

CALLING AND CAREER

Teaching Guide

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This Week's Reading Assignment

This week's reading, *Calling and Career*, was written for a professional audience and discusses the topic of calling and the value of work. Christians in the work place long for cohesion between life and faith; calling can slake this craving by bringing all things back to the person of Christ.

A Note to the Teacher

A firm understanding of calling is essential for working with career minded professionals. Calling helps define how we live out our new life and can provide the driving force for all kinds of personal and professional development.

Learning objectives for this time:

1. To be able to explain why and how a proper understanding of calling is essential for working professionals?
2. To be able to explain the value of work and the sacred/secular dichotomy.

Additional Reading

The Call, by Os Guinness

The Devine Conspiracy, by Dallas Willard

Resources

No Labor Days, Mike Metzger

The Clapham Institute [newsletters@claphaminstitute.org]

Monday, September 03, 2007

Class Structure

Please plan 2 ½ hours for this session.

20 minutes

Hook: Choose either Hook #1 or Hook #2.

Hook #1 – Watch Nacho Libre Clip #2 & Read *No Labor Days*, by Mike Metzger

Hook #2 – Watch Nacho Libre Clip #1 and discuss how the characters in this scene reveal that they see life through the sacred/secular distortion.

20 minutes

Learning Activity: Calling and Creation Debate

30 minutes

Lecture and Discussion: The Sacred Secular Dichotomy

- What is the sacred/secular dichotomy?
- What are the implications of this distortion on calling?

40 minutes

Project Discussion: The Vocational Inventory

*Note - this teaching guide does not provide a framework for this discussion. Have your people share insights and discuss their calling in light of the article and the Vocational Inventory.

Hook and Discussion - Nacho Libre & No Labor Days



Starring: [Jack Black](#), [Héctor Jiménez](#), [Ana de la Reguera](#), [Peter Stormare](#), [more cast](#)

Directed By: [Jared Hess](#)

Released By: Paramount

Run Time: 100 min.

Genre: [Comedy](#)

Rating: [PG](#)

Movie Synopsis: Nacho (Jack Black) works as a cook at the same Mexican monastery where he was raised. He spends his days serving the monks and orphans he loves, but secretly, Nacho dreams of becoming a professional Mexican wrestler—a Luchador. When the orphanage is threatened with financial ruin, Nacho begins moonlighting as a wrestler by joining a local Lucha libre tournament. When Sister Encarnacion (Ana de la Reguera), arrives at the monastery, he tries to win her adoration while attempting to prove that being a Luchador isn't a sin.

Hook #1

Scene Introduction: Because of his love for the children in the orphanage, Nacho works hard at a job that holds little interest for him. His dream of becoming a professional wrestler makes it hard to endure the criticism he gets for his efforts.

What does the scene reveal about Nacho's attitude toward his work? Consider his use of the word duty and his desire for his day of glory?

Read *No Labor Days*, by Mike Metzger. How does the article help explain Nacho's experience with his work?

Hook #2

Scene Introduction: Nacho has been out all night trying to become the wrestler he believes he is called to be. He has failed to prepare breakfast for the children. In this scene Nacho confides in the sister his desire to be a wrestler. Her response betrays that she views the world through a sacred/secular distortion.

Discussion Questions: In the sister's opinion what makes wrestling evil and what would make it good? If you were to apply her criteria to all sports what would we need to conclude about the up-coming Olympics? Are sports a sacred or secular activity?

Calling and Creation Debate - Learning Activity

Purpose: The Calling and Creation Debate is designed to help the participants broaden their view of the created order and begin to think about creation differently. The discussion will help us imagine the world from outside a sacred/secular dichotomy.

Description: Think through the professions listed in the chart on the next page and decide which of these professions would exist had human kind never fallen, i.e. in a pre-fall, never corrupted world. You can do this in either a debate format or a discussion format.

Debate: Divide group into teams of 1-3 people. Assign each team a profession/field and a position (why or why not this field would exist had the fall never occurred) to defend. Give the teams five to ten minutes to prepare their presentation. After each presentation/debate debrief as a group.

Discussion: Assign pairs or small groups to each profession and have them state whether the profession would or would not exist had humanity never fallen. Debrief with the group after each presentation using the notes below if necessary.

| Profession/Field | Case For | Case Against |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Police Officer | It is true that crime would not exist apart from the fall, but Police are responsible for more than crime detection and punishment. The police play an important role in civic organization. Issues of crowd control and accident prevention would still exist. | Not only would crime not exist but there would be no need for overseeing other issues in society. Humankind would be perfectly sufficient to govern themselves. |
| Medical Professional | The created order may not be perfectly safe. Accidents may occur even if disease is wiped out. Also discovery/continued research is a key part of the cultural mandate. | Every tear is wiped away means no accidents. |
| Anti-Virus Provider | Can't think of any reason we would need such protection. | Viruses are a result of sin and would not be present in a perfect world. |
| Scientist | Discovery and development is a part of the cultural mandate. | |
| Aid Organizations | There is no reason to think that needs would not arise through or other non-sin related causes. | Even if there were needs, perfect shalom would exist, and the community would appoint guardians of that shalom. |
| Religious Workers | We will need priests to coordinate praise offerings | We would not need intermediaries between us and God and we would not need help with atonements. |
| Fashion Designer | Though Genesis states that Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed this does not mean that they were meant to remain naked (they were meant to remain unashamed). In their nakedness they were impervious to shame but they were not impervious to cold, nor were they equipped to explore the ocean or space or any of a number of places that require special clothing. Special clothing would be needed for these situations. Exploration is part of development. In addition, clothing can be an appropriate form of expression when not affected by the fall. Fashion would be very different in a perfect world. It would be a holy expression of who we are rather than a source of identity. | We were never meant to wear clothing. It grieved God to have to kill an animal to clothe Adam and Eve after the fall. Fashion is a perversion of self-expression. |
| Architect | Architects have been and would be indispensable in developing creation. We started in a garden but we will end in a city. The city is not as a result of the fall but is a part of God's original plan. | We wouldn't need architects in a garden. |
| Computer Technician | With development come new technologies. New technologies need to be evaluated and used correctly. Apart from the fall it is certain that technology would have developed differently, humankind would be far more discerning, technology would develop according to what we should do not what we can do. Computers have been and would be an important part of discovery. | Computers are a disruption to life as it ought to be. We would not need them we could just ask God if we had a question. |

Lecture Notes - The Sacred /Secular Dichotomy

Introduction: It can be easy to underestimate the destructive result of holding to a sacred/ secular dichotomy. We want to explore the truths that this view subtly distorts and the pragmatic affect it will have on our ministry.

What is the Sacred/Secular Dichotomy? Simply put it is when some activities or things fall into the category of sacred and others don't. The sacred is generally relegated to the private sphere and everything else is appropriately public. An example might be brushing your teeth and singing worship songs; teeth are secular and songs are sacred.

From a kingship perspective, Christ is King and reigns over all of creation. We, as his followers, are to acknowledge him as king in everything we do; which means that brushing our teeth should be as much of an act of worship as singing a praise song.

When work is viewed through this distortion some callings are elevated and others are lower. Missionary and church work is considered first-class work while all other work is considered second-class work.

What are the implications of the Sacred/Secular Distortion?

- It denies the value of work. Ignoring how God intended work to be (Creation) and what it will be someday (Consummation/Restoration) this distortion views work as necessary but meaningless. This robs work we do every day of its value.
- It denies a key principal of new life in Christ; that all things fall under his Lordship and therefore have value.
- It denies value of life on earth and of the created order and postpones all value until heaven.
- It limits the worker's ability to think of his/her profession in light of shalom and therefore to work for shalom.
- This distortion communicates to professionals who spend 50-70 hours a week at work that they are spending a large percentage of time in useless activities.
- Mission subtly changes from raising-up kingdom laborers in the communities where work and life takes place to simply raising up missionaries.

Lecture Discussion - The Sacred /Secular Dichotomy

- Pair up and have each group summarize what is meant by the sacred/secular dichotomy. After five minutes regroup and present conclusions.

- Several times the article uses the term "connect our faith to our work." In light of the sacred/secular dichotomy, what does this mean? How is your work connected to your faith; in other words, what does the four-chapter gospel have to say about your profession?

Agree/Disagree

When we use language that implies that certain work such as missions or church work, is more spiritual, more valuable and more enduring than other work we are flagrantly perverting biblical teaching by narrowing the sphere of calling and excluding most Christians from its scope.

Discussion Questions: What are the implications of this distortion for the working professional?