

Book Review: Faith & Work

by Carrie Cavanaugh

Faith & Work is part of Christianity Today International's Study Series. I wasn't sure what to expect when I picked it up, but what I found was an eight session study on the topic of work that was delightfully thought-provoking and biblical. Although some Bible study materials can feel simplistic, this one would be appropriate and engaging for both young believers and mature Christians. Although I read this for the purpose of writing this review, I couldn't help but be personally challenged and encouraged in my work by what I was reading. I now work remotely from home, don't have coworkers to do the study with, but I'm hoping that those in the BCWI office will be able to work through this study together for their own edification.

Each session is dedicated to a different topic, ranging from the reformed concept of vocation to an examination of alternatives to retirement. Each chapter begins with relevant Bible verses and then is followed by a related article from Christianity Today or one of their sister publications. I thoroughly enjoyed these articles and found that even though they weren't very recent (some dating back as far as

1986), the truths discussed were timeless. The articles are followed by questions to be worked through as a small group, but I found that most of them were also wonderful for personal study.

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The study questions begin with an ice-breaker question/exercises that I thought would be fun to do and get people thinking about the topic at hand. And if you don't feel comfortable with what they suggest, they even provide a secondary option.

The ice-breaker time is followed by a section called "The Issue" in which they ask a handful of questions about the article, addressing the crux of the topic for that week. Then there are questions in the "Reflect" section that focus in more on what the Bible has to say about the issue. The "Let's Explore" section goes into more depth with each Bible passage and this is the main part of

the study. The last part of the group study is the "Going Forward" section in which you work through how you will apply what you have learned. I appreciated that this involves sharing with the group which would both inspire others by hearing what the Spirit is speaking to your conscience, but also is a great forum for accountability.

The chapter concludes with a section entitled "What to Explore More?" and it provides additional resources ranging from books to websites. These were great sources of information and I found myself enjoying exploring more information on each of the topics.

The most inspiring chapter for me was the one on the Puritan work ethic entitled "Called . . . To This?!" It was a refreshing look at how the whole of our lives is to be lived out in worship of our Creator. Lest someone take this paradigm too far, this explanation of work was balanced by the following chapter, "Does What I 'Do'= Who I Am?" This balanced approach revealed a great deal of wisdom on the part of the Christianity Today editors since both too low of a view of our work and too high a view of

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our work are sinful. In the end, I've been encouraged to work with purpose, but to ultimately find my identity in Christ.

Our research at Best Christian Workplaces Institute has revealed that Christian organizations that dedicate time to the spiritual edification of their staff have staff that are overall more engaged in their work. This makes sense as it is both a reminder of the hope that we have and also affirmation that we are one in Christ. Christianity Today's Faith & Work would be one great way for your organization to explore the spiritual dimension of work.