



GOD
AT
WORK

Conversation Starters

Welcome to the God at Work Conversations Starters. We know that finding purpose at work is one of the greatest challenges in our lives. The following pages support the God at Work Conversation films. Use them to spark your own conversations, to inspire you and to help equip you for your unique challenges and opportunities.

Topics



You will find that each session stands alone, but if you want to group sessions together we would suggest the pairs shown below. Enjoy your journey to 'live each day with purpose' at work.



God's Purpose for Work

Reconciling faith and work

'The God who created the universe and who created work, is himself interested in the work that we do.'

God works

God calls us into the workplace, for him it's a reflection of his action in creation (Genesis 1).

God describes himself as:

- a gardener (John 15:1)
- an artist (Genesis 1:1)
- a potter (Isaiah 64:8)
- a shepherd (John 10:11)
- a king (Psalm 145:1)
- a home-maker (Hebrews 3:1-6)
- a builder (Psalm 127:1)

We are made in the image of a God who works.

Work is Worship

The Hebrew word avodah (עֲבוּדָה) can be translated 'work' or 'worship'.

'My work station is my worship station.'

Colossians 3:23, we work within relationship and this is our model for work.

John 5:17, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.'



Your attitude matters

'Trust in Jesus Christ changes everything.'

This influences your attitude at work, the way you approach the work, treat people and the way you deal with tough times.

'We're strengthened in the world for the world.' Reflect the presence of God at work.

Work matters to God

'So the God who created and sustains the world, is also the God of the workplace.'

'If God is not relevant at work, He's not relevant at all.'

Conversation Questions

Do you agree that our work matters to God?

How does what we believe about God's attitude to our work impact our attitude to our work?

What does it look like to worship God through our work?

If we believe relationships are at the heart of work, how should that change our way of working?

Think of a specific issue at work and think about what God might be saying to you about his purpose for you right now.



Called to Work

“Commit your way unto to the Lord, trust in God and He will act” Psalm 37:5 (ESV)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

No sacred secular divide

There are a range of different professions in the Bible:

- Abraham was a cattle trader
- Joseph was Prime Minister
- Luke was a doctor
- The first Ethiopian convert was a central banker
- Dorcas was in fashion
- Simon was a tanner
- Jesus was a carpenter

“Christians are to be ‘this worldly’ - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Five key points for calling

1. Consider - the facts, your gifts, your skills
2. Clarify - the key issues
3. Conscience - what does it say?
“It’s the silent clamour of the heart” (Augustine)
4. Courage - to take action
Caleb & Joshua - Numbers 13 & 14
5. Contentedness



Our attitude to work

- Honour God in whatever we do.
- Keep the macro in mind, when consumed with the details of the day.
- Recognise you are where God wants you to be.
- Live where you are for the purposes of why He's put you there which is to do a day's work well.
- Consider the micro as well as the macro of your role.

A pattern for work

- Start the day with prayer and the Bible
- End with prayer and reflection
- Allow God to punctuate your day

Conversation Questions

How do you see your calling & how does that link to what you do today?

What is the macro/wider context of your job? How can you recognize the broader impact your work has on society?

At the micro level are there opportunities to change how you do things so that the kingdom of God is advanced?

How have you been challenged on your attitude to work?



Authentically You

'We're not alone, He's invested in us and we honour Him in the way we work.'
2 Corinthians 1:21- 22

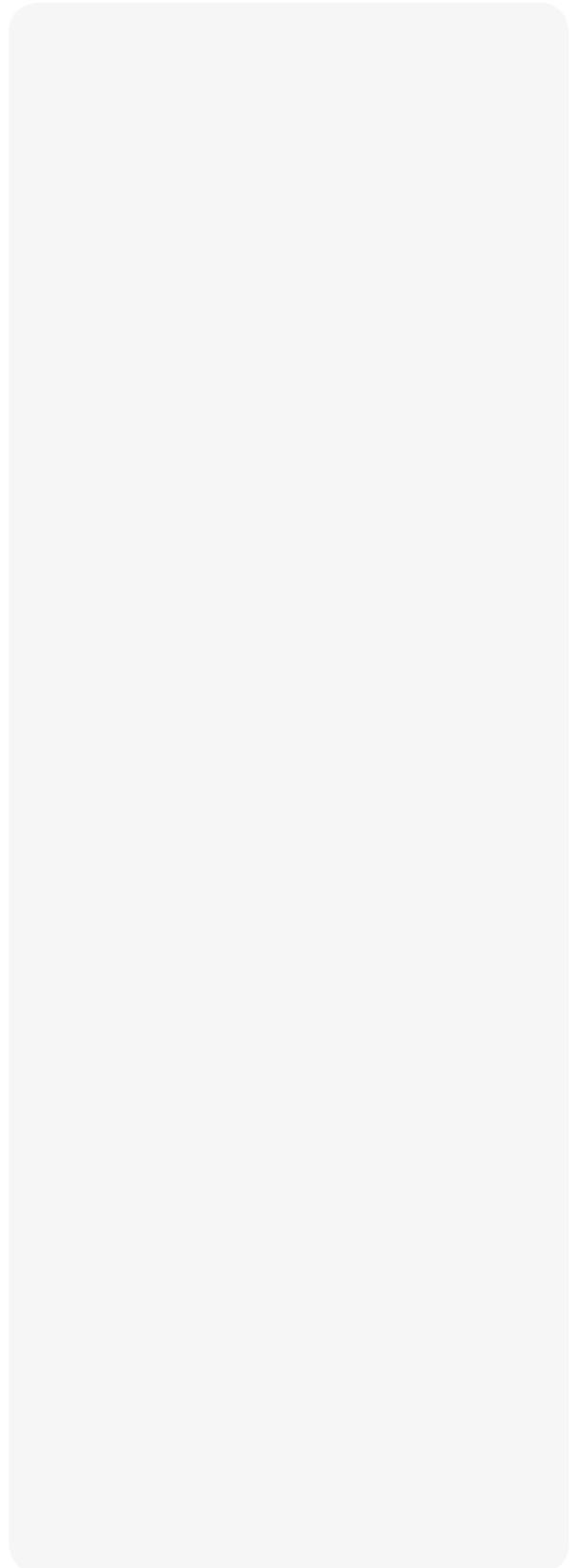
- Anointing God has anointed us for the work we do.
- Aligning Align ourselves to his will and the values of the Kingdom.
- Purpose "Live each day with purpose", you can work in a not-for-profit organisation but you cannot work in a not-for-purpose organisation.

How can I be authentic at work?

1. Do the job God has given you well
2. Know the money you earn is a proper reward, and use it well
3. Don't leave your faith behind at the door
4. Remember God is interested in how we work
5. Love your neighbour as yourself
6. Be quick to forgive
7. Recognise the Spirit of God is with us everyday

What about when I've got it wrong?

- God's grace
- Forgiveness
- Repentance





How do I link to God's resources at work?

1. Stay connected to God

2. Reflect God's values

love others as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31)

be honest (2 Kings 12:13-15)

live with integrity (1 Chronicles 29:17 and Job 2:3)

act justly and humbly (Micah 6:8)

be willing to forgive (Matthew 6:12)

be patient, kind, good, faithful, and self-controlled
(Gal 5:22-23)

Conversation Questions

Is it possible to be authentically you in the workplace?

What key relationships do you have at work, how would they describe you?

What daily triggers could you use to stay connected with God at work?

What practical steps will you take in the next week to engage with God at work?

Think through a situation where you might need to reflect more of God's values at work, what do you need to change?



Transforming Work Culture

Understand the World

“For God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son.”

John 3:16

“Do not love the world or anything in the world.”

1 John 2:15

Double listening (John Stott) – listening to culture and listening to the word of God

How do you understand the world?

- Use social media
- Talk to people
- Read the news
- Watch current films
- Read books from new authors

Critique the world

Critique with biblical and worldly standards

Turn from the way of the world and turn to Jesus



Draw the World to Christ

We want people to know the good news of Christ.

“... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

(1 Peter 3:15)

“... But do this with gentleness and respect.”

(1 Peter 3:15)

Five key points to transform your work culture

- Honour God in everything
- Give more than people expect
- God is interested in our attitude
- Prefer our colleagues to ourselves
- Enjoy reward without guilt

Conversation Questions

What value do you see in understanding and critiquing the world?

How might you become more effective at it?

What's your experience on being open about your faith at work?

What might help you to be more confident and courageous in drawing others to Christ?



Money Matters

Money is powerful. We underestimate the influence it has on us.

Your wallet tells you about your walk with God.

What is money?

“Everyone has it; no one has enough. Reluctant to discuss it, they think of nothing else. People invest it with their own intimate feelings, their rivalries, their triumphs, their frustrations, their ambitions, their resentments. At night it grows into something real, overpowering, enlightening, protective, crushing. A phantasmagorical god... it was a means, it has become an end.” (Guy de Rothschild)

What does the Bible teach about money?

Mark 10:17-27 - If your money is a barrier to your relationship with God then you must do something about it.

Jesus used every day examples of commerce; debt, investing, stewardship and how we deal with money. It mattered to Jesus so therefore it should matter to us.

Matthew 6:24 - You cannot serve both God and money.

‘There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind and the purse’

Martin Luther



Advice on money

- Do not love money
- Step back and review your spending patterns
- If you have fallen in love with money, recognise the problem, talk to someone to help you solve the problem and take the opposite action
- Enjoy the money that you have but be responsible
- Enjoy giving
- Build up trust spend by spend

“The aim is to use money, to invest money, to make money, to risk money, to deal in money, to enjoy the fruits of money, but never to love it.”

Seek first the kingdom and everything else falls second.

Conversation Questions

What does your wallet say about your spiritual walk with God?

How do you manage the tension between the world's view and the biblical view of money?

How does money help or hinder your relationship with God?

What is the next decision you need to make with your money?



Enjoy Giving

“Giving is spirituality made real”

Principles of giving

- It is an act of worship
- It is a sign of our responsibility
- It is a credit posted in heaven (Philippians 4:7)
- It will help you live a fuller life

The cost of giving

- Change of mindset
- Change of heart
- Change of direction

Attitudes to giving

Mark 12:43-44 - a right heart

Matthew 6:2-4 - ‘giving privately’

2 Corinthians 9:7 - cheerfully

How do I become more generous?

Start small

Build up a sustainable pattern of regular giving

Be deliberate, not just impulse giving

Give to causes and people that mean most to you

- Church community
- Charities you’re particularly interested in



How much should I give?

How much is not as important as how we give it.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

“Gain all you can, without hurting either yourself or your neighbour, in soul or body, by applying hereto with unintermitted diligence, and with all the understanding which God has given, you; save all you can by cutting off every expense which serves only to indulge foolish desire...waste nothing...and then, give all you can, or, in other words, give all you have to God. Do not stint yourself ... to this or that proportion. Render unto God, not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's, be it more or less; by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith and all mankind, in such a manner, that you may give a good account of your stewardship, when ye can be no longer stewards.”

John Wesley

Conversation Questions

What might you do to lead a more/an even more generous life?

What struggles do you have with giving?

Think through how you currently use your money, how does it reveal your values and priorities?

Consider what, if anything, you want to change.



Good Ambition

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition”

Philippians 2: 3-4

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.”

John 4:34

“Press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:12b -14

Godly ambition - Jesus in the centre

Worldly ambition - me in the centre

The parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

The importance of God centred ambition

Faithfulness and fruitfulness

What does God-centred Christian ambition look like?

“Christian ambition is the passionate and contented pursuit of challenging, yet attainable, God-given objectives.”

Passionate

Ambitions arise from a God-given passion to fulfil his purpose for our lives

Contented

Learning to be content in all situations.



Challenging

'Do not settle for black and white if God has given you a vision in colour' – John Collins

God-given

Initiated, sustained and, where necessary, corrected by God

Doesn't have to be big, but it does have to be bold.

Ambition driven by the self is unbearable, but ambition driven by the Spirit is unbeatable

Attainable

Set the bar at the right level - too high you'll be discouraged, if you pitch it too low you're probably lacking ambition.

Avoiding the dangers of ambition

Keep connected to God, not divorced from Him.

Hold our ambitions lightly, not going all out for ourselves.

Live at ease with the influence He's given us in the world.

Conversation Questions

How do you feel about the subject of ambition?

What do you believe God-given ambitions are?

How are your ambitions affecting your career choices?

What challenges do you face on the area of ambition?



Failing Well

What does failure look like in the workplace?

1. Personal
2. Professional
3. Moral

Am I a failure?

- You may have failed in a project it doesn't mean that you're a failure.
- Psalm 37:4
- Failure doesn't define us.
- With Christ in us, hope pulls us through.

How to fail well

- Get back to your feet
'success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm' – Winston Churchill
- Accept we are going to fail
- Listen to God and others around you
- Don't linger over what went wrong
- Do learn from it
- Leave it and live on



How can we live well in the midst of disappointments?

- Sometimes my plan B is God's plan A
- The Spirit of God's with us in through those failures (Psalm 23:4)
- God looks at our failures through Jesus, through the cross

Spiritual Habits

Turn to God

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble

Face the facts

Meditate on Scripture

Prepare through feeding on the word of God
so when crisis hits you know his Word

Keep a journal

Persevere in hope

May the God of hope fill you... (Romans 15:13)

Conversation Questions

What Christian principles do you apply when faced with a failure or disappointment?

How have they helped you?

What stops you applying these principles when you face disappointment?

What am I facing at the moment where I could apply these practical steps?

What do I need to change to 'persevere in hope'?



Right Decisions

Building blocks for moral decisions

1. Foundation: God is the foundation
2. Framework: the Word of God and the Spirit of God.
3. Freedom: to choose but not freedom to sin (Romans 6:1)

How do we live holy lives in the workplace?

1. We must be carriers of good news, the Spirit of God.
2. We need to be within the world, but not of the world.

Guidelines for making moral decisions

- Be accountable to God and others
- Prioritise your relationship with God
- Reason and think issues through together
- Consider your conscience
- Assess the consequences of our actions



What happens when you do make a bad moral decision?

There is grace and forgiveness

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity within you.

Romans 12: 1-2 (Msg)

Conversation Questions

- What moral decisions are you facing in your workplace, how might these guidelines help?
- Think of the range of decisions that you have to take in your working life, how have you made these decisions? What might you do differently in the future?
- Who are the people in your life with whom you seek wise council?

Personal Reflection

Are there any wrong decisions you've made which you need to walk in God's grace and forgiveness for? If so, remember it's by grace and you're already forgiven. Bring those things to Him so you can be free of condemnation.



Smart Decisions

How do you make smart decisions in the workplace?

1. Follow the wisdom of God

“wisdom is the art of living skilfully in whatever actual conditions we find ourselves.” - Eugene Peterson

wisdom takes time and investment to develop

“the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom”

(Proverbs 9:10)

2. Ask others for advice

from people you can trust and who understand you

from people who understand the nature of the decision you have to make

and sometimes from those who have no idea

3. Make time to decide.

Step back to gain perspective. Start by focusing on God – worship Him.

4. Make the complex simple

“Strive for simplicity on the other side of complexity.”



5. Listen to the question

Consider the three questions in Luke 20:

- Jesus declines to answer – not every question deserves an answer.
- Jesus redefines the question – we don't always have to restrict ourselves to the questions people ask us.
- Jesus gives a straight answer – when you get a straight question, give a straight answer.

6. Consider the consequences

Consider and manage the downside as much as the upside, there's always going to be risk.

7. Implement the decision

We are to be 'as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves' (Matthew 10:16). - the Spirit of God enables us to do both and have that balance.

The Spirit of God works with us to implement these decisions in an effective way (Daniel).

Conversation Questions

Looking at the seven steps, how can you apply this to any decisions you're having to make now?

Is there any of the seven steps which you find challenging? If so, what is challenging about it and what can you do to try and implement it?

Reflect on your trend line. Are there any red flags? How can any red flags be managed to bring the change which is needed?



Living Well

Paul says “learning to be content in all things”
Phil 4:11-12 (paraphrased)

Stress kills perspective; good living restores perspective

Work life integration versus work life balance

Col 1:17 (paraphrased) “... in Him all things hold together”

What does the integrated life look like?

Keeping priorities must be central to living an integrated life

Order your priorities

- o God
- o Key relationships
- o The work God has called us to

How do we keep those priorities in place?

Start the day with God

Be fully present, you just need to be vigilant and keep watch.

Know where your ultimate identity comes from



Saying no

Matthew 10:5-6 – Jesus had a specific task for His disciples. Our natural instinct is to try and do more than we're equipped or enabled to do.

When the core is strong and right, then we can live with the chores.

Rest

It's a priority day out God rested from His creative activity after the creation of the world.

The Sabbath rest reminded the children of Israel they're not slaves anymore

- We need sleep
- Have a hobby
- Take physical exercise
- Use that rest time for something that's different from what you're normal work
- Take a holiday

"I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance."

John 10:10

Conversation Questions

What is it that you really spend your time doing and how is it affecting the rest of your life?

In the last month, where have you placed your priorities and does this need to change?

In what are you placing your identity? Is it from a place of God's love or does this need to be re-aligned?

Do you feel your core is right at work, or do you need to establish this?



Tackling Stress

“We perform under pressure, but plummet under stress.”

Discover a rhythm for life.

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Matt 11: 28-30

The rhythms of grace = The Spirit of God integrates the whole person; emotional, psychological, physiological and spiritual

How to deal with stress well: Seven stress busters

1. Stay healthy

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Exercise, sleep and eat healthily

2. Fight fear

“... Perfect love casts out fear ...” 1 John 4:18

“They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting **in the Lord.**” (Psalm 112:7 paraphrased)



3. Take joy seriously

'Be joyful always' (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

4. Take an emotional break

Jesus withdrew to the mountains to be alone (John 6:15)

5. Minister in the opposite Spirit

'We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly.' (1 Corinthians 4:12-13)

6. Take control of our thoughts

Reject the thoughts without substance.

Remind yourself of the many attributes of God and dwell on them (Philippians 4:8)

7. Pray and read the Bible

'Everyday robust sanity' (Eugene Peterson)

Conversation Questions

- What are your main sources of stress or pressure at work today?
- What difference does your faith make to you when dealing with stress?
- What practical steps do you need to take to be more effective at dealing with stress?
- What do you need to change to "learn the unforced rhythm of grace" in your life?

Further Information

Our vision is for you to be ready to take risks, go deeper with God and tackle whatever work throws at you so you can live an amazing life of adventure.

If you want are interested in more resources then go to godatwork.org.uk (where if you sign up to the site you will receive our newsletters). Our social media channels are where you will find more inspirational and practical content covering the everyday challenges faced at work and helping you explore your God-given purpose, skills and talents to truly influence our culture for the glory of God.

Strange Kingdom

Is the Cross of Christ relevant to anything I do at work? Absolutely. Find out how it is in Strange Kingdom, a new teaching series from God at Work. Create 10 minutes in your diary each week and join Ken where you will have time to reflect on the cross, to be still, to meditate on scripture and to pray before launching into the busyness of the week ahead.

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