

# MYC 2025

## MID YEAR CONFERENCE



GUIDANCE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# Overview

## The MYC Teaching Programme

### 1. Main Session Talks

The talks in the main sessions will help us think through our topic from the “big picture” with this year’s speaker, Reuben Salagaras.

### 2. Review Groups

These student-led small groups will help you get to know a few other ESers really well and have a chance to debrief. You’ll also study part of the book of Romans in depth together.

### 3. Morning sessions

These sessions are designed to help give us a “global focus” as we are encouraged by what God is doing throughout His world. We’ll also hear about opportunities coming up on campus with the “Meet Jesus” team.

### 3. Workshops

These staff-led workshops will develop your ability to “think theologically” by exploring related topics and aspects of the Christian life. You pick 3 of the available workshops to attend across Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Choose wisely!

(Workshop details and schedule are available on page 53).

### 5. Question Times and Panel

An MYC Favourite, we’ll have questions after some of our talks as well as a Q+A Panel on Thursday night. There’s a question box at the back of the hall to submit questions, and we’ll have a roving mic at points as well.

## Talk 1: Monday Afternoon

Reorienting your heart - God’s cosmic plan and your part in it

### My questions for God about guidance

#### 1. Reorienting your heart

#### 2. God’s plans for the whole universe for the whole of time

##### a. Colossians 1:15-20

<sup>15</sup> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

<sup>21</sup> Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. <sup>22</sup> But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—<sup>23</sup> if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

## **b. Ephesians 3:1-11**

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

<sup>2</sup> Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup> that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. <sup>4</sup> In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup> This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. <sup>8</sup> Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup> and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. <sup>10</sup> His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, <sup>11</sup> according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **c. Ephesians 1:3-10, 18-23, 11-14**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

<sup>11</sup>In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup>in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

### 3. Implications

A better question

"...'What's the biggest thing you've asked God for this week?'...Did you ask for peanuts, toys, trinkets, or did you ask for continents?"

- Dawson Trotman, quoted in *The Fuel and the Flame: ignite your life & your campus for Jesus Christ*, Paul Worcester and Steve Shadrach, p. 8

## Talk 2: Monday Night

How God guides: Spirit, scripture and Biblical patterns

### Introduction

#### 1. The Basics:<sup>1</sup>

a. Can God guide? I.e. does he know and control the present + future

The sun rises day by day; but it is God that enlightens the earth by his rays. The earth brings forth her fruits; but it is God that giveth bread, and it is God that giveth strength by the the nourishment of that bread. In a word, as all inferior and secondary causes, viewed in themselves, veil like so many curtains the glorious God from our sight (which they frequently do), the eye of faith must be cast up far higher, that it may behold the hand of God working by all these His instruments.

*John Calvin, The Secret Providence of God (1558), quoted in Helm, The Providence of God, p. 87*

**Romans 8:28-30** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

b. Does God have a plan for our life?

<sup>1</sup> see J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, ch. 20 for a fuller treatment of these points

### Sidebar: “God’s will” terminology

- What God decrees will happen (**sovereign will** - not always shared with us)

see Mt 10:29-30, Ac 4:27-28

- What God desires generally of all people (**general will**)

see Heb 13:20-21, 1 Tim 2:4, Dt 29:29

- What God plans for your life (**individual will**)

c. Can God communicate that plan?

"...though guidance by dreams, visions, and direct verbal messages must be judged exceptional and not normal, even for the apostles and their contemporaries, yet these events do at least show that God has no difficulty in making his will known to his servants"

*J. I. Packer, Knowing God, p. 263*

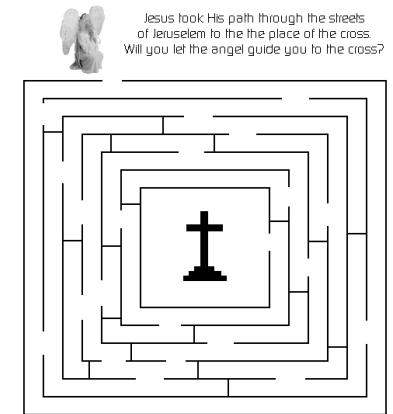
## 2. The challenge: what conclusions to draw from the above facts?

The tldr; version:

"But the true way to honour the Holy Spirit as our guide is to honour the Holy Scriptures through which God gives shape to our lives - the instilling, that is, of the basic convictions, attitudes, ideals, and value-judgements, in terms of which we are to live - is not a matter of inward promptings apart from the Word but of the pressure on our consciences of the portrayal of God's character and will in the Word, which the Spirit enlightens us to understand and apply to ourselves"

*J. I. Packer, Knowing God, p. 268*

## 3. The “traditional view” of God’s guidance



“[the] Conventional understanding of God’s will defines it as a specific pathway we should follow into the future. God knows what this pathway is, and he has laid it out for us to follow. Our responsibility is to discover this pathway – God’s plan for our lives. We must discover which of the many pathways we could follow is the one we should follow, the one God has planned for us. And if we make the right choice, we will receive his favour, fulfil our divine destiny and succeed in life... if we choose rightly, we will experience his blessing and achieve success and happiness. If we choose wrongly, we may lose our way, miss God’s will for our lives, and remain lost forever in an incomprehensible maze.

*Gerald Sittser, The Will of God as a Way of Life, p. 28*

- It makes God seem \_\_\_\_\_

- It wouldn’t have worked well for \_\_\_\_\_

- Leads us to be obsessed with the future (producing \_\_\_\_\_)

- Can be an (unwitting?) attempt to shift responsibility to God

#### 4. A better question: how does God promise to guide?<sup>1</sup>

Proposition: Apart from the Spirit working through Scripture, God does not *promise* to use any other means to guide us

**2 Peter 1:3** His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

**John 14:26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**Hebrews 1:1** In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Statement 1: In these last days, God has spoken to us by His Son

Statement 2: God continues to speak to us by His Son through His Spirit in the Scriptures

**Hebrews 3:7** So, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you hear his voice,

8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,

9 where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did.

10 That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’

11 So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Statement 3: Apart from the Spirit working through Scripture, God does not promise to use any other means to guide us, nor should we expect him to.

*Your key insights and/or questions:*

<sup>1</sup> See Phillip Jensen and Tony Payne, *Guidance and the Voice of God* for a fuller discussion of these ideas

# Talk 3: Tuesday Night

## The way of wisdom: navigating life under God's sovereignty

### Introduction

**Romans 12:1** Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

### 1. Straightforward answers

**Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

formal preoccupation, Pharisee-fashion, with detailed, minute applications of the general principles of God's law is not a full description of the path along which God guides his people. The truth is that a person living and thinking that way is mentally grooved in a style that leaves out of account something vital in our quest for guidance—namely, that gift from the Holy Spirit through the written Word that is creative and humanizing and outward-looking and self-effacing and profoundly perceptive, the gift which is properly named wisdom.

*Packer, J. I.; Nystrom, Carolyn. God's Will (p. 126). Kindle Edition.*

### 2. Jesus, and the other New Testament writers urge wisdom

**Matthew 7:24** "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the

streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

**Colossians 4:5-6** Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

**Ephesians 5:1** Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

[...]

**Ephesians 5:15** Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's thought is that our days and hours are full of moments for advancing God's kingdom and glory, if only we have wisdom enough to see the possibilities and seize these opportunities accordingly.

*Packer, J. I.; Nystrom, Carolyn. God's Will (p. 130). Kindle Edition.*

### 3. What is wisdom?

#### a. Understanding put into practice

##### **Proverbs 3:13–15**

13 Blessed are those who find wisdom,  
those who gain understanding,  
14 for she is more profitable than silver  
and yields better returns than gold.  
15 She is more precious than rubies;  
nothing you desire can compare with her.

##### **Proverbs 4:7–8**

7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.  
Though it cost all you have, get understanding.  
8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you;  
embrace her, and she will honor you.

##### **Proverbs 2:9–10**

9 Then you will understand what is right and just  
and fair—every good path.  
10 For wisdom will enter your heart,  
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

One mark of a wise person, according to Proverbs, is that one is willing to accept instruction and correction and to learn to know things better than one does at the moment. The life of wisdom is a life of constant learning: constant evaluating, constant discerning, constant extension of one's understanding.

*Packer, J. I.; Nystrom, Carolyn. God's Will (p. 140). (Function). Kindle Edition.*

#### b. Worship

The fool, the opposite of the wise person, is not a moron or an oaf. The fool is the person who does not live life God's way. Wisdom is knowing God and doing as He commands. Foolishness, on the other hand, is turning from God and listening only to yourself. So when we talk about wisdom, we are talking about more than witty aphorisms and homespun advice. We are talking about a profoundly God-centered approach to life. Biblical wisdom means living a disciplined and prudent life in the fear of the Lord.

*DeYoung, Kevin. Just Do Something: A Liberating Approach to Finding God's Will or How to Make a Decision Without Dreams, Visions, Fleecees, Impressions, Open Doors, Random ... Liver Shivers, Writing in the Sky, etc. (p. 89). Kindle Edition.*

#### c. Relational and personified

**Proverbs 12:15** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

**Proverbs 15:22** Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.

##### **Proverbs 8:1** Does not wisdom call out?

Does not understanding raise her voice?  
2 At the highest point along the way,  
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;  
3 beside the gate leading into the city,  
at the entrance, she cries aloud:  
4 "To you, O people, I call out;  
I raise my voice to all mankind.  
5 You who are simple, gain prudence;  
you who are foolish, set your hearts on it.  
6 Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say;  
I open my lips to speak what is right.

### 4. What if the personification of wisdom is not just a literary device?

"what if the wisdom of God really was a person, who you could know and love, and that if you got into a relationship with this person it \*made you wise\*? Then for those of us who never had the parents, never had the mentors, never had the guides, never had the counsellors we should have (had)...this would be the ultimate guide, the ultimate mentor, the ultimate counsellor...the wonderful counsellor."

*Tim Keller, True Wisdom, Sermon in the series Proverbs: True Wisdom for living, accessed 07/2025 at <https://gospelinlife.com/series/proverbs-true-wisdom-for-living/>*

**Colossians 2:2** My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.



**1 Corinthians 1:23** but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. [...] 30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

"In ourselves we still suffer from the foolishness of worldly wisdom, but in Christ we are perfectly wise, for he is our wisdom before God."

*Graeme Goldsworthy, The Goldsworthy Trilogy, vol. 3 (Gospel and Wisdom, p. 353)*

## 5. Tips for walking in the way of wisdom

a. Ask!

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Pray for good motives in your decision making. Pray for an attitude of trust and faith and obedience. Pray for humility and teachability. Pray for His gospel to spread. You know that He wants these things in the world and for your life. Pray for them. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, as Jesus asked us to (Matthew 6:33).

*DeYoung, Kevin. Just Do Something (p. 96). Kindle Edition.*

b. Forming goals and strategies

Wisdom teaches us how to set our sights on objectives that are truly worth aiming at. Goal number one (which all the Bible insists on) is that the knowledge of God, the enjoyment of God, the praise of God, and the honor of God should be our constant aim in everything we do, so that we may truly live to his glory. The consequent goals include love, goodwill, and care in all our personal relationships with family, friends, acquaintances, and casual contacts; faithfulness in all business dealings; integrity in all community involvements and all enterprises in which we lead and direct others; and creativity, the quest for order and beauty, in pursuing whatever interests and hobbies we embrace. Wisdom enables us to formulate and focus our goals in our various fields of activity.

In Ecclesiastes 2:13–14a the wise man says, "I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness. The wise

person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness." Part of the implication of "eyes in his head" and "darkness" is that while the wise person sets goals and knows where he or she is going, the fool practices a random kind of living. A fool walks through life as if he were blind. Aimlessness in the most fundamental sense is the sad word that has to be written over the life of a fool. Wise persons, by contrast, have clear purposes and make thoughtful plans. They do not simply drift through life as the fool does.

*Packer, J. I.; Nystrom, Carolyn. God's Will (pp. 142-143). Kindle Edition.*

A better question: what great options does God's character and his gospel plans open up to me?

c. self-control and humility

**Proverbs 25:28** Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.

**Proverbs 14:17** A quick-tempered person does foolish things

**Proverbs 29:20** Do you see someone who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them.

**Proverbs 17:10** A rebuke impresses a discerning person more than a hundred lashes a fool.

**James 3:17** But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Your key insights and/or questions:

# Talk 4: Wednesday Night

## Clothed with Christ: becoming the person God guides

### Introduction

'Therefore the good man, although he is a slave, is free; but the bad man, even if he reigns, is a slave, and that not of one man, but, what is far more grievous, of as many masters as he has vices.'

*Augustine, City of God, Book 4, Chapter 3. c.f. 2 Peter 2:19 "...people are slaves to whatever masters them"*

**1 Thessalonians 4:3** It is God's will that you should be sanctified ...

### 1. Augustine's Crisis - orthodox belief, but spiritually stuck

It is one thing to survey our peaceful homeland from a wooded height but fail to find the way there, and make vain attempts to travel through impassable terrain, while fugitive deserters marshaled by the lion and the dragon obstruct and lurk in ambush; and quite another to walk steadily in the way that leads there, along the well-built road opened up by the heavenly emperor, where no deserters from the celestial army dare commit robbery, for they avoid that way like torment.

In awe-inspiring ways these truths were striking deep roots within me as I read the least of your apostles; I had contemplated your works and was filled with dread.

*Augustine, Confessions, Book 7, Chapter 27*

I was neither wholly willing nor wholly unwilling. So I was in conflict with myself and was dissociated from myself.

*Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, Chapter 22*

The enemy had my power of willing in his clutches, and from it had forged a chain to bind me. The truth is that disordered lust springs from a perverted will; when lust is pandered to, a habit is formed; when habit is not checked, it hardens into compulsion. These were like interlinking rings forming what I have described as a chain, and my harsh servitude used it to keep me under duress.

A new will had begun to emerge in me, the will to worship you disinterestedly and enjoy you, O God, our only sure felicity; but it was not yet capable of surmounting that earlier will strengthened by inveterate custom. And so the two wills fought it out—the old and the new, the one carnal, the other spiritual—and in their struggle tore my soul apart.

*Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, Chapter 10*

I was quite sure that surrendering myself to your love would be better than succumbing to my lust, but while the former course commended itself and was beginning to conquer, the latter charmed and chained me.

*Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, Chapter 12*

I had been extremely miserable in adolescence, miserable from its very onset, and as I prayed to you for the gift of chastity

I had even pleaded, "Grant me chastity and self-control, but please not yet." I was afraid that you might hear me immediately and heal me forthwith of the morbid lust which I was more anxious to satisfy than to snuff out.

*Augustine, Confessions, Book 8, Chapter 17*

## 2. The fruit of the Holy Spirit

**Galatians 5:13–26** You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

## 3. The turning point: “take and read”

**Romans 13:13-14** Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

## 4. Becoming the person God guides

A better question: what would a [insert fruit of the Spirit] person who has been following Christ a long time do in this situation?

a. Adding character to decision making

b. Allowing scripture to shape our moral imagination

c. Help in community

*Your key insights and/or questions:*

# Talk 5: Thursday Night

Vocation: living your calling for God's glory

## Introduction

### 1. Establishing some core principles

### 2. Work

a. Search the scriptures

Gen 1-3, John 5, Matt 6:19

### *Misguided reasons to work...*

**Ecclesiastes 2:4** I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ... 8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

'The Teacher' concedes the good of work, in its place (Eccl 5:18-20). It isn't that work never enables fulfilment, reputation and consumption. But these are secondary outcomes. We don't understand our work until we understand its primary outcomes

*Andrew Cameron, Joined up Life, p. 270*

### **Primary outcomes worth focussing on**

- *The work of creation*

- *The work of community*

**1 Thessalonians 4:11** ... make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

**Ephesians 4:28** Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

**1 Timothy 5:8** Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

1. 'I use and care for creation as I ...'
2. 'My activity enables caring community by ...'

- *The work of God*

**John 6:27** Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

**Matthew 9:35** Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

b. Get wise counsel

c. Pray

d. Make a decision

A better question: whatever work you choose to do with most of your waking hours, How could I be more ambitious for Christ and the spread of the Gospel?

### 3. Marriage

a. Search the scriptures

- *who should I marry?*

- *Dating*

- *Should I marry?*

**Matthew 19:11** Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

(on unwanted singleness)

**Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

b. Get wise counsel

c. Pray

d. Make a decision

Your key insights and/or questions:

## Talk 6: Friday Morning

Just do something: gospel ambition in the rest of your life

### Introduction

#### 1. Guidance, together

"[in the Church] God is pleased to collect his children, not only that by her aid and ministry they may be nourished so long as they are babes and children, but may also be guided by her maternal care until they grow up to manhood (sic) and, finally, to attain to the perfection of faith. ... to those to whom he is a Father, the church must also be a mother. This was true not merely under the Law, but even now after the advent of Christ; since Paul declares that we are the children of a new, even a heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26)."

*John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 4, Ch 1.*

**Ephesians 4:11** So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**Hebrews 13:7** Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. [...] 15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. 17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

## 2. A life shaped by what God is doing in his world

**Mark 8:34** Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

### *Love of others*

**1 Corinthians 13:4** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

### *Humility*

"It can be easy as this point to start 'believing your own press' as others tell you how godly you are or what a great leader you are becoming. The marks of pride are like bad body odour - evident to everyone except ourselves. Pride reeks! It raises its ugly head in the forms of defensiveness, prayerlessness, comparison, and unteachability."

*Steve Shadrach and Paul Worchester, The Fuel and the Flame p. 105*

## *Not rocked by suffering*

**Hebrews 12:1** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

**Romans 8:18** I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

[...]  
28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

## 3. Next steps

**Colossians 1:27** To them [the Lord's people] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

A better question: what's one good next step?