

Tim Keller: 5 Ways the Bible Shapes Our Work



Friday, May 24, 2013

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<http://blog.acton.org/archives/55225-tim-keller-on-how-the-bible-shapes-the-way-we-work.html>

At The Gospel Coalition's [2013 National Conference](#)¹, Tim Keller kicked off a Faith at Work post-conference by exploring what it means to be a Christian in the marketplace.

Keller argues that we have to view our work through the larger Biblical story of *Creation > Fall > Redemption > Restoration*. If God is the creator of all things, and if through Christ all things are made new², that process of restoration must include our work.

Keller proceeds to offer five ways that the theology of the Bible shapes the way we work.

1. "Faith gives you an inner ballast without which work could destroy you."

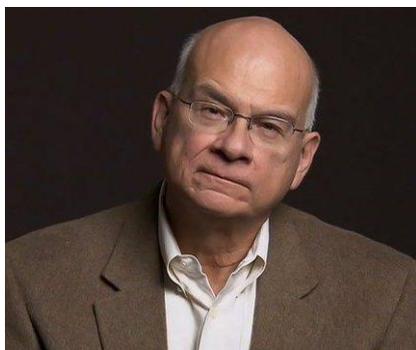
If our identity is in our work, rather than Christ, success will go to our heads, and failure will go to our hearts. I've highlighted Keller's thoughts on this [previously](#)³.

2. "Faith gives you a concept of the dignity and worth of *all* work, even simple work, without which work could bore you."

The people who do the simplest kinds of work are, as Martin Luther wrote, "the fingers of God." Because of this, doing our work well, or being the best at what we do, is one way to be Christian in our work. [Justin Taylor](#)⁴ and [Greg Forster](#)⁵ recently wrote on this point in the context of bus driving.

3. "Faith gives you a moral compass without which work could corrupt you."

Unless your work is grounded in and guided by a Christian moral framework, you will be prone to selfish and short-sighted decision-making that will eventually harm you in the long run, whether in customer/client relations, productivity, profitability, or otherwise.



4. "Faith gives you a world and life view that shapes the character of your work, without which work could master and use you."

Here, Keller points to the difference between what we might call work with our hands and work with our head. Being a Christian pilot will most typically mean "land the

plane,” Keller explains, while being a Christian elementary school teacher “depends on what you think a human being should be and what you think would lead to human flourishing.” Though this example is helpful, the reach here is likely farther, broader and more complex, as Jordan Ballor⁶ has previously noted.

5. “Hope.”

Christians can press forward in cultural transformation knowing that all will one day fulfilled. “If you’re a city planner, there is a New Jerusalem,” Keller says. “If you’re a lawyer there will be a time of perfect righteousness and justice.” The way we view the not yet will inevitably impact the way we respond in the here and now.