**A Practical Theology of Work**

I. Introduction

A. The majority of our lives is spent working

B. Work is fundamentally a spiritual activity

II. Why do we work?

A. To provide for ourselves and our families (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, 1 Timothy 5:8)

B. To be productive and diligent (Proverbs 24:30-34)

C. To serve other people

D. To be a responsible trustee and steward who faithfully manages God’s creation for the common good (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:15)

1. We were created in God’s image (God himself is a worker and creator)

2. As image bearers, we are called to subdue, rule, manage, supervise God’s creation as he himself would do it

3. Adam and Eve were placed in the garden to work and take care of it (add value to it)

4. Work was mandated before the Fall—it is fundamentally a good thing in which we get to add value to God’s good creation.

III. Work and the Fall (Genesis 3)

A. Work became difficult, toilsome, and frustrating

B. We are now trying to carry out God’s mandate in a fallen world with fallen people like us (greed, dishonesty, ego, tough circumstances, failures, etc.)

IV. What’s the relationship between church (“full-time ministry”) and work?

A. Many people think that church is the really important thing and people in “full time service” are really doing God’s work, and that “secular” work is inferior to that.

B. But the truth is reversed: our time at church and church leaders exist to prepare us for our daily work, which is where most of our life is lived and is the core arena where are faith is lived out.

V. Whatever you do, work unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23-24)

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does considering God’s good purpose for work (= to faithfully rule over and manage God’s creation for the common good) change the way you approach your work?

2. Where do you most experience the effects of the Fall in your work? What are the greatest challenges of your particular work?

3. Read Colossians 3:23-24. As you consider being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ in the context of your particular work (whether paid or unpaid), how specifically can we be praying for you in the context of your work?

4. Do you tend to think that people in paid church ministry or mission work have work that is inherently more valuable than “secular” jobs, or do you see all jobs as being of equal value in God’s eyes?