

**A Theology of Work**  
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If you took a poll of business/professionals in your church, how do you think they understand their work in relation to their spiritual life?

If you asked them, “why do you work,” what do you think they would say?

I routinely ask my students how business people are perceived in their churches:

“Pockets to be picked.” Though, many get great joy out of funding these areas of service.  
“Help administrate the church.”  
“The Strategic Soapbox.” For evangelism.  
“Business as mission” strategy.

“Not on the front lines.”  
“Doing something lesser for the Kingdom than pastors and missionaries.”  
“Supporting those who are where the real action is.”

Regularly I get seminary students who have left their business to come to school. They say things like:

“I left my business to serve Christ full time.”  
“I left my business to go into vocational ministry, etc.”  
“I’m so excited to be entering the ministry.”

I realized that my students have an underdeveloped theology of work.

- I. Work has instrumental value.**
- II. Work has intrinsic value in serving God.**

Theology of work begins with creation—work ordained before the entrance of sin.

Work ordained as part of the dominion mandate for human beings. Dominion as responsible wealth creation.

Portrait of God as a worker-and human beings as made in His image.

Work as good in Ecclesiastes 2: 24-25, 3:12-13, 5:18-20,

NT View of work—many parables drawn from world of work.

Colossians 3: 23-24-work as an arena of service to Christ

### **III. Work and Ministry**

Ministry as service—diakonia, with eternal value

Acts 6: 1-6 as an example

Commissioning business professionals

Insuring that our language reflects our theology

### **IV. Historical Context**

Aristotle's distinction between the active and contemplative life

Ancient skepticism about commerce/business

Medieval dichotomy between monastery and marketplace

Luther/Calvin and the “worldly calling”

Evangelical dichotomy between work and “ministry”

**Conclusion:** Affirming work as ministry