

“WORK: Redeeming Our Labor” - Blog #2

Steph, Corporate Strategist



This blog series is a part of our sermon series “WORK: Redeeming Our Labor”. We hope this set of interview style blogs is encouraging to our church family as we strive to be faithful in our labors and put our vocation into the story of God, for His glory, our good, and the benefit of the world around us.

**Answers have been lightly edited for grammar and spelling.*

1. Tell us what you do and how long you've been doing it.

After spending a couple of years in consulting, I began working in corporate strategy for a large retailer. I've been in my role since this past January and my work primarily consists of distilling strategic insights based on trends in the external landscape or shifts in consumer preferences to inform the company's strategic plan.

2. What are some of the highlights or things you enjoy about your job?

One of my favorite parts of my job is the future-oriented nature of the work. I really enjoy getting to look out onto the horizon and help set the direction of the company for the years to come. Another aspect of my job that I really enjoy is determining how to solve complex issues in a very structured way. I enjoy the challenge that these opportunities present and it keeps the work extremely dynamic — no day is the same. Another highlight of my job has been learning how to drive transformative initiatives across a massive organization. There is a lot of cross functional collaboration and it has been very interesting to get to understand different perspectives and how to lead through change.

3. What are some of the more frustrating parts of your job?

One of the harder parts of my job is the pace. Requests / projects are usually quite urgent yet need significant time and energy to comprehensively address, so balancing these expectations can become stressful. Another challenge is the pressure to consistently create extremely high-quality deliverables. Oftentimes we have an executive audience and because of this there is pressure to never make any mistakes and continuously raise the bar. This can make it really difficult to set boundaries with work because there is always more to do or more ways to improve the current deliverable. One other challenge I often wrestle with is the ambiguity of the work. I have yet to work on a project where the solution was black and white or I had a clear line of sight to reach completion. There is frequently a large amount of uncertainty or varying perspectives, which can make it difficult to arrive at a solution that is agreed upon by all.

4. How do you see your work as "joining God in cultivating the world?"

My job enables me to join God in cultivating the world by pushing me to creatively consider how to create value by better serving the needs of others, whether that be the customer, employees, or our shareholders. Additionally, the skill set that I have gained throughout my career has enabled me to partner with the Lord in equipping others so that they can sustain themselves and be economically self-sufficient. This has taken many forms throughout my career. God used my consulting experience to help a nonprofit in Chicago extend their reach in the homeless population and my strategy experience to help a historically underrepresented business in Charlotte develop their growth strategy. He has even enabled me to leverage my experiences to serve others overseas. He provided the opportunity to help launch a startup incubator in an economically disadvantaged country in North Africa by coaching aspiring entrepreneurs, empowering them to shape their own future. God has used my job to show me the many ways in which he cares for not only the spiritual well-being of people but also their socioeconomic well-being. I am extremely grateful for the ways I've been able to join Him in this work.

5. How does the gospel of Jesus impact your work?

The gospel of Jesus impacts my work because it enables me to view my work as an opportunity to extend God's love and hope to others in a way that encourages and supports both their economic and spiritual welfare. The gospel also specifically pushes back against the highly competitive nature of my field. Because of Jesus, I get to steward my position in a way that affirms and uplifts others. Instead of striving for perfection and the approval of my team, I get to rest and remain steadfast because my identity is grounded in Christ and I work for Him rather than people. Instead of seeking fulfillment primarily from my work, God supplies me with a purpose and joy that a career could never offer.

6. What are some current prayer requests you have with your job?

I would love prayer for increasing depth in my work relationships and boldness to love them well and speak gospel truth into their lives as a result. I would also really appreciate prayers that I would grow increasingly trusting of God's presence and plan for my career, rather than holding it tightly in my own hand and becoming engulfed in it's worldly business and stresses.