



## Shannon Vandewarker - Working in the Presence of God

Author & Speaker, Shannon Vandewarker, is one of 3 panelists speaking on "Bridging the Sacred/Secular Divide" during Work as Global Mission 2021. Shannon shares her personal journey towards discovering the principles she wrote about in her recent book, "Working in the Presence of God: Spiritual Practices For Everyday Work," about spiritual practices for experiencing God in our everyday work.

### Discussion Questions

1. Shannon shares that while staying at home as a mother seemed to put her "sacred work" on hold, it was actually an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to bridge her personal sacred-secular divide. Have you ever had a season in your life where you felt like circumstances took you away from the work you felt called to do? How did God enter into that experience and speak to you?
2. Shannon shares that God speaks to us through the ordinary stuff of life: *"bushes and fire, water and bread, bosses and servants...workplaces and children, walking sticks and wrestling matches, babies' bassinets and mothers' compassion, cooking pots and olive oil."* There is no sacred-secular divide we have to cross in order to enter into a life lived fully with God. How has God used the "ordinary stuff" of your life in this season to speak and engage with you?
3. Shannon shares some concerns she has heard over the years from people struggling to see God at work through their ordinary work:
  - a. *"I understand that God created me to work and that work is not a result of the Fall, but how do I live this out practically in the production line of the cabinet factory I work in?"*
  - b. *"I understand that Jesus wants to interact with me more throughout my work day, but how? I have a very busy schedule and the demands and pressure of my company to perform is almost too much."*

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- c. *“As someone without a whole lot of power in my company, how can I make an impact in peoples’ lives with the love of Christ? I’m not in charge of much.”*

To what extent can you relate to any of the above experiences? What about your current experience of work connects you to them?

4. Through her work at Fuller Seminary, Shannon explored pairing classic spiritual disciplines with the ordinary work people were doing to train them to see God at work *through* their work. Look at the below examples of spiritual disciplines. Have you ever tried adapting any of these practices? If so, what was it like? If not, which practices are you most interested in learning about? How do you see yourself incorporating them into your existing work routine?
- Surrendering your calendar*: Prayerfully and slowly look at your appointments for the day and bring to God any concerns, stress, excitement, or confusion you feel. After talking with God about those things, listen to what God might have you say or who He might want you to reach out to.
  - Creating a [liturgy of commute](#)*: Think about your commute. Think through the streets you take and the landmarks along the way. Do you pass a school, a particular store, or a certain street sign? Are there train tracks you cross or a hill you go up or down? Begin mentally taking note of what you remember along the way, and use these landmarks as prompts to enter into different types of prayer for your commute. For instance, from your house to the first landmark, spend time praising God for the blessing of a new workday. After you cross the second landmark, move into a time of offering the day to the Lord. At landmark three, begin asking for God’s help in your work. After passing landmark four, begin praying for others in your life who need it. After passing the last landmark on your commute, use the rest of the time to ask God what he desires you to be attentive to at work that day.
  - Praying the [Prayer of Examen](#)*: Find a comfortable setting that is quiet. Acknowledge that you are in God’s presence, perhaps through a brief prayer or reflecting on a short text like, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Allow for some silence, then begin reflecting on the

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Examen questions one at a time, allowing for silence and reflection after each question. The silence between each question can be as short as a couple minutes and as long as several minutes.

- d. *Reading or listening to scripture or a podcast:* Consider listening to a podcast like "[Pray as You Go](#)," a daily ten- to fifteen-minute podcast devotional that includes music, a Scripture reading, and a time of reflection.
- e. *Creating a liturgy of work and/or meeting:* When feeling overwhelmed by the amount or pace of your work, for example, when looking at your calendar or email, say aloud the truth and pray: "Lord, You made the whole world and everything it. I invite you to show me what I should attend to next." Hold this time with God for a moment (set a 1 or 2 minute timer if needed!) as an active step of trust to see what the Holy Spirit will direct you to. Before joining a meeting, remember and acknowledge before God that you are living in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God, and that you go into the meeting alongside Him. As you leave the meeting, ask God to continue to do His work as you attend to your work. Ask for the strength to trust Him to do His work and lay down yours.