



Faith + Work 101

Living out your faith in the workplace

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Your Calling

When I was a boy, the church we attended hosted an annual missions conference. Every year there would be a time of prayer over those headed overseas to the mission field. It seemed these people were the rock stars of the church world. Subtly, I found myself left with the impression that these missionaries, and our pastors, had a vocational “calling” from God, but the rest of us were simply trying to survive in the marketplace so that we could help fund their work.

That background is probably why one of my more memorable church services as an adult was when the congregation of the urban church I served in prayed over Chuck. Chuck originally came to me for help in buying a trash hauling business. As an African American entrepreneur, Chuck saw an opportunity for a minority owned trash hauling business to land some significant city contracts.

It took a couple of years of hard work and planning, but Chuck was finally able to buy the trash hauling business. The following Sunday, our pastor asked the elders and Chuck to join him at the front of the church.

The pastor informed the congregation that we were going to pray an anointing over Chuck and his new business, because God had “called” Chuck to this work. As we finished praying that day, I looked around the auditorium and was moved to see many people with tears in their eyes. The room was filled with people who likely doubted that their work mattered to God. I’m sure many thought, “If Chuck has been called to the trash business, and God cares about that, maybe there’s hope for my work as well.”

Pastors and missionaries have an important calling, but so do you and I. God began the earth by creating a gardener and farmer to tend to His creation. He gave Adam and Eve a job description, then the authority to do his job. In Genesis 1:28 we read, *“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”* Throughout Scripture, we read of God using farmers, ranchers, soldiers, craftsmen, Kings, carpenters and even slaves to advance His kingdom.

Your Work Is Important to God

God has created you with unique gifts, skills and talents, and He wants you to use them for His glory. God gave Joshua great leadership skills to lead armies into battle. He gave Joseph the wisdom and skill to lead and manage the affairs of government and to make lots of money. Bezalel was created by God to be a craftsman who built the Ark of the Covenant and many of the artifacts in the tabernacle. Peter was a fisherman, Paul was a tentmaker, and Jesus was a carpenter for far longer than His time preaching the Gospel. God also created you, and He gave you specific gifts to use right where He has planted you.

Imagine if you bought farm property in another city. You built a home, a barn and bought the necessary equipment to have a fruitful farming operation. Now imagine you hired a farm manager to care for the operation since you will not be living there. How would you feel if the next time you visited the farm you found it in disrepair and no crops had been planted? I suspect you would be angry and disappointed.

God feels the same way when His children do not think their work for Him is important. He created the earth and charged man with making it fruitful and multiplying what He gave to us in the beginning. Some believe that since God is going to give us a new earth someday, we don't need to care about the physical earth we have now. These people believe evangelism is all that matters, but in Colossians 3:23 we read, *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."*

God the Entrepreneur and CEO

God is an entrepreneur! He created the entire universe from scratch. Talk about creativity! God is also the owner of all things. Psalm 24:1 teaches, *"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."* If God owns it all, shouldn't you humbly recognize that truth and offer up your business or work to Him, acknowledging that He is the true CEO?

As a great CEO, God has developed a plan for your business, and He provided an operating manual to help you care for His business. The Bible is the best-selling book ever and the best business book you will ever find. Unfortunately, too few people

read it from the lens of a businessperson. If they did, they would better understand how God desires us to conduct His business.

God desires to help you prosper in the business or work you are stewarding for Him, but that requires listening and learning from the Master. Prayer, studying and applying God's Word, listening and journaling, and sometimes even fasting are tools God has given us, in tandem with the Holy Spirit, to help us do business well.

Joshua was told in Joshua 1:8, *"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."* Joshua only had the first 5 books of the Bible. Imagine if he would have had the wisdom of the entire Old and New Testament.

What God Wants from You

The average person in the workplace spends more than 45% of their waking hours at work. Even if they faithfully attend church, it's rare that they would spend more than 2 hours a week inside the walls of a church. In addition, many of our significant relationships and influence happens in the marketplace.

Unfortunately, Christians in the marketplace are rarely known for being any different than those who do not have a faith. As a matter of fact, Barna Research surveyed Christians about their integration of their faith and their work. Sadly, they discovered that only 28% of Christians are integrating their faith into their work. The remainder were either compartmentalizing their life or they were sitting on the sidelines observing.

Whatever God has given you in the way of vocational calling, skills and gifts, He desires you to be a good steward of those God-given resources. But it's not about you. In Colossians 3:17 we read, *"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

Our work here on this earth is to be for God's glory and to advance God's plan. Jesus commanded in Matthew 5:16, *"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

Our vocation is to be managed in a way that it is done with excellence, integrity, courageous faith and with love of God and others. In other words, it is to be done in a

way that is distinctly different from the rest of the world. The world has conventional ways. God's ways, however, are *unconventional*.

God's Word is the best place to start. It is full of Biblical truths, principles and stories of leaders who led with very unconventional approaches so that everyone knew that God was with them and was guiding them.

What's Next?

If God is calling you to embrace the vocational calling He has for you, and you desire to heed His call, here are some ways that Unconventional Business Network might be helpful:

- **Take our LEADING Assessment** ■ This self-assessment tool will help you gauge where you are on the faith + work journey. It will then provide you some Biblical insights, information and resources to help you move forward.

<https://unconventionalbusiness.org/leading-assessment/>

- **Read Unconventional Business** ■ If you are more inclined to first read and learn more, my book, *Unconventional Business*, is a practical guide on how to manage all the typical disciplines of business from a Biblical worldview.

<https://unconventionalbusiness.org/ubn-store>

- **Join the Network** ■ We have business leader groups for small business owners, business leaders regardless of role they serve, and for professional women. These groups have in depth training and accountability. It also gives you the opportunity to be with other like-minded leaders and for you to do life together as you advance in instilling your faith into your workplace.

<https://unconventionalbusiness.org/forums/>