



THE HIGH CALLING OF OUR DAILY WORK

Gospel Living in a Superficial World

5.28.06 by Gordon Atkinson

Article:

A dear friend of mine is a lawyer in a large city. He and his partner are both serious Christians, and they have built their practice around the values and principles that they believe are central to their faith. They have made conscious business choices that allow them to operate simply, so that their resources may be used in ways that are meaningful to them.

The only time these choices are difficult is when other lawyers come to their office. Some assume that their simple and inexpensive office is a sign that they are not good attorneys. So many people seem to equate décor with success. At these times, my friend must swallow his pride, keep silent, and let the other lawyers think whatever they may think.

It is so very hard to embrace the values of the gospel while living in a culture that values external appearances and considers wealth to be a sign of professional success.

The irony is that signs of wealth are easily faked. The man with the nice house may be mortgaged to the hilt and facing bankruptcy. The woman with the fancy car may be seeking to create a good impression that will make up for a lack of ability. External signs of wealth and success are often cheap storefronts that hide internal mediocrity or even incompetence.

The values of the gospel, on the other hand, blossom and grow inside of us. They are less showy and much harder to fake.

In [Matthew 5:3-10](#), Jesus opens his famous Sermon on the Mount by listing the values of the Kingdom of Heaven, which stand in stark contrast to the values of the world.

- Our culture says, "Blessed are those with great wealth." Jesus says, "Blessed are those who admit their poverty of spirit."
- Our culture says, "Blessed are those who think positively and are always happy." Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn and whose hearts are broken by the things that break the heart of God."
- Our culture says, "Blessed are those who are bold enough to assert themselves and take what they want." Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek, the gentle, and those who have learned to live for others."
- Our culture says, "Blessed are those who are publicly praised and blessed by the culture at large." Jesus says, "Blessed are those who live righteous and good lives, even if the world misunderstands them and considers them to be fools."

Faith is much more than a publicly proclaimed set of religious beliefs. Faith is, instead, the willingness to embrace the life and values of Christ in a world that is skeptical and sometimes even hostile. And our faith is never challenged more than when we are in the workplace, where the values of wealth and success are championed most openly.

There is no higher calling than to live as Christians in our daily work. And no other arena presents such an obvious opportunity to demonstrate the more fulfilling and meaningful way of life in Christ.

Over the years my friend has become well known in the legal community of his town. His colleagues have been impressed with the quality of his work, for his faith calls him to do good work. Those who might have been less than impressed with his office were greatly impressed to find him involved in many good causes in which legal help is desperately needed.

In 2001, my friend was chosen by his peers as the best lawyer in his area of specialization in the city. Lawyers from around town stood and applauded enthusiastically when he received his award at their yearly meeting. Careful work and integrity always show themselves over time.

Living daily for Christ in the workplace does not always pay off in such open and obvious ways, but clearly the values of Jesus are not at odds with achieving excellence in our work. My friend is a wonderful example of what can happen when the values of Christ take root and blossom in the high calling of our daily work.

Questions for Further Reflection:

- *Our culture tries to set our expectations for success. A lawyer expects to work in fancy office. A businessperson expects to pack the calendar with important meetings. In "[The Football Suit](#)," even Howard Butt's three-year-old son felt like he needed a fancy football uniform to play well. How does our culture define success for someone in your line of work?*
- *How does God define success for someone in your line of work?*
- *Gordon Atkinson says, "Faith is the willingness to embrace the life and values of Christ in a world that is skeptical and sometimes even hostile." Such faith is not easy. In [1 Thessalonians 5](#), Paul tells Christians to "encourage one another and build each other up." Who encourages you and helps you demonstrate the life and values of Christ in your workplace? Who are you encouraging?*

Read more of Gordon Atkinson at RealLivePreacher.com.

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