

Grounded: in the Body in Time & Place, in Scripture

Grounded in Work as Christians

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Meet the author

Kara Martin has authored *Workship: How to Use your Work to Worship God*, and *Workship 2: How to Flourish at Work*. She lectures at Mary Andrews College and Alphacrucis College in Sydney, and has worked in media and communications, human resources, business analysis, and policy development.

Chapter overview

God is the first worker; his work is the work of creation, and then God invites humankind to join him in the work that needs to be done: He tells Adam to work or “till the ground,” and to “keep the garden.” So work is a good gift of God, though because of sin, all work becomes harder and more painful. We can become overwhelmed by the “curse” or burden of working, as we experience weariness, frustration, conflict or a sense of futility in our workplaces, whether we are in paid or unpaid work. As city dwellers, many of us have lost connection to the ground, and this may be linked to our lack of appreciation for our vocation to care for the earth and all creation. Reclaiming a sense of the goodness of work also involves understanding it as participation in the repair of the brokenness of creation-- – whether through medicine, or plumbing, or mothering, or counselling, or as a police officer; we are used by God to mend and solve and rescue.

General Study Questions

Question 1

What work are you involved in?

Question 2

Do you default to ‘paid work’? How do you value the different areas of work in your life?

Grounding our Work in God’s Work

Question 3

Read Genesis 1: What do you notice about God as worker?

Question 4

Focus on Genesis 1:26–28: How can you be fruitful in your work?

Question 5

What aspects of your work are stewarding creation?

Question 6

What parts of your work are about ruling or subduing the earth (bringing order)?

Finding Ourselves Ungrounded in Work

Question 7

How is your work, including your working relationships, impacted by sin?

Question 8

What is the good of your work, in spite of the curse of the process of work?

Regrounding our Work in God through Christ

Question 9

How conscious are you of all the work of others that helps us to simply live?

Question 10

Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of Colossians 1:15–20 says of Jesus: “Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe – people and things, animals and atoms – get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.” How does your work contribute to the work of helping to fix the “broken and dislocated pieces of the universe”?

Question 11

In the chapter there are stories of Christians grounding their faith in their everyday work. Were there any stories that resonated with you? Why?

Question 12

Note the following:

- One quote or Bible verse you are going to put up in your main place of work.
- One idea that you are going to share with a friend.
- One change you are going to make to the way you work as a result of reading this chapter.

Academic Questions

Question 1

Does Proverbs 31 change your idea of what 'women's work' is? How?

Question 2

How does the concept of working **with** God impact on your ideas about work?

Question 3

"Work is not simply a means to get an income, it is about stewardship, productivity, fruitfulness, relationships, for the good of the world and the glory of God" (p.255). What does this translate into in your particular areas of work?

Question 4

"We can also live in light of the hope of the New Creation. The whole earth is groaning for release as we read in Romans 8:22-23, and we share in that awareness of bondage to

decay, and the desire for what is to come" (p.259). How do you respond to that text: intellectually, physically and emotionally?

Question 5

How does work help to ground your faith, or spirituality, in everyday reality?

Question 6

How would you communicate this concept (of work grounding one's faith in everyday reality) in your preaching and teaching?