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Women, Work, & Calling

STEP INTO YOUR PLACE
IN GOD'S WORLD

The world needs who
God made you to be.

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Tips for Using this Guide for a Discussion Group

This discussion guide provides a place to think through and write out answers to the questions throughout the book's four sections.

How to divide the content for discussion:

While your discussion group could meet any number of times you'd prefer to discuss the book, it divides easily into two or four sessions.

- For two discussions: Focus on Sections 1 and 2 and then focus on Sections 3 and 4 in your second gathering.
- For four discussions: Take one section and its questions per gathering.

Facilitation tips for group leaders:

Everyone's story is unique and shaped by life stage, religious or denominational background, community or family where they grew up, etc. Recognizing the diverse experiences within your group matters and is one reason we avoid sharing a formulaic approach to the Christian life in this book. Encourage each individual to connect her or his story to God's vision and work to maintain a spirit of curious, respectful dialogue.

There are more questions included here than you will have time to explore. For each meeting, identify ahead of time a few questions you'd like to pose to the group, rather than aiming to discuss each one.

Try to allow everyone time to answer in some capacity. Allow for quieter voices to speak as well.

If you have any questions or need additional discussion group resources, please reach out to us at women@denverinstitute.org.



Discussion Questions

Section 1: Ignite Your Vocational Imagination

What does being made and called to work together tell us about God's character and his design for human flourishing? (Ch. 1)

Think about your own work context. What do the men and women you work with have in common? What does each gender offer that is unique? What would be lost if either was missing? (Ch. 1)

Consider your daily work with a broad view of the gospel in mind. (Ch. 2)

What is broken or strained in your current workplace or its systems?	Where do you see opportunities to infuse qualities such as God's goodness, beauty or truth?

What influences have shaped your understanding of women's roles (such as, where you live, your faith background, your unique family dynamics, your age)? (Ch. 3)

What emotions have surfaced as you seek to develop your gifts? What tension points do you encounter in your roles? (Ch. 3)

How is God's general call (to relationship with him, to a life of discipleship, to serve others) expressed in your life? (Ch. 4)

As you reflect on your life, how have you seen God prepare you over time for future opportunities? What might this reveal about your calling? (Ch. 4)

Name a "flare" moment in your career - a time when you tried something new that did not follow your usual pattern. What did you learn by deviating from your norm? In contrast, what benefits have you gained from a season of "focus"? (Ch. 5)

Start building your "next" list. What is one practical goal and one aspirational goal you would like to accomplish? (Ch. 5)

PRACTICAL

ASPIRATIONAL

Identify a friend who might help you dream about your professional development. Schedule a time to introduce the idea of supporting each other in this way. (Ch. 5)

Section 2: Build Strength from Within

Name a few limiting beliefs that keep you from working with freedom and confidence. (Ch. 6)	Where do you think those beliefs come from? (i.e. they may have come from loved ones, bullies, or from how you've interpreted past experiences. (Ch. 6)

Write a biblically-based identity statement for your work. Identify two situations in which you will be able to rely on this statement to boost your confidence. (Ch. 6)

God is *with you* and *for you*. How does knowing this make you feel about the challenges you face at work? (Ch. 7)

Think of a season in your life when your sense of connection with God was strong. How did that connection shape your spiritual life, your ability to navigate stressful situations, or the health of your relationships? (Ch. 7)

Breath Prayers

This week, experiment with a practice called *breath prayer*: simple phrases timed to the rhythm of your inhaling and exhaling.

For example, the next time you feel stress at work, slow your breathing and pray one of the following prayers. Repeat the phrase five times with each breath in and out:

INHALE	EXHALE
Nothing can separate me	From the love of God
Jesus Christ	Have mercy on me, a sinner.
Be still	And know that you are God.
Your grace	Is enough for me.

How would you describe *humble confidence* in your own words? How is a Christian's confidence different from the confidence shown in popular culture? (Ch. 8)

How would others describe your personal brand? (Ch. 8)

Ask a couple trusted friends what words they would use to describe your reputation.	What about that description shows humble confidence and what feels overly self focused or self-promoting?

Think of an example from social media of someone with a personal brand who displays humble confidence. What is it about their postings that demonstrates humility? (Ch. 8)

Think of a time when you experienced imposter syndrome. What helped you work through it? (Ch. 9)

Reflect on Psalm 139:14-15, quoted at the beginning of Chapter 9. How can remembering that God intentionally made you the way that you are help you to combat imposter syndrome? (Ch. 9)

Do you have someone in your personal or professional network who affirms the gifts they see in you? What is one thing they have said that sticks with you? Affirm someone else! What is a gift you see in another woman that you could call attention to? Make a point to share this observation this week. (Ch. 9)



TO
DO!

Have you ever observed the Sabbath? Share your experience with the group. How could practicing the Sabbath serve as a complement to your work rather than an escape from it? (Ch. 10)

What example of work/rest, delight, and trust would you like to set for your children, colleagues, or employees? What activities or elements would you like to include in your Sabbath (naps are encouraged!) (Ch. 10)

A restful Sabbath is intentional. What steps will you take to make sure the pressures of daily life don't creep into your Sabbath? (Ch. 10)

Section 3: Navigate Common Workplace Challenges

What do you tend to root your identity in rather than Christ? What have been the consequences of finding your identity outside of him? (Ch. 11)

Think of a time when you adopted someone else's lifestyle, expectations, or goals as your own. How did it feel to "wear" values that weren't your own? (Ch. 11)

In what moments do you feel the most pressure to compromise your true self? Identify two small steps you could take to anticipate those situations and to help you stay authentic. (Ch. 11)

Of the seven areas of vocational power identified by Amy Sherman, which three are most evident in your life? (Ch. 12)

Knowledge/Expertise

Platform

Networks

Position

Influence

Skills

Reputation

What opportunities exist for you to use this power to serve a cause, your colleagues, or your community? (Ch. 12)

What steps can you take to strengthen these areas of power for even greater impact? *This may mean pursuing additional training, collaborating with people who have other areas of power, or leading a conversation with like-minded friends to assess their vocational power.* (Ch. 12)

Is there an area of your life where you notice more perfectionistic tendencies - at work, at home, or with your family? Why do you think this is? (Ch. 13)

Can you recognize the voice of your inner critic? What messages does it send that weaken your confidence? (Ch. 13)

Describe a time when you allowed yourself to be vulnerable and it helped a personal situation, work project, friendship, or relationship with a colleague. How did showing vulnerability affect the relationship? (Ch. 13)

LEADING UP

Think of a time when you approached a leader about a problem you observed and it wasn't well-received. Why do you think the leader responded that way? (Ch. 14)	In contrast, think of a time you approached a boss about an issue and it was well-received. What factors contributed to a more receptive response? (Ch. 14)

Think practically. How could you apply one of the principles of leading up to your current workplace? (Ch. 14)

Have you ever experienced the double bind as a working woman? In what way? (Ch. 15)

In what ways may you have unconscious bias about masculine or feminine leadership styles? (Ch. 15)

From the list below, identify one step you could take to help present a well-rounded example of your influence at work. (Ch. 15)

Notice how your personality may play into stereotypes

Find opportunities to work against type

Highlight measurable, visible accomplishments

Section 4: Pursue Purposeful Relationships

Who is one person you'd like to ask for an hour of their time to advise you on a specific topic? (Ch. 16)



Think about people you could mentor informally. How would you invite them to spend time with you? (Ch. 16)

How would you describe previous experiences you've had with networking? (Ch. 17)

Think of one or two women in each of the following categories and identify one simple step you can take to encourage them in their work. (Ch. 17)

A colleague within your organization or existing relational network

A competitor (or perceived competitor)

A woman who is in a different stage of her career than you

When have you benefited from another person's relational generosity? (Ch. 18)

Spend a few minutes brainstorming a list of resources, relationships, or influence that you could share with another woman. Think of two people who would benefit from what you have to offer and make a plan to reach out to them in the next month to offer your support. (Ch. 18)

Where have you seen glimpses of the Blessed Alliance in your daily life? What situations reveal how male-female collaboration is strained? (Ch. 19)

Lean Hard

Child of my love, lean hard,
And let Me feel the pressure of thy care;
I know thy burden, child, I shaped it;
Poised it in My own hand, made no proportion
in its weight to thine unaided strength;
For even as I laid it on, I said,
“I shall be near, and while she leans on me,
This burden shall be mine; not hers;
So shall I keep my child within the circling
arms of mine own love.”

Here lay it down, nor fear to impose it on a
shoulder which upholds the government of
worlds.

Yet closer come; thou art not near enough;
I would embrace thy care so I might feel My
child reposing on My breast.
Thou lovest me? I knew it. Doubt not then;
But loving Me, lean hard.

Octavius Winslow, a nineteenth-century preacher’s wisdom speaks to the pressures twenty-first-century working women face. In his sermon, “Lean Hard,” which includes a beautiful poem by the same name, he captures our desire for you.

Spend a few minutes praying through this poem.

How is God asking you to lean on him in this season? (Ch. 20)

Winslow suggests that God allows us to experience burdens that only he can carry. What pressures are you carrying alone? (Ch. 20)

God promises to sustain us when we cast our burdens on him. What keeps you from fully trusting God with your gifts, leadership, or career? (Ch. 20)

Identify three key takeaways from this book that you will apply to your work. Record practical steps you will take to act on each takeaway and the method and time frame in which you will do them. (Ch. 20)

1.

2.

3.

ABOUT WOMEN, WORK, & CALLING

Women, Work, & Calling is a national initiative of [Denver Institute for Faith & Work](#) focused on equipping Christian women for godly influence in public life. What began as a one-time, local event has become a growing ecosystem of individuals, churches, and organizations that share a common commitment to prepare women to love God and serve others through their work.

We believe when women lead faithfully, the world will taste the hope and life that Jesus provides. So we convene women for relationships, cultivate in them a renewed imagination for work, and catalyze them toward redemptive action in their roles, industries, or cities.

We'd love for you to become involved!

To learn more, visit womenworkandcalling.com/
or subscribe to our monthly newsletter by emailing women@denverinstitute.org

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