


## Faith and Work Part 4

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. I Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “**Talking Points, Walking Points**” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “**Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time**”, are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection

- Which lines of work do we typically think of as the “service professions”?
- After what Doug said Sunday, does God say there are any “**non**-service professions”? Explain.  
Is **your** line of work considered a traditional “service profession”?  
If not, how can you begin doing your job as if it were (because God says it is!)?  
If so, have any self-serving attitudes crept into your workplace? What can you do to change that?
- Read Matthew 25:34-40. List all of the things that the righteous **did** (v. 35-36)?  
Were they **aware** of all of these righteous acts (v. 37-39)? Explain how that could happen.  
Who did Jesus say they served (v. 40): “one of these \_\_\_\_\_ of Mine, even the \_\_\_\_\_ of them.”  
Who are Jesus' brothers? Support your answer biblically.
- Doug said that our work not only provides for others' needs, but it also is the context for our own spiritual formation. Give some examples of how your job **could** make you more like Christ.

**How much** spiritual growth do you think you've seen through your work? Give some examples.

What attitudes would you have to change for your job to be an even greater source of growth?

**Not sure how to glorify God at work?  
Let a biblical counselor help!  
counseling@tcc.org**

## Application-Challenge

- Develop a new appreciation for the significance of your work.
- Consciously view your work as a platform for serving God **by** serving others.
- Conduct yourself at work as though Jesus were your boss (*because He is!*).

# Sermon Summary

Many Christians have created a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, between their private “faith life” and their public “work life.”

“Sacred” (Spiritual Life)

“Secular” (Work Life)

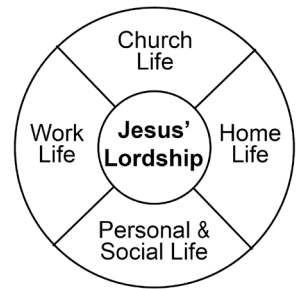
But that is not God’s intention. There is no secular dimension to life—all of life is meant to be lived under Christ’s lordship. Work is a gift from God, a spiritual activity through which we image God. Today we will discuss four critical functions our work is to fulfill.

Through work we serve people. All of the amenities that we enjoy can be traced back to the work of millions of people working across a complex web of industries. Through our combined individual contributions at work, we serve one another in powerful ways. That is a good thing that God wants done.

In fact, in Matthew 25:34-40 Jesus taught that peoples’ identity as either a “sheep” (saved) or a “goat” (lost) is evidenced in a willingness to give themselves in service to others. That’s what work is! Jesus said, “I was hungry/thirsty/naked/sick...and you took care of me.” Through our various occupations we make ourselves useful by helping to meet their needs. And that is something that God wants done. I am not suggesting that the service rendered in this parable is limited to what we do at work, but I do believe that the 40 plus hours per week we spend at work accounts for a significant percentage of the service we render to others.

Our work also is the context for our own spiritual formation. We should have a new appreciation for the significance of our work. We should consciously view our work as a platform for serving God by serving others. We should conduct ourselves at work as though Jesus were our boss.

On the job you may feel overworked, overwhelmed, under-compensated and under-appreciated, but you can be confident that Jesus, the righteous judge, will fairly evaluate your life’s work, and you will be justly rewarded.



## Talking To God About This Week’s Message

*“Heavenly Father, today I want to be a ‘doer’ of the Word, and not just a ‘hearer’. Amen.”*

## Talking To Others About This Week’s Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, “*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*”, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week’s sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? How would you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

## Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time

*This week we'll study some hard-working people who used their labor and resources to love and serve others...*

### **Monday**—Read Ruth Chapter 1

- In **one** sentence, restate the events found in v. 1-5.  
In **one** sentence, restate the events found in v. 6-18.  
In **one** sentence, restate the events found in v. 19-22.
- Describe Naomi's character. Describe Naomi's emotional state. Describe Ruth's character.
- The Book of Ruth took place "during the time of the \_\_\_\_\_" (v. 1). Judges is right before Ruth. Read its final verse. Read Judges Chapter 19 to see what "the time of the Judges" was like—when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes."
- Describe how you'd feel if you were Ruth or Naomi—a destitute, unprotected female during the wicked time of the judges.

### **Tuesday**—Read Ruth Chapter 2

- Remember what it was like "during the time of the Judges"? What indications do you see of that in v. 8-9, 22?
- What do you learn about Ruth's character in v. 2 & 7?  
In v. 10-12?  
In v. 14c and 18c? (She saved some of her lunch and brought it home to Naomi.)  
In v. 17-18?
- What do you learn about Boaz's character in v. 1?  
In v. 4? (How did Boaz differ from most of the people living "during the time of the Judges"?)  
In v. 8-9?  
In v. 14?  
In v. 15-16?
- Ruth worked from **morning till evening** (Ruth 2:7, 17) **six days a week** (Exodus 20:9) for **two months** (barley harvest began April 15; wheat harvest ended June 15) (see Ruth 1:22 & 2:23). Describe her as a worker.
- How were the following people blessed, and a blessing to others, through work: Boaz? Boaz's reapers? Ruth? Naomi?
- How do you see God involved in the events of Chapter 2?

### **Wednesday**—Read Ruth Chapter 3

- Describe Naomi's character as seen in her intentions for her in 3:1 with that of 1:8-13.
- Does Naomi's plan (v. 3-9) sound a little risqué to you?
- Did Boaz interpret her actions as loose, indecent, or improper (what did he call her at the end of v. 11)?

(**Note:** Clearly there was something culturally going on that's different from 21<sup>st</sup> century American culture! Want to know? Read Deuteronomy 25:5-9 for the background to this practice. It's **not** what you might think!)

- In v. 9b, Ruth asked Boaz to "spread his \_\_\_\_\_ over her". In 2:12, Boaz complimented Ruth, saying that she had left her pagan background and sought refuge "under the \_\_\_\_\_ of the God of Israel". **These two are the same Hebrew word!** Draw some insights from this fact.
- How does Boaz' show concern both for Ruth's safety (v. 13a) and for her reputation (v. 14)?
- How does the godly Boaz provide both for Naomi's and Ruth's current needs and their long-term security (v. 16-18)?
- How did God use generous, hard-working people to change Naomi's prospects (see the change from 1:20-21 to 4:18)?

### **Thursday**—Read Ruth Chapter 4

- Naomi said Boaz "wouldn't rest until he's settled this situation" (3:18). Was she right?

Was Boaz just "love struck"? No! In Jewish culture, the closest relative of a deceased man was obliged to marry his widow in order to make sure that **the dead man's line** did not die with him. Children born in these types of marriages were considered **heirs of the dead man**, thus keeping his inheritance intact. Boaz almost certainly was **already** married [he was a man of great wealth and gravitas in Bethlehem, 2:1; 4:1-2]—this act of rescuing **Naomi's** family inheritance by marrying Ruth was **less** an act of romance and **more** an act of sacrifice: Boaz paid **his own money** [thus impoverishing **his own** estate] in order to secure Naomi's stability. Boaz was a more distant relative; note that the **closest** relative was **unwilling** to risk **his own** money; 4:5-6).

- Ruth, too, sacrificed something by asking Boaz to redeem her through marriage. True, Boaz was wealthy—but he was also **old** (v. 10b)! Boaz said she could have had a **rich young** man! (But that would have transferred Naomi's family inheritance to that young man's descendants.) **Would you** marry an old man to make sure that your **ex-mother-in-law** was not left destitute?

### **Friday**—various passages

- If you have an NIV Bible, grab it. Grab a highlighter and mark every occurrence of the words "kin", "kinsman-redeemer" or "redeem" in the following verses: 2:20; 3:9; 3:12 (2x); 3:13 (4x); 4:1; 4:3; 4:4 (4x); 4:6 (5x); 4:7; 4:8; and 4:14. (In NASB, you'll be looking for the words "close relative", "relative", and "redeem".)
- These are **all the same** Hebrew word (**gaal**, pronounced "gaw-el"). Look back over all the words you marked and write down every observation you can about the role and importance of the **gaal** in Hebrew culture.
- Now, prepare to be awed! Naomi and Ruth had Boaz as their **gaal**, but **God** is **our gaal!** Read Isaiah 43:14 and 47:4.
- What did Job think of his **gaal** (Job 19:25)?

### **Saturday**—Read Psalm 103

- Job's redeemer is **our** redeemer too. List all the things **our gaal** does for us.
- Is God **your** redeemer?
- We too are "our brother's keeper". How are **you** emulating your **gaal** by serving, protecting, and providing for others?