

Kern FF Faculty Idea Grant Report: Paul W. Ferris

The following are student reflections on their engagement with the "Toward a Theology of Living Biblically" video presentation I developed for the fully-distance OT Survey course with help from the Kern Family Foundation. The responses are clipped from their Moodle forum (hence formatting issues).

This unit will be used in the spring 2014 offerings of the course which will involve c. 60 more students.

Respectfully,

Paul W. Ferris

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Work -- Stewardship -- Calling

by Yvonne Mitto - Sunday, September 22, 2013, 11:40 PM

Wow! This week's videos provided some rich content that I will always be referring to. The explanation given by Professor Ferris of why he believed Genesis 1 is historical narrative and not poetry helped solidify some of what I had read in chapter 2 of D&L.

Video 2 not only provided great information that I need to learn for this course but also ministered to my heart. I believe that work, stewardship and calling are important subjects that need to be taught more in churches. The matter of stewardship really resonated with me. We are all called to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us (time, talent, money, etc.). As professor Ferris states, "For many Christians, stewardship is a money word, but in reality, biblical stewardship is a whole-life word."

There is definitely a great divide between secular vocation and ministry. I can recall attending ministry training a few years ago, and the trainer asked how many attendees were in full-time ministry. There were over a hundred people in attendance and less than a third raised their hands. When he asked what the others did, everyone started giving their job titles. He politely stated that as long as we are children of God we are in full-time ministry. He noted that where we work is our mission field and our purpose there is to help fulfill the Great Commission through our words, deeds and actions. For me, this was more of a sermon than a lecture and I have been truly challenged. As a leader, I plan to take action by helping to equip the people at my church to live out their faith where God has placed them whether secular or sacred, all for the glory of God.

Re: Work -- Stewardship -- Calling

by Jenn Layte - Monday, September 23, 2013, 12:50 PM

That's where it's at, Yvonne! I applaud your efforts and am really glad it's on your heart to encourage people in their vocation, whatever that vocation is. Such a great reminder about how as God's children we are *all* in full-time ministry. (I think the conundrum comes when we realise this and then we don't know what to call all the things we've been calling "full-time-ministry" before. And maybe they aren't supposed to have their own label.)

When I felt God called me back to the US from London, but then just kind of "left" me here without telling me what to do next, first I went to Denver Seminary for a year. While I was there, I reassessed the things I had enjoyed/felt good at when I was in London and decided that an MA in Counseling wasn't the best fit, but that what I really thrived on was friendship evangelism over tea and coffee, but that one thing I felt was lacking in my ministry in London was that I didn't have a "real job" I could say I did when people asked me. So I decided to get a job that would enable me to make friends with people and evangelise them over tea and coffee. Initially I wanted to start a coffee shop, so I got a job at Starbucks in Worcester to try to get some coffee experience. The indie coffee shop idea fell through, but I ended up staying at Starbucks for as long as I had been in London, serving coffee and witnessing to people.

In the end, a number of factors/personal choices ended up sort of undermining my witness there, but I definitely went into that job intentionally in the service of the Kingdom. It used to frustrate me no end that people couldn't seem to "get" it. Of course there were the customers who asked me if I were still in school and what I wanted to do when I got out, for a "real job." But I also remember a time early on in my old church when one of the members of the congregation asked, innocently, if I ever thought about "going back into ministry." I wanted to punch him (which probably wouldn't have been the best approach), but instead I tried to explain to him that I *was* in ministry. He just looked at me blankly and moved on. There are some mindsets in the church in general which are really hard to root out, but that it's vital to try to combat. I think this work thing is one of them.

Re: Work -- Stewardship -- Calling

by Yvonne Mitto - Tuesday, September 24, 2013, 8:25 PM

Jenn, what a great concept "Friendship evangelism over tea/coffee." I hope you haven't given up on your dream of starting a coffee shop.

I agree that work is one of those things that need to be viewed differently. I'm not surprised to hear that people could not see serving coffee/tea as a way of evangelizing. Many people's concept of evangelism is going door-to-door or conducting street meetings.

Also, there is still the perception of work being that secular 9-5 job, while ministry is working at a church or being a missionary. I truly believe that the member of your church was innocent when he asked you about going back into full-time ministry because of what he perceived as full-time ministry. As a matter of fact, a lot of people don't even recognize local missionaries. In 2007, I left corporate America and began my ministry vocation with a para-church organization, where I was required to raise financial support. It was interesting when I talked with people and even some churches about being a local missionary, I was told that they only considered people who go overseas as missionaries. Pretty interesting concept! What happen to starting our witnessing in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and finally the whole world (Acts 1:8)?

Re: Work -- Stewardship -- Calling

by Jenn Layte - Wednesday, September 25, 2013, 12:18 PM

Yvonne--

Haven't given up on the coffee shop idea exactly, but it's on long-hold. It might be something Paul and I would consider doing in retirement. :-)

You're right--the guy at my old church was asking a totally innocent question. I think I was, in the end, less frustrated at him and more frustrated at the culture which was created centuries ago but which most Christians support, whether we know it or not, of division between secular and sacred. I completely hear what you're saying about the mission thing, too. I was on the Missions Committee at that church during that time as well, and I certainly wasn't trying to raise any money (although admittedly a Starbucks income is not a big one!), but I really wanted to get across the idea to that group that just because I was no longer working with Muslims in London, didn't mean I wasn't still a missionary. But according to missiologists, I guess Stateside evangelism to people mostly of my own ethnic group doesn't count as "missions."

I have since taken a world missions class (GCTS) which says the same thing, and I understand their lines of demarcation and that such divides are partially designed to help motivate people to go to lesser-reached people groups. I agree that's a crying need, but I also don't think all those grids and labels are particularly helpful, nor do I think they allow for openness to the idea that God is going to call people to the people and the jobs He wants them in, and we can trust Him to do that, no matter what we're calling it.

I cannot tell a lie

by Jenn Layte - Friday, September 20, 2013, 8:34 PM

Well, I could, but I'm not very good at it.

These stories are so familiar to me, that these particular videos didn't seem to clear up anything, or point out anything I hadn't already been told or thought of. I'm still not convinced the "sons of God" in Genesis 11 are simply despots, although I guess the arguments for that are logical. I don't really see the full understanding of that story as being a faith-hinge, though.

I think the video segment that most stuck with me was the one about work (#2). That stuff wasn't really new to me, either, but I liked the word-art/poem-y thing and would like to use it with my youth group . . . Also, I think it just kind of made it hit home to me that not all Christians really "get" the truth about calling and the holiness of work. I wonder if Dr Ferris is familiar with the website, The High Calling. It's specifically for people who are Christians in "secular" (aka "normal") jobs. I used to have some connexion to it when I was a Starbucks missionary . . .

Re: I cannot tell a lie

by Yvonne Mitto - Monday, September 23, 2013, 10:03 AM

Hi Jenn,

Video #2 was also the highlight for me this week, and I really gleaned a lot from it. While I was familiar with a lot of the content, it reinforced them and challenged my thinking on different levels. I like how it culminates with the point on discipleship because that's what the Christian faith is all about. God has placed us where we are for a specific purpose and we need to fulfill that purpose for which God has called us. So whether we work in a secular job or in the ministry, we should view our work as our mission field. I agree with Professor Ferris that the churches need to do a better job equipping the people to be effective ambassadors for Christ no matter where they are. I believe that this is one area that is lacking because of the great divide between secular and sacred. Many churches only view the people who are paid by the church as being in full-time ministry, but everyone no matter what our vocation is a disciple and need proper training in order to become an effective witness for Christ.

Thanks for mentioning The High Calling website in your post. I'll check it out. Starbucks missionary! Tell me a little bit more about it.

Re: I cannot tell a lie

by Jenn Layte - Monday, September 23, 2013, 12:37 PM

I agree--the divide between sacred and secular is enormous and it's incredibly detrimental to faith and witness, I believe. I think part of the detriment centers around a tendency of both "regular people" and people in full-time paid ministry to assume that the full-time paid ministry people operate on a different (higher) plane than everybody else, so that not only is what they do *better* than the average job, but it's also inaccessible to the regular person. Therefore people who might actually be called into full-time ministry sometimes don't aspire to it because they don't think they can, and people who should aspire to something else because they'd be better at it, think that the only way to *really* serve God is to go into full-time ministry.

My current boss--until next week--the interim pastor at my church, is the best boss I've ever had, and he's been great for this church administratively, but as a *pastor/shepherd*, I confess I think he's terrible. (His preaching's pretty bad, too.) I mean no disrespect. He's a very gifted man. I'm just not convinced he's done as well as a pastor as he could have done as a CEO or something somewhere.

Re: I cannot tell a lie

by Yvonne Mitto - Tuesday, September 24, 2013, 7:04 PM

While your current or soon to be former boss is a great boss and very gifted in the area of administration, he sounds like he does not possess the gifts of pastoring/shepherding. Unfortunately, these gifts are essential for leading a congregation. Maybe he recognized his shortfall and that's why he chose to serve as the interim pastor and not seek the full-time pastoral position. Many large churches bridge this skills gap by having an executive pastor who fulfills the administrative function and another pastor who does the preaching/teaching/shepherding. However, I am aware that this may not be an option for smaller churches because of limited resources.

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Re: I cannot tell a lie

by Jenn Layte - Tuesday, September 24, 2013, 8:58 PM

Yeah, definitely not an option for our church. But he's an interim because he's 76 and technically retired. He has led quite a few congregations in his day. Tonight at his last meeting with our church council he was talking about how he would have done things differently with us if he had been our "called pastor" instead of our interim. I'm not sure exactly what those things would have been, and if they would have been "more pastoral" or what, but I'm sure he did operate differently as a settled pastor than as an interim. Also, at least one of his churches was quite sizable with numerous staff

members, so he was probably better at that (overseeing the other pastors) than at pastoring a small congregation.

Video two " Toward a theology of living biblically

by Lynn Shimkus - Friday, September 20, 2013, 9:54 AM

Dr. Ferris discusses the economics and the point of "work." " God "worked" and created humans to imitate His creative work. In our world we tend to view work as something we "have to do" rather than as something "we get to do," but work is not just about money, it's about value. Ferris sees work for followers of Jesus as a sacred stewardship; in fulfilling one's job we will either accredit or violate the Christian witness. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 encourages us to love God with all our heart and soul, allowing His righteous expectations to instruct how we think and act in regards to our family and the larger society. We should take every "teachable moment to pass this faith-walk onto the next generation," viewing work as a "24/7 disciple-making mission." Each of us has been given some aspect of God's creation to be responsible for; to be a good steward of. If we seek to model Christ, we are called to live as Jesus did (1 Jn. 2:16). Our first calling is "by God, to God, and for God," our secondary calling is the specific work we do as we think, speak, and act entirely for Him in the workplace.

The claim that 98% of those not working regularly in a ministerial position are not equipped for the task of making God known in our communities is staggering. Yet, it resonates with me as one who has been in ministerial positions for the past thirty years, and I still don't feel equipped to do this as effectively as I'd like. We need to find ways to train lay people to stand in the gap between the secular and sacred worlds we live in, equipping them for the work of God. How can we be better at this?

Re: Video two " Toward a theology of living biblically

by Andrea Paulson - Sunday, September 22, 2013, 10:34 PM

Hi Lynn,

Per my question on the boards, and my perception of the answer, I think it will work best if for the videos, one of us posts and then we just go back and forth. Otherwise, we have multiple threads on the same video and end up saying the same thing over and over again. This way, we can read back to what the previous poster said and respond to it - more of a discussion, rather than restating the same thing over and over again!

I love the video. The piece about three minutes in is a video by Francis Chan (I think) that I have actually

used with my youth.Â

I wonder how we, as ministry people, help people move to a feeling of being equipped. What can we do to help our church members and fellow Christ Followers feel that they are - simply because they follow Christ - fully equipped to make the Lord known. I know with the parents I work with most don't talk about the Bible at home with their kids because they don't feel they know enough to actually have that conversation.Â

I like what you shared above from the video, that we must view work as 24/7 disciple making mission. This is an easier mission statement in the church, where it's a given that people are coming to learn about Jesus. How do we help our members as they leave the church and go into their homes, jobs, schools, communities to have the same mission? How do we jump the hurdle of an increasingly hostile environment when it comes evangelizing/proselyting?Â

Mostly, though, how do we help people realize that in everything they do, they can bring and give all glory to God? We are the hands and feet of Jesus and as scripture says, just as the body is made up of many parts, so too is the body of Christ. I think if we start by first helping people realize that their daily lives sing a song of worship to the king, then bringing others to him isn't as big of a leap.Â

Re: Video two "Toward a theology of living biblically

by Lynn Shimkus - Monday, September 23, 2013, 5:26 PM

If Dr. Ferris is o.k. with your suggested arrangement, I'm fine with it.Â I would just hate to have points taken away for not following his instructions.Â

Regarding your question about how to begin helping people with this: I have a friend who has written a curriculum (Carol is actually a Bethel seminarian as well) called "Faith Family-Style" which I have helped facilitate several times.Â It is for families with children ages 4- 9.Â The family comes as a unit, with the intention of walking the parents through ways to present the Bible to their children.Â Carol's work is filled with Bible memorization, crafts, games, singing, cooking, and more.Â It is a great way to help parents feel more equipped for teaching God's word at home.Â

Secondly, I love the idea of Acts 2 living.Â I don't actually do this myself, but I have read some on this and know of a couple of young single people who are living this out.Â What a wonderful concept!Â To live amongst and share everything with others...to do devotions and worship and serve with those in the same house or neighborhood!Â It seems so much like it must have been like living in the wilderness community of the Israelites.Â How supportive and encouraging it must have been to be together as a community of God on a daily basis!Â What accountability!Â I think I would like to try

living this way...I just need to find such a place...and convince my husband... : )

Re: Video two " Toward a theology of living biblically

by Andrea Paulson - Monday, September 23, 2013, 11:41 PM

I emailed him again, and hopefully there will be some clarification. There is a lot of confusion among class members about how best to do the groups like this. I think people are struggling with how this best works.

I think there needs to be a lot of conversation about living biblically in the home. I'd be curious to learn more about the curriculum.

I struggle a bit with the Acts 2 living. I do think it's beneficial, but I sometimes wonder if it can serve to limit the church by turning inward as opposed to branching out.

We have a church here in my community who does missional communities. They are essentially as small group that works to build one another up. Then, when the group reaches 20, the divide and build to 20 again. This is a bit different model of Acts 2, but here it is reaching out to share the message of Jesus beyond the small group.

Re: Video two " Toward a theology of living biblically

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Re: Video two " Toward a theology of living biblically

by Lynn Shimkus - Tuesday, September 24, 2013, 8:35 PM

Carol has a website: <http://www.faithfamilystyle.com/> if you want to check it out.

I imagine just the opposite outcome if Acts 2 is lived out correctly.Â I see it as edifying the community of God, with a lot of accountability, but also as encouraging the outreach aspect.Â Unlike the Israelites who seemed reluctant to spread the good news, from what I understand a good, close-knit, Acts 2 community would definitely be out there doing just that.Â I find the concept exciting!Â I am very involved at my church and work for a Christian not-for-profit, but often feel I could use more edifying and definitely more accountability!

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Video 2 - Creation Mandate

by Andrew Hermann - Tuesday, September 24, 2013, 6:54 AM

What is the point of work?Â

We must see our work as an extension of the creative process in this world. It is difficult to think that each and every task has significance. That is really tough to swallow in the normal day to day work place. Ugh.Â

What an incredible thing to work towards. I heard Jon Acuff, an author, say, "Anything you do for 40 hours a week is not a job, its your life." Or something along those lines. Anything over 40 is not JUST a job. We have to see that as taking part in God's calling and in God's initiatives of the creative process.

As Ferris said, "Half of our waking hours are working." We need to catch the bigger vision of work being more than putting food on the table. I love that it is catching a bigger vision even though the mandate of work has been shifted by us to AFTER the fall. We so badly want it to be against everything God created us to do and take part in. God doesn't want us just sitting around.Â

Video 2

by Brandon Ganz - Sunday, September 22, 2013, 9:40 PM

Continuing the theme of work as a part of the creation mandate, work is a calling for everyone.Â Work

is not limited to economic activity.Â Unpaid work is just as valid as paid work.Â We incorrectly create a division between secular and sacred when it comes to viewing work.

Re: Video 2

by Carl Greene - Monday, September 23, 2013, 10:30 AM

On the one hand, I think that this assessment is spot on--we often try to create a pie chart for our lives where there is God's slice of the pie, then there is work to earn the bread, civic activities, me time, etc.Â The goal seems to be to increase God time rather than recognizing that God is in all portions of our lives.Â I get that, and recognize that concern in my own life.Â Yet, one question I ponder is how to explain a clear separation between the sacred and the secular.Â Levites were the only ones who could perform certain functions--they were permitted to have some agricultural pursuits but no land.Â They were clearly set apart for 'other' service.Â How do we make sure that God is invited into all of our life's endeavors--without forsaking the sacred times in life which are set apart and distinct.

Re: Video 2

by Brandon Ganz - Monday, September 23, 2013, 12:56 PM

I think the issue you raise related to the Levites has more to do with function than a theology of work.Â We have no problem looking at their effort as serving God.Â Where we incorrectly make a distinction is when we say the farmer is not since it doesn't have a "spiritual" or ministry component. Understanding the unity between the sacred and the secular is related to the connection between the body and the soul.

3.2

by Carl Greene - Sunday, September 22, 2013, 11:17 AM

The focus on creation mandates continued with a focus on the ordinance of work.Â On the one hand, I really appreciated how the lecture brought out that work is a blessing--it was there before the Fall.Â There is definitely a mind set difference between "something I get to do" and "something I've got to do".Â I am always intrigued by how one person's hobby is their passion, while their job is their absolute frustration--and another person can have that hobby as their job, and the other person's job as a hobby and have the exact opposite feelings.Â The key is mindset about work.Â Whether work is paid or unpaid, it is critical to be productive.Â The mentioning of the reformers, with the concept of

doing all things for God's glory is a great reminder, and compelling to fulfill God's call on our lives. As the lecture reminded, our primary calling involves Whom we are called to (by Him, to Him, for Him), and our secondary calling is to labor for Him.

With that said, I am a recovering workaholic--I probably enjoyed too much hearing about how good work is. Rather than simply a focus on paid versus unpaid, I need to keep in mind public versus private work. My work as a husband and dad is a prerequisite to my other work. I can fall into the trap of making "productivity" decisions that affect public efforts over private family work. Even things like mowing the lawn or cleaning the yard can take precedence because people see it--while I might let me private work slide. Many of the stories in Genesis bring out the utter failure of God's people in their 'private' family work. That is something I think is important to pay attention to.

Re: 3.2

by Brandon Ganz - Sunday, September 22, 2013, 10:05 PM

I have been thinking all weekend about the idea of work and calling from the video. I wonder how much fulfillment we miss out on when we have the mentality that work is something we have to do in order to retire. We have somehow warped our ultimate goal into not working. What a disappointment eternity will be to some who plan to sit around on a cloud and sing.

Re: 3.2

by Carl Greene - Monday, September 23, 2013, 10:50 AM

I wonder what sort of grade we would have received in Dr. B's class if we stated that the legacy we wanted to leave was a relaxing retirement earned by the sweat of our brow. That seems to be an entitlement we expect--and as you said, especially an entitlement expected for eternity. I hope that I model a healthy vision of work for my kids--somewhere between the tension of being a workaholic and a guy who feels like he has worked so hard he deserves "just me" time whenever possible.

Video #2

by Angela Fahey - Wednesday, September 18, 2013, 12:18 AM

I love this video. Although I have heard about God functioning out of any position regularly throughout seminary, I am always glad to hear it again. I firmly believe God can call us to any type of position, not just ministry (i.e. in reality, most jobs minister to people in some aspect as it is so).

technically they all seemingly be ministerial work.Â

Itâ€™s helpful to be reminded how picking a typical ministerial job is not better than selecting a secular one.Â Many in the spiritual life can easily believe because they are especially sanctified because they are seemingly separated from their homes, etc. to do Godâ€™s work.Â It is helpful to hear a personâ€™s calling, regardless if it is to do yard work or otherwise, it is equal to all other worldly positions.Â Â Â Â

I like thinking about how work was a positive notion before the fall.Â It seems finding oneâ€™s purpose and fulfillment in life is as much of a concern as any other area one may feel deficient in.Â This was not a concern for Adam and Eve then.Â It is not wonder one may struggle with this premise of finding fulfilling, purposeful work throughout oneâ€™s life

Re: Video #2

by Rebecca Jacobson - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 2:42 PM

I agree, Angela. It makes me wonder if there will be jobs in heaven. If Eden was originally perfect, it seems like heaven would be similar to it and if they worked, perhaps we will too. I wonder what God will have the pastors doing since we will be obsolete by then!

Re: Video #2

by Angela Fahey - Sunday, September 22, 2013, 12:27 AM

I wonder too... I think we would...Â (what else would we do?)...Â Pastors may need to come back to Earth to have a job again ;)

Living Biblically

by Daniel White - Friday, September 20, 2013, 9:38 PM

This video was not as loud as the last so I had great difficulty hearing it.

The greatest way to live is as a servant. Jesus gave us that example.Â He was Creator and sustainer, but what really sets Him apart is the humility He displayed in coming and dying for His creation, and in that serving them.

Today's role models as displayed on TV are anything but....These people all seem to struggle with their

identity and purpose...

Economics by standards in our culture today is all about one thing....show me the \$\$\$\$....One thing I have found to be a blessing more than any other thing is the work I do in the street serving the homeless. I get no monetary return from it, but the reward of it is incomparable, and not only that it get's us out of the selfish mode and more into the Christ mode of selfless.

So living biblically is living with an eye on God regardless what we are doing. It is so difficult for so many people as there is so much to trip people up in this culture. It takes a great deal of discipline. Paul tells us to train ourselves for godliness.

Let me say, I wrestle with my tent maker job which pays the bills, but my volunteer work is where my heart is.

Re: Living Biblically

by Bruce Hofman - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 10:51 AM

I would like to expound on one of your points in my reply. The idea that Paul tells us to train ourselves for godliness. This is such a profound message. We need to understand that godliness is not automatic for us, it is not easy for us to do because we need to be trained to do it. What a powerful message that it is so foreign to us that we need to be trained in it. It also shows us why some have excelled and many have not, they may not have been adequately prepared for the task. This is a very deep and meaningful thought for me. I appreciate you bringing it up in this context.

Video 2 Work, Calling, Stewardship

by Bruce Hofman - Friday, September 20, 2013, 8:40 AM

Wow, that was a powerful message and done in an amazing way. The key message I got from this video is that what we are providing for other people in our work and calling is value. Value comes from giving to others as you should be, serving in work as you are called by God to be doing. It doesn't matter what kind of work or for whom you work, we all can be a witness for God through the work which was mandated to us even in Genesis. I need this video to share with my congregation. Amen.

Re: Video 2 Work, Calling, Stewardship

by Daniel White - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 6:51 AM

Yes, his was a great video. Unfortunately the volume of it was too low so I will have to listen again. Part of my ministry work is a rescue mission I put together and working out in the streets or going into the homes of the poor delivering a need and ministering to them brings such happiness to them. Many times the blessing I get from this is IA am sure more than the blessing they are receiving from me. When I take people out with me serving, they get the same experience and are so pleased to be a part of it. Anyway what we need to do is foster a body of servanthood. But like the video demonstrated, we can still serve the Lord regardless of our vocations just by sweeping the floor, filling the machine, driving the truck, whatever it is by doing so unto the Lord. In my tent making profession, I have to admit I still struggle with this as it's so demanding and at the same time I have the missions work and sermon prep, not to mention what I am doing now,,,,,school work.

Re: Video 2 Work, Calling, Stewardship

by Bruce Hofman - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 8:48 AM

I also am a tent maker allowing me to be where I am today to participate in the work that God has prepared for me. The extra time, extra effort, extra everything that is required seems like a challenge until you see the benefit in the lives of people. For me, it is easy to feel like it is too much, but when I see the need and the hunger in the people I connect with to know more about God it fills me with more than I ever had before. Blessings in your work with the rescue mission.

Bruce

Theology of Living Biblically

by Mike Zenk - Friday, September 20, 2013, 6:59 AM

I found the videos this week very engaging. I do find the book of Genesis an interesting one (and the band Genesis good for a song or two), so taking an indepth look at, say, the Land of Confusion when the sons of God married daughters of men is really interesting to me. The references to other passages in which 'Elohim' is used of worldly leaders is very helpful for my understanding of the odd passage passage. Getting a better picture of Sarah's response to Abraham's calling, or Invisible Touch (I'll stop at this point, both because the references are getting old and because I can't think of a way to work in I Can't Dance), to take Isaac for sacrifice was also interesting -- I had never thought of her role or thought of Abraham's decision. Perhaps, indeed, that is why he left early in the morning. I'm not sure I'll ever use that passage in a couple's therapy session, but it is an interesting look into Abraham's

commitment.

I really found the second video, the video on the Theology of Living Biblically, most interesting. I appreciated Dr. Ferris' intro and discussion around the awkwardness of the question 'what do you do?'. In Turkey, that question is even more complex for a variety of reasons I won't go into (I am still working toward finding a better second question to replace the work one, though). I applaud his perspective regarding the goal of work being beyond money, though again, I think Turks have a harder time believing that than Americans -- especially if they are hearing it from an American. "Unpaid work has no less value than paid work" when work is seen as serving our neighbor, it is productive and it makes the world a better place. The theological implementation of 1 Corinthians 10:31 is well placed here (this passage was fundamental for me in my younger days starting to think differently about "full time Christian work" versus "secular work"). It is, indeed, more about who I am -- my heart attitude -- than what I do. Great stuff.

Week 3, Video-2, Creation Mandates

by Chad Brown - Thursday, September 19, 2013, 2:06 AM

Wow, thanks for the real life application. Actually it was a pleasure to take minimal notes and instead just absorb the truth of this sermon/lecture. Therefore bloom where you are planted, as you are a creature of God, designed to work, and serve, and steward the land and neighbor. That work is good; it always has been destined for man even before the fall, because it's sacred, not profitable but productive. As co-creators with God we should aim to be productive and not so much profitable. That we don't have to be pastors to be spiritual energizers and role models in the community and in the economy. In fact the larger number of lay people well equipped is a more powerful force than the small number of paid clergy.

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For we are all called to have a vocation, to be stewards, our question is who am I, and not what do I do? Do not identify with your job, but with your heart, and therefore let your job be a service to the world and to God, proudly and humbly. The best line for me was: "embrace the adventure of faith exactly where you are". Amen to that.

Video #2

by Rebecca Jacobson - Thursday, September 19, 2013, 11:02 AM

Right now I am working with a student who graduated 2 years ago from our ministry and is coming back to serve. One of our biggest struggles right now is that she has a mindset in which some ministries are better than others. She doesn't want to serve in some areas because it's not as important as others. So often this is how people look at working in the church versus the secular world. We do need to help our congregations see how God-honoring their work is. Honestly, I feel many times that working

outside the church leads to a better relationship with God than working in the church.Â

My struggle is to identify when your work is in the church when to stop and value rest how God intended it to be. When is enough enough when you're working for the glory of God?

Re: Video #2

by Angela Fahey - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 8:00 AM

Interesting point.Â The black-and-white, all-or-nothing thinking can be common in church members I think.Â There seems to be this innate competitiveness, much like one may see in the secular world, to be valued within the social hierarchy.Â Yet, there is something to be said (as you nicely pointed out ) about recognizing God's work as not only being in the church.Â Self-worth versus worth of others might be tied into those in the church's lack of boundaries around service.Â Â Perhaps individuals can get so focused on others, they forget to also take care of themselves.Â There also are so many stigmas around thinking about self as being selfish.Â Gender roles may also play into this (i.e. women or church leaders (often male) being expected to take on the needs of those around them). Some of these ideas may need to be reframed forÂ these individualsÂ to incorporate themselves toÂ allow them to functionÂ better within a church community.Â

Personally, I think all of our actions (i.e. thoughts, feelings, actions) can glorify God.Â Valuing self is honoring the temple he gave each of us. Â I am sure God would agree with us doing this.Â Enough seems to be when our actions become more superficially-driven than genuine in my opinion.

Re: Video #2

by Rebecca Jacobson - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 3:55 PM

I absolutely agree that pastors need to value their time off and how their body was designed to operate. I am just recognizing how easy it is for ministry leaders to push their full-time jobs to 80 hours a week because people are experiencing God. I don't think the marker is genuine vs. superficial motivation. Most are in ministry because they desperately desire people to encounter Christ. Often, this desire eclipses their need for rest and solitude.

Re: Video #2

by Angela Fahey - Saturday, September 21, 2013, 11:46 PM

I completely agree and am not saying those in ministry are not genuine. I am saying when a person works and/or makes themselves available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week there is a point where he or she will probably get wore out. When that happens, it will probably be difficult for that person to still be genuinely interested in giving. More than likely, they may just want to go home and go to bed. At that moment, he or she would probably be better off doing that than going through the motions to please those around them.

If they are doing their 80 hours a week and feel completely saturated with God's love, that's different. When a person is in that state, rest and solitude can seem less important. Finding balance between the two extremes of burn out and a high intensity passion for serving God seems like the challenge and seeming the ideal in these situations to keep up pace.