

WORK

- 4) Content will challenge viewers to **grow** in their appreciation of beauty and evaluation of themselves and their culture.
- 5) **Heroes** will be depicted honestly, admitting shortcomings and championing virtue even in so-called villains.

“Reform in cinema will be difficult. Sex and violence offer potent vicarious thrills . . . Are people willing to see the connection between the objectification of women in films and their objectification in reality? . . . Reform might begin in the marketplace” (196).

What reforms might believers work toward beyond choosing not to spend money on morally depraved films?

PHYSICIANS

The medical field is fraught with ethical dilemmas and desperately needs Christians to bring the influence of the gospel.

- 1) Doctors, nurses, and specialists promote **justice** by treating each patient’s needs as important. They prove **faithful** and **loving** when they listen to patients and treat them as holistic persons—body and soul.
- 2) They uphold God’s **law** by the Hippocratic oath to “do no harm,” particularly with regards to abortion and assisted suicides. They evaluate patients according to **biblical categories** of gender and psychology not fleeting societal fads.
- 3) The **causes** and **goals** of physicians center around the flourishing of patients, not the financial prosperity of a hospital or practice.
- 4) Doctors are not afraid to recommend any **helpful** remedy beyond medicine and surgery—including changes to diet, exercise, less medicine, even reconciliation of a broken relationship.
- 5) Christians seek to become **champions** and pioneers of treatments that dignify patients and address problems at the root.

“They give the body every opportunity to heal itself, [knowing] that the medical system ‘often teaches patients to stay sick, not to get well’” (197).

Week 12: Principles for Representative Professions (Part 1)¹

*“Emma, the founder of a growing design firm, pressed me to offer more than general principles for work: ‘I need you to tell me what to do on Mondays . . . I need help with **specifics.**’” (189).*

We all want teaching to get practical and address the particular situations and pressure points of our workplaces. **What dangers do we need to watch out for as we apply general biblical principles to specific professions and vocations?**

There are many particular questions in the workplace that pastors and theologians can help answer:

- Is it wrong to entertain ‘incentives’ or kickbacks when receiving bids for a project? (Ex. 23:8; Deut. 25:13)
- Is it immoral to fire people who need their job if they are underperforming?
- Can I grow my business using loans and interest? (Ex. 22:25; Luke 19:11-27)

However, there are particular questions about various professions that pastors and theologians are not qualified to answer, at that point “we have left our sphere of competence and ought to be silent” (190).

The burden falls on Christian professions with experience and training to apply Scriptural principles in their workplaces. Pastors can always serve as wise counselors and sounding boards.

FIVE PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE ‘OUR’ WORK

Each of these five principles applies no matter where you work, and they all begin with “we” because work is always communal:

- 1) We will strive for godlike justice, faithfulness, and love.
- 2) We will apply God’s law, especially the Ten Commandments, to all work.
- 3) We will promote worthy causes and goals.

¹ This study is a distillation of Daniel Doriani’s *Work: Its Purpose, Dignity and Transformation* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2019). It is meant to be taught in conjunction with the book, not as a replacement.

- 4) We will look for people we can serve, develop, and protect.
- 5) We will follow the examples of heroes at work.

Which of these principles do you think is most important? Let's consider how these might play out in some particular fields.

COACHES, TEACHERS, AND TUTORS

Coaches and teachers have a vast overlap in their role as the primary instructor of a small group of individuals seeking personal development.

- 1) **Justice** means an instructor has mastery to teach the basics to beginners and to challenge advanced students.
- 2) Coaches encourage **love for neighbor** and sportsmanship that never seeks to bend or stretch the rules.
- 3) Teachers know how to set achievable and challenging **goals** to promote growth.
- 4) Coaches and teachers know their own limits and help **developing** students transition to new instructors. When students fail, teachers and coaches never insult or demean; they also shun false praise and flattery.
- 5) Tutors and coaches don't let their people quit. They champion **heroes** to motivate and discipline their teams and classes to practice not "until I can do it right," but until I can hardly do it wrong, even under pressure.

In team and classroom environments coaches and teachers must consider these goals not only on a one-on-one basis but in a collective sense as well. **How might these goals be promoted communally?**

COMMUNICATORS, WRITERS, AND NEWS MEDIA

These professions work in the industry of *words*—and *images*, especially in social media. **How might our five principles steer our work in this field?**

- 1) Communicators need to do **justice** to the facts. The burden lies with them to vet their sources and to **love** others by being **faithful** to promote trustworthy information, never twisting facts to incite fear or improper action.
- 2) Writers do not **bear false witness** (Ex. 20:16), speak in a **dishonorable** manner about authorities (Ex. 20:12), write hit

pieces to **assassinate** personal character (Ex. 20:13), **plagiarize** (Ex. 20:15), or **incite** readers and viewers to sin (Ex. 20:17).

- 3) Honest communication tells truth **helpfully**. Broadcasters, podcasters, and web content developers surround the truth with beauty that persuades, delights, and invites listeners to the contemplation of what is good and excellent (Phil. 4:8).
- 4) Interviewers will **bring out the best** in their subjects with thoughtful questions. Reviewers will not exaggerate or lampoon but **provide suggestions** for improvement. Journalists who expose evil will **protect** the vulnerable (Isaiah 1:17).
- 5) Communicators will celebrate and promote **heroes**, not partisanship.

In your estimation, where do the greatest dangers lurk in the field of communication?

"Communicators should 'speak the truth in love' and give grace to those who hear' (Eph. 4:15,29) . . . They [should] overlook minor slips and take inopportune comments in the best sense" (194).

ENTERTAINERS

Is it right to curse or depict violence to represent the human condition properly? How can entertainers promote virtue without getting pedantic? Can we depict sympathetic villains without glorifying evil? **How do our principles apply to actors, producers, YouTubers, comedians, entertainment executives?**

- 1) Content will encourage viewers to delight in clever humor, using satire to promote truth and tear down falsehood. Storylines will celebrate sacrificial **love** and demonstrate the brokenness of sin and **unfaithfulness**.
- 2) Entertainers will not tell stories, shoot scenes, or include content that **entices viewers to sin**.
- 3) Executives will measure **success** by more than "what sells." Rather, they will pursue the goals of truth-telling and aesthetic beauty.