

## 7 Things Pastors Should Teach Those in the Marketplace

**1. Teach them how Scripture informs their work.** One of the most foundational texts for understanding work is the “creation mandate,” where God commands Adam, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” ([Gen. 1:28](#)). Though it is impossible for a pastor to keep up with the ever-growing complexity of social and economic development since the Garden of Eden, pastors do have the opportunity to devote themselves to the timeless wisdom of Scripture. **Helping those in the marketplace love and live the wisdom found in Proverbs will shape how they understand their daily work**, and how it can be used to glorify God and to serve their neighbors.

**2. Teach them to fear the Lord.** The marketplace is a place of fear. A worker may fear his boss, an executive may fear very public failures, and others fear market instability, unemployment, and government regulations. Globalization, media, and technology all serve to amplify the sense of not being in control. Like anger and pride, acting from fear produces a range of insecurities, sins, and failures.

Throughout Scripture, the people of God are commanded not to be afraid. Paul reminds us, “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control” ([2 Tim. 1:7](#)). We are, however, commanded to fear God: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” ([Prov. 9:10](#); [Ps. 111:10](#)). Unfortunately, **there are many professing Christians whose work life is dominated by fear and anxiety, which cuts them off from living in the wisdom of God.**

**3. Teach them to pray.** Many Christians do not feel equipped to pray about their work, much less to actually pray in the marketplace. Given the fear that is so rampant in the marketplace, coupled with hostility toward Christian faith and practice, the best thing for workers to do is to pray. Yet the kinds of prayers needed in the marketplace may not be the kinds typically heard on Sunday mornings. **Pastors have the opportunity to teach Christians how to pray for courage, against temptation, for integrity, that they might work with skill, for their coworkers, and that God would establish the work of their hands.** And in response to the many blessings of work, they should be equipped to give thanks.

**4. Teach them that their ultimate worth isn't found in their performance.** There is massive pressure in the marketplace for workers to earn their keep, meet their quotas, and climb the ladder. Without vigilant resistance, Christians too can come to believe they are nothing but a job title, a level of responsibility, or a unit of production.

The psalmist teaches that, unlike man, God does not judge us like one evaluates the strength of a horse. Rather, “the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love” ([Ps. 147:10-11](#)). At the end of the day, **our approval and identity are found in being adopted as children of God by grace through faith in Christ**—not on the basis of anything we do for ourselves.

**5. Teach them they are more than “useful” to their local church.** There is a subtle tendency

for pastors to see members of their congregation in terms of their utility in supporting church programs or contributing to the budget. This temptation becomes even greater when a church member is known to be talented in their craft or successful in the marketplace. In this regard, pastors apply the same pressures on them that they likely experience throughout the week from their employers, leaders, and supervisors. Before churches are about budgets and programs, they are about people. **The members of a congregation need to know they matter for more than just their utility.**

**6. Teach them that they're not inferior to pastors and missionaries.** Many churches, perhaps unwittingly, subtly propagate the myth that pastors and missionaries matter more, or are intrinsically holier, than carpenters, call center workers, or entrepreneurs. The church may employ pastors and send missionaries, but **the silent majority of kingdom work is done by those of diverse callings in the marketplace.** Pastors should find ways to disciple members for the variety of vocations represented in the congregation, and not just those in so-called "Christian ministry."

**7. Teach them to love what they do, and to do it well.** It is easy to love one's work for a time, but when circumstances, opportunities, relationships, and rewards change, difficulty and discouragement quickly set in. A certain degree of this is inevitable, but if work is dominated by a sense of pessimism or fatalism, the worker will not do his work well, he will not be content, and his gospel witness will shrivel up and die. Believers need the reminder of [Colossians 3:23](#) that in a broken world they ultimately work for the Lord. In every task and in every season, **it is this truth that provides the motivation to do all work with passion and excellence.** Pastors face difficulty and discouragement in their work as well. But those who have found new, life-giving ways to rekindle the love for what they do will in turn be able to share that wisdom with those in different occupations.

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