

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 60: Discovering vocation with your kids (with Dr. Gene Veith)

Topic introduction

Today we welcome guest Dr. Gene Veith to share with us a biblical understanding of vocation, equipping us and our children as we learn to do our work in God's world.

Key terms: *vocation, priesthood of all believers, calling, work, "mask of God," oikos (oikonomia), Imago Dei, secularism/secularist, secular, sacred*

Questions

What is a biblical understanding of vocation? What is vocation *not*? How does that definition challenge your former view on the topic? How does it encourage and challenge you?

How did Luther interpret the idea of the "priesthood of all believers" out of Hebrews?

What is the central place we discern and practice vocation? Name some other vocations (beyond familial roles) that belong to all of humanity?

What is the purpose of vocation, according to Luther?

How does vocation relate to economy (*oikonomia*), in a biblical sense?

What does Luther mean by encouraging us to understand vocation as a "mask of God"?

How do trials and tribulations relate to living out our varied vocations in the world? What is the danger of using trials and tribulations as a litmus test for what is "right" or "not right"?

What is the relationship between rational self-interest, capitalism, and an incomplete understanding of work and vocation?

What "charges our work with meaning"—affirming our work and confirming us in our vocational expressions and paths?

How does Gerard Manly Hopkins' poem "God's Grandeur" help us to look at the world, our varied vocations in it, and the fruit of those vocations with new eyes? How does the poem encourage us to no longer see work as drudgery but as man's participation in glory?

How does the doctrine of vocation change our perspective on the “secular” world? Take a moment to define the terms: secular, secularism, secularist.

Why is the secular/sacred divide a false dichotomy, according to Dr. Veith (and Luther and Kuyper and many other theologians)? Why are we tempted to elevate so-called ministerial vocations above putting the label on the can in the factory? **Note:** Consider using “the secular-sacred dichotomy” as a launch point for a research project.

Can God bring Himself glory through the vocational expression of unbelievers? Explain your answer.

Some vocations are “thrust upon us” (as in the worlds of Malvolio from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*)? How do we resolve the dissonance of what we may not have expected?

Dr. Veith’s advice for parents and young people in finding vocation: Look for the vocation you have right now. Get them to think about vocation right now. What are your callings? And you discern that by asking: What neighbors are in your life?

Vocation is not merely expressed by the “grown-ups” in the room. What is the vocation of a baby? Of a child? Of a teen? Of an elderly adult?

Scriptural anchors/provision

Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. — 1 Corinthians 7:17

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. — Mark 10:45

The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. — Proverbs 16:9

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. — Genesis 1:28

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