



Every Good Endeavour Timothy Keller

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Do we see work as our life's purpose? A good, an evil or a means to an end? Do we work in order to earn the money to live and relax for the 'real part of life'? As Christians, is our work primarily a place for evangelism or raising money for ministry, or is there value in our work in itself? This book brings to light the biblical view of work, as a fundamental part of being human and made in the image of God.

Keller helpfully unpacks God's plan for work in its design and dignity, and the purpose of work as cultivation and service. We see God at work from the beginning of time: God forms and fills the earth in Genesis 1. From here, Keller uses the biblical narrative to show that in our work we imitate God and thus our work has innate value and dignity.

We can see throughout both the Bible and history many facets of God working, as an artist, teacher, carer, architect, engineer, lawyer, manager and parent. Furthermore, work was a part of Eden, not an evil result of the fall (although work is of course affected by it). God created the universe, and us, out of love, so that we can have a relationship with him, and glorify him through our lives and work. Adam and Eve were the first human

beings to begin the God-mirroring and God-glorifying mandate to fill the earth and subdue it by working in the garden, cultivating the ground, using the raw materials God had given them for their livelihood and enjoyment, and bringing order out of chaos and fullness out of emptiness.

Additionally, Keller helps us understand our problems with work. We all know the feeling of work being fruitless, pointless and unsatisfying, and it never fully reaching our hopes or being fully completed. It is valuable to analyse the pain of work resulting from the fall (external) and our idolatry and selfishness (internal). We must let the gospel change our conception of and compass for work and be aware of the influence of the psychological idols within our hearts as well as the sociological idols in our culture and profession. The world we live in both idolises and devalues work from what God created it to be. Keller encourages us that our work on earth is not futile; it has eternal value. God continually shapes us as his workers to glorify him. Work's painful toil will be redeemed in the new creation; there is hope for our work now and for eternity.

Although Keller mainly uses examples of business in New York City, *Every Good*

Endeavour can certainly encourage and challenge us in our work as nurses and midwives. We have the privilege of bearing God's image as we care for humans holistically, showing them their intrinsic value and dignity. We can display God's love and see them as God does.

This book encourages us to assess ways we idolise work, and for healthcare professionals, this could be moral superiority and pride. Keller describes and defines the model for work by looking to Jesus, who supremely worked for the benefit and service of others. We are also called to serve God, by serving others and bringing glory to him. In light of God's mandate for work, we are freed from the world's measures of success. We can strive to do our work excellently with the gifts he's given us in the workplace he's placed us in, to bear his image, serve others and bring glory to him.

I found this book very enriching and challenging for the way I think about work, both to see its godly value and to understand why it can feel burdensome and unsatisfying. Keller provides a thought-provoking, challenging and encouraging read, which draws on foundational and relevant biblical wisdom to address our questions about work.