It's great fun because God's good creation is dynamic and full of rich potential. There is no doubt that humans are placed over the rest of creation. Humans are called to rule and manage God's creation unlike workshy ferrets, badgers and goldfish which simply cannot 'do' the cultural mandate! But we need to say more about how we do this important work.

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (Genesis 2:15) The Hebrew words abad (work it) and shamar (take care of) focus on serving and caring for the donkeys, the trees, the ferrets and the earth. Both verbs (abad and shamar) severely restrict the way the other two verbs – subdue and rule – are to be applied. Human ruling should serve the animals, the trees, the earth itself – all of which is being ruled. Six Themes in Work: Work is God's idea! Adam and Eve had work assignments – unfolding, protecting and managing creation! Work is a form of worship. God demands our wholehearted service and devotion in everything we do and this includes our work. Work is meant to ennoble us. Work gives us a sense of meaning and purpose. It's good for the soul! Work should be directed to our neighbours. In our work we can show love to our neighbours by serving them. Work should be mindful of our task as responsible and responsive stewards of God's good creation. Work must be bounded by Sabbath rest.