

LifeWork Study Guide

Questions to Guide You, Chapter by Chapter



by Darrow L. Miller



Lifework: A Biblical Theology of What You Do Every Day Study Guide
Copyright © 2009 by Darrow L. Miller
Published by the Disciple Nations Alliance
1110 E. Missouri Ave., Suite 393
Phoenix, AZ 85014
United States of America

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Printed in the United States of America
First Printing, 2009

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ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to help you reflect and apply what you are reading in *LifeWork: A Biblical Theology For What You Do Every Day*. It is designed for both individuals and for small group work.

INSTRUCTIONS

Since there are sometimes questions that need to be answered before reading begins, please read through the study guide for each chapter before you read that particular chapter. Answer the remaining questions, either as you read the chapter, or once you have read the entire chapter.

If you are going to use this in a small group setting, you could set a goal of reading and processing one chapter each week. Please take time to pray and report on the action steps from the previous week's "To Do" assignment before discussing new material.

KNOW & DO

The Greek mind was interested in *knowing* the truth. Ancient Greeks wanted to fill the mind with knowledge, but had little interest in application of what they were learning. In contrast, the Hebrew mind was interested in both knowing the truth and in *doing* the truth. Today, many Christians are more like Greeks than Hebrews. This study guide will encourage you to be a Hebrew.

Therefore, in this study guide there are two parts to each chapter. In the section marked "Know", you will be challenged with questions that will help you reflect on what you are reading. The section marked "do" will challenge you to put into practice at least one thing that you have learned during that week's study.

May God richly bless you as you process the material in *LifeWork*.

Darrow L. Miller
Co-Founder
Disciple Nations Alliance

INTRODUCTION

KNOW:

- 1) Before you begin to read the book, ask yourself: “Why am I choosing to read this book? What do I hope to gain from this book?”

- 2) In relation to the quote from the Philippine young people: [p. xvii]
 - a. What were they looking for?

 - b. How do you personally respond to their quest?

- 3) In relationship to *The Compelling Vision*:
 - a. What are you living for?

 - b. Is there anything that you think is worth dying for? What is it?

- 4) What is a worldview? [pp. xviii-xix]

- 5) What is the impact of each of the two major worldviews on the issue of work?
 - a. Secularism [pp. xx-xxi]

 - b. Animism [p. xxi]

DO: Take some time to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to be your teacher as you read through this book. Pray that he will expand your horizons and understanding of why God has put you on this earth!

CHAPTER 1: WORLDVIEWS AT WORK

KNOW:

- 1) “Why work?”
 - a. If you were to do a “man on the street” interview in your town, how would the average person answer the question “Why do you work?”

 - b. How do you answer the question: “Why do I work?”

- 2) What does the Biblical word “repent” – *metanoeo* – mean? [p. 4] How is this different from your understanding of the word repent?

- 3) How do you respond to Mother Teresa’s observation about the poverty she saw in New York City? [p. 4]

- 4) Where do you see the impact of your culture’s worldview on your understanding of your life and work? [pp. 4-10] Give specific examples.

- 5) Describe in your own words the impact of unbiblical dualism on how Christians think about work as:
 - a. A higher calling: [p. 12]

 - b. The place for spiritual outreach: [pp. 12-13]

- 6) How has this unbiblical thinking impacted Christians and the church as we face the crises of the 21st century?

DO: Examine your own mind and life. Are there places where you need to repent? If so, take time to pray and ask God’s forgiveness. Ask him to renew your mind.

Chapter 2: How Did We Get Here? Dualism throughout History

KNOW:

- 1) Have you ever known Christians who have said: “I want to go into full-time Christian service?” What did they mean when they said this?

- 2) How did the Greek philosopher Plato lay the foundations for the dualistic thinking that so impacts Christians today? [pp. 16-17]

- 3) What is Gnosticism? [pp. 17-18]

- 4) How has Gnosticism impacted:
 - a. The church – historically?

 - b. The church – today?

- 5) What are the two ways of life described by Eusebius? What is the spiritual and social impact of his teaching for a society? [pp. 19-20]

- 6) How did Luther and the other Reformers “break the back” of dualistic thinking in the church? [pp. 20-22]

- 7) Briefly describe the distinctions between First Inheritance and Second Inheritance Evangelicalism: [p. 25]

- 8) What has been the legacy of:
 - a. First Inheritance Evangelicalism?
 - b. Second Inheritance Evangelicalism?

9) Which of the two inheritances has had the greatest impact on:

a. Your church? How has this been expressed?

b. Your life? How has this been expressed?

DO: Identify one person with whom you will share your insights in the next week. Who is that person? When will you share with them?

Chapter 3: The Sacred-Secular Dichotomy: An Entire Worldview

KNOW:

- 1) What is the rich lesson of Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*? [pp. 36-37] How does it apply in your life?

- 2) What did Francis Schaeffer mean when he said we must do "the Lord's work in the Lord's way"? [p. 40]
 - a. Identify an example where people do the Lord's work in a way that would not honor Christ.

- 3) From the *Origin of Humankind* section [p. 43], identify an example in your present or historic context where Christians did not treat fellow human beings as the image of God.

- 4) How do the following groups explain and react to the evil in the world: [p.44]
 - a. Secularists (Atheistic-Materialists)?

 - b. Animists?

- 5) Explain in your own words how each worldview deals with the issue of human freedom. [pp. 44-45]
 - a. Secularism

 - b. Animism

 - c. Biblical Theism

- 6) Reflect on *A Great Disconnect*. [p. 46] How do you see this disconnect at work in your own life?

DO: Identify one of the areas (i.e. heart-mind, individual-community, ends-means) where you are out of balance. What area is it? Which side is out of balance? Determine one thing that you will do this week to establish a greater sense of balance in your own life. What is that one thing? How and when will you do it?

Chapter 4: One Lord, One Realm: A Parable

KNOW:

- 1) If a stranger were to stop you on the street and ask you, in all sincerity, “What is the kingdom of God?” what would you say?

- 2) What was the context in which Christ taught the parable of the minas? [p. 49]

- 3) Describe the two false theological trends found in the church. [pp. 50-51]
 - a. How do you see the passivity that these trends produce in your own church? In your own life?

- 4) What does the idea that the present and the future of the kingdom of God are of “one piece” mean? [p. 51]
 - a. What are the implications of this for your life?

- 5) Describe in your own words the relationship between your *occupation*, the life and work that you do every day, and the advancement of the Kingdom of God, *occupying territory for Christ*?

DO: Christ has given you capital – natural and spiritual gifts that he wants you to use for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Take 15 minutes and make a list of these gifts:

Natural gifts – gifts you were born with or knowledge and skills you have acquired:

Spiritual gifts – gifts that you have received from the Holy Spirit since you have become a Christian:

Chapter 5: Coram Deo: Before the Face of God

KNOW:

- 1) Describe in your own words what it means to live *Coram Deo*.

- 2) After reading Luther's quote from his pamphlet *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and the reaction of the two priests in the paragraph that follows [p. 59], please answer the following questions:
 - a. Was the priests' act of closing the door of "the church," except for Sundays, a more spiritual or less spiritual act?

 - b. Why? Please defend your answer.

- 3) Outline the moral of Charles Thaxton's story. [p. 64]

- 4) What are the implications of Abraham Kuyper's words for *what you do every day*? [pp. 64-65]

- 5) Describe the distinction between using your place of work for spiritual outreach and advancing the kingdom of God by your work? [pp. 66-67]

- 6) How does the E. Stanley Jones quote from *The Unshakable Kingdom and the Unchanging Person* impact your understanding of work? [p. 67]

DO: From your reflection on this chapter, make a list of things that you have learned about work and about *what you do every day*:

Pick one of these things. How will you apply this one thing in your life this next week?

Chapter 6: The Need for a Biblical Theology of Vocation

KNOW:

- 1) How do you respond to the Dorothy Sayers quote that the church has lost her hold on reality? [p. 71]

- 2) What does the statement that “everyone is a theologian” mean? [pp. 72-73]
 - a. What does this mean for your life?

- 3) Describe a person who is *Living an Unexamined Life*? [pp. 73-74]

- 4) Explain how the Bible is God’s owner’s manual? [p. 75]
 - a. What are the implications of this for *what you do every day*?

DO: Make a list of critical areas where you have lived an unexamined life:

What have been the consequences of your not examining these things?

Pick one area. What will you do to begin to live an examined life in this area?

Chapter 7: The Essential Meta-narrative

KNOW:

- 1) What does the meta-narrative of a culture provide for her people? [p. 77]

- 2) What does the Biblical story have the ability to do? [p. 77]

- 3) List the four critical elements of the Biblical narrative. Describe each one and how it relates to our understanding of our life and work: [pp. 78-85]
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.

- 4) Where do we find the meaning of the storyline of our life? [pp. 85-86]

- 5) What is your response to the idea that there are “two significant events” between the first and second coming of Christ?

DO: Identify one of the relationships that you have (with God, another person, yourself or creation) that is broken. Devise a plan to begin to bring substantial healing to that area of relationship.

Chapter 8: Culture: Where the Physical and the Spiritual Converge

KNOW:

- 1) Before reading this chapter, answer the following two questions:
 - a. What is culture? Give your own definition!

 - b. Is culture neutral? Do all cultures equally bring their people freedom, justice, economic well-being, health and social peace? Explain your answer.

- 2) What is the ultimate purpose of our life and work? [p. 90]

- 3) What is the relationship between worship and culture? [p. 92-93]

- 4) Where does the concept of cultural relativism come from? [p. 93]

- 5) Explain how the spiritual impacts the physical through culture? [p. 93]

- 6) What is the trilogy of kingdom culture? [pp. 96-97]
 - a. From what are they derived?

- 7) What is the nature of counterfeit culture? [pp. 97-98]
 - a. What is the root of counterfeit culture?

DO: Identify a lie that is prevalent in your nation. What is the corresponding truth? Devise a plan whereby you can begin to speak the truth in your daily life to this lie.

Chapter 9: Elements of the Cultural Mandate

KNOW:

- 1) Describe the two major elements of the cultural mandate. [pp. 99-101]

- 2) Outline the two ways that we are called to function as stewards of creation? [p. 101]

- 3) List and describe four critical characteristics of the cultural mandate. [pp. 101-103]
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

 - d.

DO: Think of an affinity group that you are part of (a team at work, a sports team, a Sunday school class, a Bible study group) and challenge that group to consciously contribute to the promotion of kingdom culture.

Chapter 10: The Fall, the Cross, and Culture

KNOW:

- 1) Before reading this chapter, answer the question: “What is the end of culture?”

- 2) Paraphrase the quote from Dallas Willard’s *The Divine Conspiracy*. [pp. 105-106]

- 3) What is the distinction between “moral evil” and “natural evil”? [p. 107]

- 4) Make a list of the natural evil that you see in the world.

- 5) What does Isaac Watts’ Christmas carol *Joy to the World* teach us about our stance towards natural evil? [p. 107]

- 6) How has the fall affected:
 - a. Our work? [p. 108]

 - b. The systemic economic environment in which we work? [p. 108]

- 7) Describe the two attitudes we are to have towards work and what each should lead us to.
 - a. Realism [pp. 108-109]

 - b. Idealism [p. 109]

- 8) Now, having read the chapter, what is the end of culture? [pp. 110-113]

DO: Pick one of the following exercises:

- 1) Create a word picture that depicts the end of culture.
- 2) Lead a discussion among Christian friends about the end of culture. Reflect together what the glory of your nation might be.
- 3) Identify a place in your world where “sin and sorrow grow” and “thorns infest the ground.” Decide upon a way that you can work to “no more let sin and sorrow grow!”

Chapter 11: The Call: *Lifework*

KNOW:

- 1) What is the *primary* call of the believer? What is the *secondary* call of the believer? [p. 117]

- 2) Why is it a good thing for a Christian to use the word “vocation” rather than the word “job” in describing his or her work? [p. 118]

- 3) How does the modern [Gnostic] church understand the word “call”? [p. 119]

- 4) Francis Schaeffer, Dr. Robert Moffitt and Oz Guinness all speak poetically of an individual’s call to shape the universe. Take a moment to reflect on their words. How do these words speak into your life? [p. 122]

- 5) What does it mean to you to have, like Abraham, the pursuit of the city of God as the backdrop of your life? [p. 122]

- 6) Finish the following sentence: “When a person comes to Christ it is not the end of a process, but ...”

DO: Take time to pray. Thank God for his call upon your life and the salvation he has offered to you. Thank him for the call to a life of significance, in relationship to the coming of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 12: The General Call: To Life

KNOW:

- 1) Before reading this chapter, answer the following two questions with your current knowledge:
 - a. Why did Jesus die on the cross?

 - b. What is the nature of salvation?

- 2) Describe the comprehensive impact of the fall. [pp. 125-126]

- 3) What is the Biblical concept of peace? [pp. 126-127]
 - a. How is this peace God's response to the fall? [p. 127]

- 4) According to Colossians 1:19-20, why did Jesus die on the cross? [p. 127]

- 5) Describe in your own words the comprehensive nature of salvation. [pp. 127-129]

DO: Choose one of the following:

- 1) Reflect on how your understanding has changed about why Christ died on the cross and the nature of salvation. Take time and share your new understanding with a fellow Christian or with an affinity group.

- 2) Identify someone in your family or circle of friends with whom you have a strained or broken relationship. What one thing can and will you do to move towards peace with that person?

Chapter 13: The Particular Call: To Work

KNOW:

- 1) In your own words, reflect on what it means that you are the *poiema* of God. [pp. 137-138]

- 2) What does it mean that: [p 138]
 - a. We have not been saved *by* our works, but that we are saved *to* work?

 - b. We have been saved to do *excellent* work?

- 3) Take a moment to reflect on Michael Novak's quote regarding the uniqueness of our calling in his book *Business As A Calling*. What insights have you gained about your *lifework*? [p. 138]

- 4) What does the phrase "the multiplying effects of the dispensation of gifting" mean for you as an individual? [p. 143]

- 5) Reflect on the fact that *God Inhabits the Ordinary*. What are the implications of this for your life? [pp. 143-150]

- 6) In his classic book *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence states: "Our sanctification does not depend upon changing our works, but in doing for God's sake, which we commonly do for our own." How does this apply to you and your work? [p. 153]

DO: Identify one area of your work life where you may be "slacking off" – not putting forth your best effort or doing your best work. What can and will you do to pursue excellence in this area of your work?

Chapter 14: Characteristics of our *Lifework*

KNOW:

- 1) Before reading the chapter, take a few minutes and answer the question: “How can your life and work advance the kingdom of God?”

- 2) Write a summary statement of the balance between God’s work and our work in relationship to the fruit of our labor. [p. 156]

- 3) God has given us the gift of our own lives and the gift of the external world. How are these gifts important to our *lifework*? [p. 157]

- 4) What does it mean to redeem time? [pp. 158-159]

- 5) Why should we pursue excellence in our *lifework*? [pp. 159-165]

- 6) How is God glorified in our work? [pp. 165-168]

DO: Identify one or two events in your life that have produced self-pity, bitterness, or despair. How can you respond to this circumstance in a manner that will honor God?

Chapter 15: Stewardship: The Protestant Ethic

KNOW:

- 1) Before reading this chapter of the book, answer the question: “If you were to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and record in a journal every passage that you found on the ‘salvation of the soul’ and every passage on ‘business and economics,’ at the end of your reading which list would be longer?”

- 2) Describe the two errors that modern Christians tend to make regarding economics. [p. 172]

- 3) Summarize the three principles of economics and their underlying validations described in this chapter:
 - a. Gain all you can! [pp. 174-177]

 - b. Save all you can! [pp. 177-183]

 - c. Give all you can! [pp. 183-187]

DO: On the scale below, “1” represents limited or no practice and “10” represents perfect practice. Please mark where you stand in each of the three areas of practice: ‘gain,’ ‘save,’ and ‘give.’

Evaluative Scale: 1 -----→ 10

Pick the area where you have the weakest practice. What one change can/will you make to bring improvement to your behavior?

Chapter 16: The Economics of Giving: Generous Compassion

KNOW:

- 1) What are three of our most basic relationships and how are we to “give” in each of these areas? [pp. 190-191]
 - a. –
 - b. –
 - c. –

- 2) According to Dr. Bob Moffitt, what is the “Irreducible Minimum” of God’s commandments? [p. 191]

- 3) What does it mean to give based on reality? [pp. 191-193]
 - a. How do some Christians ignore reality in the way they give their charity?

- 4) List and summarize, in your own words, Olasky’s *Seven Marks of Compassion*: [pp. 195-196]
 - a. –
 - b. –
 - c. –
 - d. –

e. –

f. –

g. –

5) What is the lesson we can learn from the book of Ruth about compassion? [pp. 198-199]

DO: List 5 ways you can be a more generous giver. Which one will you begin to practice first?

Chapter 17: The Kingdom Advances from the Inside Out

KNOW:

- 1) Explain, in your own words, the meaning of the Alexander Solzhenitsyn's quote found on page 203.
 - a. How do most people in your culture explain the "root" of evil?

- 2) What is one of the great entry points to the human heart? [p. 204]
 - a. Give an example, from your own experience, of where you have seen this entry point used.

- 3) Describe the 4-step process of how the kingdom of God expands outwardly from the human heart to the larger world. [pp. 204-207]

- 4) What is the vertical, demographic component of the great commission? [p. 208]

DO: Think about your work and place of work. What is one small way that you can bring an aspect of kingdom culture into your workplace? Be specific as to which aspect of kingdom culture and how you want to bring it into the place where you work.

Chapter 18: The Gates of the City

KNOW:

- 1) Why are so many nations with large Christian populations languishing in moral or material poverty? [p. 212]

- 2) Why is it so important for Christians to consciously understand Scripture and to occupy the “gates of the city?” [p. 212]

- 3) Reflect on the Sharron Watkins story. [p. 214]
 - a. What was she willing to do to represent justice in the market place?

 - b. What did/could her witness to Kingdom culture cost her?

- 4) How do you respond to Judge Roy Moore’s actions? [pp. 215-216]

- 5) What have you learned about the concept and importance of the “gates of the city” for your life and nation?

DO: Consider the cost to Watkins and Moore for their willingness to sit at the gates of the city. Take time and write a letter to God, telling him what you are willing to do and what price you are willing to pay to represent truth, beauty and goodness in the gates of your city.

Chapter 19: The Domains

KNOW:

- 1) Rodney Stark's thesis in his book, *The Rise of Christianity*, is encompassed by the quote on page 227. Take a moment and paraphrase Stark's thesis.

- 2) According to writers like Rodney Stark, Thomas Cahill and Paul Maier, how have the followers of Jesus historically impacted their societies and the larger world? [pp. 227-228]

- 3) What are the three fundamental, God-ordained institutions in a society? [pp. 229]
 - a. Describe the relationship between the health of these institutions and the health of a nation.

 - b. How does this reflect in your nation?

- 4) Describe in your own words the Christian principle of self-government. [pp. 231]
 - a. How do people in your nation view governance?

 - b. What is the fundamental practice required for a free society?

- 5) After reading the chapter, pick the one sector that you are most interested in and identify five ways that Christians have contributed to that sector throughout history.
 - a. –

 - b. –

c. –

d. –

e. –

DO: Pick one item from the *Our Calling Today* list of the sector that you are interested in and describe how you will apply this to your life.

Chapter 20: The Great Commandment

KNOW:

- 1) Instead of a secularist romantic understanding that human beings are basically good, how does the Bible describe the reality of all human beings? [p. 271]

- 2) According to Rodney Stark, what were the revolutionary social ideals that Christians manifested into their societies that lead to social transformation? [p. 271-272]
 - a. How were these ideals applied in everyday life? [p. 271]

- 3) Pick the area of social reform that most interests you. List five of the ways that Christians throughout history have contributed to the healing of society in this domain. [pp. 273-293]
 - a. –

 - b. –

 - c. –

 - d. –

 - e. –

DO: In the area of social concern that was of most interest to you, devise and execute a plan to engage with a group that you are associated with at work or church.

Chapter 21: Serving as Gatekeepers

KNOW:

- 1) People often ask me; “How do you disciple a nation?” Dallas Willard provides one of the answers in his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*. See the quote in the opening paragraph of this chapter and then write a paraphrase of his concept. [p. 297]

- 2) Reflect on Dallas Willard’s words concerning the Lord’s Prayer. [p. 300] How can you begin to put hands and feet to what your heart and mouth speak?

- 3) Make a list of five practical things that you can do to “kingdomize” your work:
 - a. –

 - b. –

 - c. –

 - d. –

 - e. –

DO: Pick one thing from the list you have made above and begin to apply it.

Chapter 22: The Body of Christ: Churches without Walls

KNOW:

- 1) Before reading this chapter, answer the question, "What is the church?"

- 2) Describe the war between God and Satan as it manifests itself in concrete ways in your nation or community. [p. 305]

- 3) Who won the battle that marked the turning point of the war between God and Satan? [p. 306-307]
 - a. What does the modern church think?

 - b. What mindset and behavior has that created for the church?

 - c. What should the church begin to do NOW?

- 4) Outline the three types of churches discussed. Which one of these best describes your church? [pp. 309-311]
 - a. List characteristics in your church that manifest this.

- 5) What does it mean that the average church has physically separated herself from the world and, at the same time, is metaphysically and morally conformed to the world? [p. 311]

- 6) Describe your understanding of how the church is a community that gathers and scatters. [pp. 313-315]

DO: Having finished reading the chapter:

a) Answer the question again, "What is the church?"

b) How has your concept of the church changed?

c) Devise a way to begin to share your new understanding with members of your Bible study or Sunday school class.

Chapter 23: Occupy Till I Come

KNOW:

- 1) Outline your understanding of how God built a house for man and now man is to build a house for God? [pp. 320- 321]

- 2) What does it mean to “build” or live with the end in mind? [p. 321]

- 3) Have you been *waiting* for Christ’s return or *working* for Christ’s return – hastening it? Explain your answer. [pp. 322-324]

- 4) What is the work that *only a knight can do* that God has called you to? [pp. 324-325]

DO: In response to what you have learned in this book, take some time to use the creative side of your mind to write a letter to God, a poem, a song, a skit, paint a picture or....

Share your creative expression with a family member, friend or Bible study group.

Resources for Further Study and Application

We hope this book has challenged and inspired you with a vision for advancing God's Kingdom through your unique vocation!

To help you go deeper and apply the principles presented in this book, we invite you to visit www.MondayChurch.org. Here you find a host of resources including:

- A chapter-by-chapter study guide with reflection questions for reflection, discussion and application.
- A free, downloadable companion Bible study designed for individual and small group application.
- A personal inventory to help you discover your unique design and calling.
- Information on hosting a conference on how vocation relates to the advancement of the kingdom of God.
- Helpful suggestions for how pastors and church leaders can envision and equip their congregations to advance God's Kingdom through their vocations.
- And much more!

www.MondayChurch.org



The Disciple Nations Alliance

Equipping the Church to Transform the World

The Disciple Nations Alliance is part of a global movement of individuals, churches, and organizations with a common vision: to see the global Church rise to her full potential as God's instrument for the healing, blessing and transformation of the nations.

The Disciple Nations Alliance was founded in 1997 through a partnership between Food for the Hungry (www.fh.org) and Harvest (www.harvestfoundation.org). Our mission is to influence the *paradigm* and *practice* of local churches around the world, helping them recognize and abandon false beliefs, and embrace a robust Biblical worldview—bringing truth, justice and beauty into every sphere of society, and to demonstrate Christ's love in practical ways, addressing the brokenness in their communities and nations, beginning with their own resources.

For further information about the Disciple Nations Alliance as well as access to a host of resources, curricula, books, study materials and application tools, please visit our website.

www.disciplenations.org

E-mail: info@disciplenations.org