



Joanna Meyer:

You are listening to the Faith & Work Podcast where we explore what it means to serve God neighbor and society through our daily works. Hi, and welcome to the Faith & Work Podcast. I'm Joanna Meyer, Denver Institute's Director of Public Engagement and founder of Women, Work, and Calling. I'm joined by Jeff Hoffmeyer, our vice president of advancement, host of our new podcast, Teach Us To Pray. Hi, Jeff.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Hi, Jo, so excited to be here as always and be a part of this conversation.

Joanna Meyer:

Yeah, since the last time we saw you, you have completed the triple bypass, which is just an epic moment in Colorado sports. Tell us how that went.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

118 miles on a bike, 10,800 feet of climbing. Basically, that means I was on my bike all day in the mountains of Colorado, which was hard and a lot of fun.

Joanna Meyer:

Well, we're talking about idols today, and I will refrain from making any comments about cycling as a potential idol in our lives.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Definitely an idol in Colorado and probably my life.

Joanna Meyer:

Listeners, I invite you to think about what comes to mind when you think of an idol. Maybe you picture a meticulously-carved statue in a foreign temple or a golden calf that the Israelites worshiped in The Old Testament. Idols seem far removed from our professional lives, yet today idolatry is alive and well in most workplaces and industries. As Pastor Tim Keller said, "The heart is an idol factory." So identifying and knowing how to respond to workplace idols is essential to living a Christ-centered life on the job. Our guest today, Lauren Gill, brings a unique perspective to the conversation. She leads a Global Faith & Work Initiative, but she's also a licensed therapist and a working actor. So with her multihyphenate career, she can offer both a theological perspective and emotional and spiritual perspective and a practical perspective on idolatry at work. Hoff, tell us a little bit more about Lauren.



Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Lauren Gill is the director of the Global Faith & Work Initiative at Redeemer City to City where she works with pastors, church planners and ministry leaders around the world to equip their lay leaders to push against brokenness in every industry and field. Such a good friend of Denver Institute and the work we're doing, you can just hear it in that opening sentence. She's a co-author and a general editor of the recently published the Missional Disciple: Pursuing Mercy & Justice at Work. We can link to that in our show notes on this episode. Prior to working for City to City, she worked at the Center for Faith & Work at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. She's also a licensed mental health counselor with a specialty in helping clients work through vocational issues. Lauren is a working actor and producer as well. What a fascinating resume she has, and we're so glad to have Lauren on the episode. So Lauren, welcome to you.

Lauren Gill:

Thank you. Thank you for having me. I'm so happy to be here.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, we're really grateful. I just read through your resume. It's really interesting. It's quite varied. Just tell us about your vocational journey that's led you through, led you to work as a therapist, as an actor, as a nonprofit leader. Give us a little window into that journey.

Lauren Gill:

Yeah, I think it's a real testament to just the way you can plan certain things, but God will lead you where he's going to lead you. So my first interaction with work was actually on my family farm, and my mother wanted my cousins and I to learn the value of a dollar. So we would spend our afternoons picking red bell peppers and removing rotten peppers from the plant. But I had always had a heart for theater and acting and did a lot of that when I was in middle school and high school, which is what ultimately led me to come to New York City 21 years ago to go to NYU. I studied acting as well as journalism and worked a bit as a freelance booker at Good Morning America while acting, did some work in a retail store while acting, worked a brief stint at a hedge fund while acting, so it was always doing a couple of things.

Then at some point, God moved me into the faith and work space. While I was working for the Center for Faith & Work, I also went back to school, got my degree in counseling and started counseling people around a lot of issues, but especially vocational issues at Redeemer Counseling Center while I was working at the Center for Faith & Work, and those two things really fed each other because I was working with people on the ground hearing about their struggles with their bosses and co-workers and trying to choose their job path. That really fed into the way I was thinking about how we should be doing



ministry through CFW. I didn't anticipate they would really feed each other, but they did. So now at City to City, I work full-time and also participate in the unpaid work of motherhood-

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Right.

Lauren Gill:

... which is deeply formative as well.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Oh, what a cool just tapestry of a resume and a journey from red bell peppers to leading a nonprofit. By the way, do you still eat red bell peppers or is that like you can't ever touch one again?

Lauren Gill:

I have never liked eating peppers ever in my life since then. We get those recipe boxes that have all the ingredients, and this summer there's been a red pepper in every box, and I never cook with it. I just leave it on the side. So I think my mom's value of a dollar plan definitely backfired in some ways.

Joanna Meyer:

Lauren, one of the reasons that I was excited to talk to you specifically about this topic is that you approach this concept of idolatry from unique perspectives. You've been a worker, you've been a counselor, you're in an industry, any industry can have idolatry, but I think especially in entertainment, it's ripe for things that can be worshiped. But before we jump into some of the nuances of the conversation, let's start by just talking about how both of you would define what an idol is as it relates to our work.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, Lauren, go ahead.

Lauren Gill:

I always use Tim Keller's, "An idol is a good thing that we turn into an ultimate thing. Anything that we turn to for the meaning or significance that only God can give us." But Patric Knaack of Serge Ministries once gave me the analogy that a really simple way to boil down idols is Jesus plus what equals happiness. So I think when you talk about the faith and work space, so many of the people that we minister to, they fill in that what with so many different things, right? Jesus plus a better boss equals



happiness. Jesus plus easier customers equals happiness plus more pay, more status, more acclaim. Jesus plus more interesting work equals happiness. So I think that is an easy way to give people a quick diagnostic for what's going on in their hearts.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, that's really good. I heard a different summary of that same definition from Keller is, "An idol is when a good thing becomes a God thing." So most idols, not all, but most idols are not evil, it's just they take on that ultimate place that only God can take. Actually, I was thinking maybe, I don't know if you're a fan of Raiders of the Lost Ark and Indiana Jones movies, Lauren, Joanna and I are for sure 'cause we're Gen X and that's one of our movies. But you remember that opening scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark where he's searching for that idol, and he finally gets to it, and he has to swap out the weight of the idol with the weight of a bag of a sand, and he's trying to measure how heavy is the idol?

That's actually a really good image because there is a weightiness to our idols, and even the biblical word glory carries this connotation of weight. So we're giving weight to something that ultimately is not really designed to bear that weight. We try and measure it out and think, "How weighty is it?" But I think that's a cool image when we think about our own idols in our life because trying to replace the weight of something that actually only God can fill that scale.

Lauren Gill:

The other thing about idolatry is there's the surface idols that we often see in people's work, and then those are connected to deeper idols. So the job recognition or the nice house or the part that I want to get as an actor or all of those things are really surface idols. Then deeper idols underneath are really motivational drives that you can't see. So why do you have to have that particular job or girlfriend or car or home? It's because you need approval that you aren't getting from your relationship with Christ, or you need a sense of comfort or control that you aren't getting in your relationship with God or you need power.

Tim Keller also did a great job of showing that distinction in counterfeit gods, his book where he talked about there are all of these things that we can get, but then we thirst for another thing 'cause not dealing with that motivational drive underneath. So I may get the job that I want, which was really feeding a sense of approval, but as soon as I get it, if I don't deal with that deeper approval idol, I'm just going to start looking for something else to fill it, another surface idol. So I think that's also a helpful way to think about it is the two buckets of surface versus deeper idols as well.

Joanna Meyer:

What do you think is it in the human heart that we create idols? Hoff, what do you think about that?



Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Well, part of it's control. Idols are things that we make and that's part of the biblical definition. One really important place to go in the Bible for an understanding of idolatry is Psalm 115. These lines are actually repeated elsewhere in the Salter, but that Psalm includes these lines, "Our God is in heaven. He does whatever pleases Him, but their idols," meaning the other nations, they're silver and gold. They're made by human hands. They have mouths but cannot speak, eyes but cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear and noses but cannot smell. They have hands but cannot feel, feet but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats."

Then this line is really important, "Those who make them will be like them and so will all who trust in them." So idols are things that are made. But that last line in Psalm 15, we actually end up becoming the thing that we make, the thing that we put too much value in. It starts to make us, and this is why there's so much in the Bible about idolatry all throughout scripture is because of course, ultimately, God is our maker and God wants to continue to do that making. That's the danger of idolatry is they overtake the human heart and they begin to corrupt, but they begin to make us, they begin to form us in ways that are ungodly.

Lauren Gill:

Yeah. Yeah. I think we create idols really for two reasons. One is, I think we do it because we don't see Jesus as the most compelling, beautiful source of joy in our lives. So there's this great article by Thomas Chalmers called The Explosive Power of a New Affection where he says, "The bondage of sin has to be broken by a more compelling joy, and we don't love Jesus enough. So we think these other things are more lovely and more beautiful." I also think the other reason is because we like to be our own savior.

So if I get my sense of righteousness, not because it's imputed to me because of Jesus, because I have the identity of Jesus, but rather I get my sense of righteousness because I'm a hard worker. I get it because I'm a good worker or because I have a certain title or status, then that feels more controllable to me, and I like being my own savior. I don't like the humility of needing to be saved because I am a depraved human being who needed Jesus' blood on the cross to save me. So I think that's another reason why we do it, because we just, like what you were saying, Jeff, we want to have that sense of control over our own destiny.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, So Lauren, let's get a little bit more specific. We've mentioned your really fascinating career journey and so much time spent in New York City, a global center for power, for banking and entertainment, communication, style, all kinds of things are centered in New York City. Just curious about what idols you see in that particular context. I think this is a really important question. Of course, there's idols that are universal, but there's also local idols. You even see this in the Old Testament. Each town



would have its own particular idol or god. So what are those particular idols that you see in this city that so many of us love, but you've also spent so much time in?

Lauren Gill:

Yeah, it was hard for me when I knew you were going to ask this question, it was hard for me because I think one of the idols of New York City is love of New York City and sort of-

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Right.

Joanna Meyer:

Yes, 'cause we see that in the New Yorkers that move to Colorado. They spend all their time talking about Manhattan.

Lauren Gill:

Yeah. So I instantly was like, "Well, yeah, we have this cultural idol, but it's not as bad as that city. We have this cultural idol, but it's not as bad as that place." So my own New York City sense of righteousness got flared up, so I think that's a big part of it. But I definitely think career achievement, career success, ambition are huge idols here, and a lot of people move here because of work. They move here for more opportunity. Whether they're moving here 'cause they want to work in finance or the arts, or they're moving here because they're a migrant and they're coming here 'cause they think there's lots of opportunity and there's more opportunity in a large city than there is in a small community. So a lot of people move here for job opportunity. I think that part of what made the Redeemer ecosystem what it was, was that sense that they knew people were being crushed by their own ambition, and they were talking to that through the years.

They were preaching to that because you would move here, you would make a lot of sacrifices. Nobody moves to New York City for a comfort idol, I can tell you that. Then even if you got the brass ring of the job you wanted or the Broadway show or the great job at the tech startup, it wasn't enough, and that left you feeling empty. So I think in my time counseling people, there was a lot of that vocational disappointment. Even some of the vocational disappointment was because work is broken and hard and things were more difficult than what people realized, but some of it was because people got the thing they wanted and then they didn't know what was next.

Joanna Meyer:



Lauren, let's dig in a little bit more about what you have observed in your role as a counselor and individual workers. What are examples, a few more examples of types of idolatry or ways that you see it affecting individual workers' lives?

Lauren Gill:

Yeah, I was thinking about my own life, and I think that in the entertainment industry, there's definitely a sense of thirsting and it never being enough. So I think when I was first an actor, I really wanted an agent. Then you get the agent and then you really want to be part of the actor's equity stage union. Then you get in that union and you really want to be in SAG. That's the Screen Actors Guild Union, and then you work hard for that. Then you want a certain type of show. Then you get that and then you want a bigger part in that type of show, and it just keeps going and going and going. So I think there's something about that industry in particular where the achievement and the status just feel like never enough, even when you're climbing up the ladder.

Then on the total opposite end, I think in my work as a counselor, I realized that in the helping professions there's this temptation to be useful or helpful and feeling like you're helping heal people or get them somewhere. That's its own idolatry, to feel like you're doing this great thing in people's lives and people move slowly, and some people don't move the needle at all when you're counseling them. I was working at one point getting my clinical hours at an outpatient psychiatric ward at a hospital here in the city, and it was all people who were very mentally ill, mostly homeless, schizophrenic, schizoaffective disorder, a lot of addiction. I would sit with them week after week and feel like I really wasn't doing anything to help them because they would describe the same hallucinations and delusions every week, and all you could really do was make sure they were taking their medication.

I look back on that job now because I hated it when I was doing it, and I realize I hated it because I didn't feel useful. I had my own productivity usefulness idol, and really the job that Jesus wanted me to have with those people was just to sit with them and be present with them week after week. That was the way to love them, but my own need to be helping got in the way of that. That's totally different than an entertainment idol, but I think that same temptation exists for people who are in New York City doing education or healthcare or nonprofit work. There's this need to fix the people or the system or contribute in a way that feels really meaningful, and sometimes that's just not going to happen. Then what do you do with that if that's the why behind your work? If the why is not Jesus, it's because you need to feel like you are helping.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, I think what you're saying, Lauren, is so important 'cause what we're really talking about is vocational idolatry and certainly in your work and also at our work at Denver Institute, that's something we're very interested in and want to help with. But what I hear you saying, Lauren, is it can be quite



particular, and for different industries and careers, idolatry looks a little bit different. Even just like we were saying about idolatry can be hyperlocal, and there's different idols in different places. Like in Colorado, it's not the Subaru you drive, it's what's on top of your Subaru like your expensive bike, your expensive skis, but same thing with particular industries. Even just to raise that for those in the giving fields or industries, like I've been a pastor. Yeah, I've felt that.

The desire to help and to care and to care for people can certainly become its own kind of idolatry. It actually makes me think about another really important passage is the baptism of Jesus and then his temptation in the wilderness. Jesus hears those words from the Father, "I love You. With You I am well pleased." That, of course, is before Jesus has done anything we could say vocationally, nothing on His resume, no miracles accomplished, no sermons preached, hadn't called any disciples, and the Father is well pleased with Him. I think even just for us to hear that repeatedly from the Father is so important in terms of countering our own struggle with idolatry.

Lauren Gill:

Yeah, absolutely. Actually, when I would counsel people, I would often say to them, "If you can just sit and think for five minutes every day about how you are Jesus's beloved son or daughter with whom He is well pleased. I think that's an idea that I got from Henry Nolan's book, *Life of the Beloved*. He talks about if you can just cultivate that awareness how differently than that will pour out in your life in the way you love and serve others in and through your work and all of your activities.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, absolutely. What's interesting too is, of course, right after the baptism is the temptation. That's exactly where the evil one goes after us, is that rootedness or the way you said it, Lauren, our identity in Christ, Satan says to Jesus, "If You are the Son of God, then do this thing. If you are the Son of God, then turn these stones into bread." So yeah, I think this is a daily practice that all of us need just to be rooted in that love of the Father that we have.

Hi, I'm Jeff Hoffmeyer, vice president of advancement here at Denver Institute for Faith & Work, and I'd like to invite you to become a part of our new monthly partner community. Whether it's a monthly commitment of \$25.00, \$50.00, or any amount, your generosity will support Denver Institute's ongoing efforts to help men and women love God, their neighbors and society through their daily work, including this podcast. To say thank you, as a monthly partner, you'll receive a welcome box. You'll have exclusive access to private digital content, personalized vocational coaching, and discounts for Denver Institute content and experiences. To become a monthly partner, simply visit denverinstitute.org/give or see the show notes in today's episode. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Joanna Meyer:



So I'd like to hear from the two of you about how we can begin to spot idols, but I think this plays out in two very distinct ways. One is we can see idols in our specific workplaces or industries, and that's a unique set of lenses that we bring as Christian workers in a space that highlights areas that we can press into the brokenness that you described and we described in some of your work, Lauren. Another one is just knowing our own triggers and spotting idolatry in our own lives. So let's treat those separately, but I think we need to touch on both of them. So let's start with how do we begin to see idols within a specific industry? What would you look for? What have you noticed?

Lauren Gill:

Yeah, so I think in an industry, the first thing that you have to think about is, what was the original creation goodness of an industry or what good is God using that industry in your community, in your city, in the world? Then you can think about how sin is thwarting that. So we often talk about with people, they often start with this reflexive lens of the fall with their work. "Well, I know what's broken about finance. It's all of these things." "I know what's broken about healthcare. It's all of these things." Instead of starting with a creation lens that says, "What is good about this industry? What is the creation goodness?" Then we can step back once we've established that and see the brokenness and name it. Then I think you can start to really prayerfully ask God to show you the ways you can push against the brokenness in that system.

We've seen a lot of examples of this at the Global Faith & Work Initiative, people who worked in the criminal justice system or the trucking industry or as a waitress or a filmmaker. They prayerfully ask God to open their eyes to allowing them to participate in pushing against areas of brokenness, large and small and saying, "What are you doing here and how can I come alongside that?" So I think just having that humble prayer life about the industry that you're in. Then I'm really thankful also to Dennaë Pierre who taught me this concept of being a restorative presence because I think we can, when you start to look at the brokenness of an industry or a city or any systemic brokenness, it can feel overwhelming and paralyzing. Then I think we say, "Okay, there's nothing I can do," and we throw up our hands, but she gave me this phrase of being a restorative presence.

When I go throughout my day in New York City, if you tell me I'm responsible for fixing some sort of systemic brokenness, I don't know where to start. But if you tell me I'm responsible as a Christian for being a restorative presence in every interaction I have, that's tangible. I can get my mind around that, and I can carry that with me as I drop my kids off at school, as I get on the subway in the morning and interact with the MTA workers, as I go to the coffee shop and grab a coffee, as I go to work and interact with all my co-workers, I can think about, "Am I being something that is a restoring influence or something that's a negative influence or a destructive influence in these spaces?" So those two ideas, the prayer and the restorative presence, I think are ways we can start to open our eyes to what God's doing and come alongside him.



Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah, Lauren, I love what you're saying. I don't have much to add. I was thinking about Keller's idea of counterfeit gods, and just to affirm your idea of asking first, "Well, what's good about a certain industry?" I'm a former pastor, this was a sermon illustration sometimes, so haven't fact checked on this, but I've been told that people who actually are trained to spot counterfeit money, they're not trained on the actual counterfeits, they just know the dollar bill, the real thing inside and out, and that way, they can spot the counterfeit. So that's just to affirm that idea of asking, "First of all, what's good?"

Then I think we also need to see it in the flesh. Denver Institute, one of our hopes is that no matter who you are in your industry, if you're a Christian, you would have at least one Christian friend in that industry. I might even say, "Who's your hero in your industry? Who's ahead of you? Who's been living this out and actually has been practicing that goodness that particular industry is designed for?" I think when we see it in the flesh, then we're also able to recognize in real time in the flesh also those counterfeit gods and the idols and the brokenness that comes.

Lauren Gill:

Yeah, absolutely.

Joanna Meyer:

I think it's helpful too, to be able to maybe look at the downstream effect of what we might be able to easily identify as an idol. I think of folks that I know here in the Denver area who are lawyers, and it would be easy to say, "Oh, yeah, we all know that what you worship is becoming partner or the lifestyle boards." But it's helpful to take a couple steps back from that and say, "Well, what are some of the practices within a large law firm that allow that level of success to happen?" One of them is the billable hour. You could say billable hours could be an idol, that every young associate before they hit partner has to achieve so many billable hours every year to be able to make their salary and qualify for advancement.

But what that means, how it deforms the life of the average lawyer is that they're having to, for some people, bill their time in 10th of an hour increments, so every six minutes, they're tracking. 'Cause if you're charging a client and making sub \$500 an hour, every six minutes, every 10th of an hour is worth \$50.00. So it's crazy to think that of how that could deform a person's life, that every six minutes you are measuring it on the clock. It's a tyranny of the billable hours that goes towards satisfying that idol of achievement or success or ease that would come from being a partner. So I think seeing brokenness is seeing how those idols play out and affect the life of the average worker too, and it's pretty fierce.

Lauren Gill:



It is, yeah. I think that sometimes people are in positions of influence where they're able to push back against that, and sometimes they aren't. I think you have to really ask God for wisdom about giving you a sense of control over the agency that you have. We did have someone at CFW who worked for the mayor's office, and she was just super insistent about, "I'm not working on Sundays. It's my Sabbath. I'm not checking emails and all of these things." I think that the people that she worked with thought that was fairly radical, for somebody who's working in the mayor's office in New York City to be that way, but she was able to do that. Of course, not everyone is able to, and then you have to calibrate that with Jesus.

Joanna Meyer:

So let's talk about how we spot idols in our own lives. Imagine that you're sitting in our listeners' seats. How can they begin to think about the way they engage their work and spot something that might be creeping into idol territory in their own lives?

Lauren Gill:

Well, you'll know when it's threatened and, well, even if it's not threatened, you'll know, I think, if your emotions are getting high. So if there's a sense of anger that's not righteous, anger, that's not about an area of injustice, right? If there's anxiety or fear or a real sense of despair or frustration, then I think those are signs that you need to go to God in prayer and scripture and process these things with him and ask him to open your eyes to what the idols are. We have a project that we use in a lot of our programming called the Self Counseling Project, and it really boils down to looking at a situation, a work situation that you responded to sinfully and saying four things: "What was going on when I responded that way? Second, what was I worshiping instead of Christ?

Or in other words, what was the idol? Three, what truth of the gospel or scripture was I not believing in at that time when I responded that way? Then four, imagining if I had been believing that truth, how would I have responded differently?" I think that is really something you can cultivate as a habit of mind to help you start recognizing on the spot when you start to feel frustrated in a conversation with a co-worker, stopping and giving yourself the space to think about what you're thinking about and say, "Why am I frustrated about this? What am I believing? What is this hitting? Is it hitting my sense of approval because they disagree with me? Is it hitting my sense of comfort because they're suggesting a new thing that I don't want to do? What's going on here?" Paul Tripp has a really excellent book called *How People Change* that gives a lot of insight into that process, but I think you want it to become a habit of mine so that you are consistently looking at your reactions and saying, "What am I worshiping right now instead of Jesus?"

Jeff Hoffmeyer:



Yeah, so good, Lauren. I would just think about two words and one of them you've already mentioned, Lauren, emptiness, and then the other word is joy. So the emptiness is, if I'm experienced emptiness in my life and I can't fill the cup, I keep pouring into it, it's like there's a hole in the cup, then that's a sign that whatever that thing is, work or money, sex power, that's an idol in my life. But then on a more positive note, it's this concept of joy, and if I'm lacking that, then that's a sign that idolatry is at play. But here's a line from C.S. Lewis's essay called *The Weight of Glory*.

Again, I mentioned before that biblical word glory has the connotation of weight, and I love this line. Lewis says, "It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased. The Lord wants us to experience joy and pleasure at work and with the things we own.

Again, these things just aren't meant to be ultimate, but if we're lacking joy again at work, then that's when we need to start to do that digging down through the layers that you're describing, Lauren, and asking those hard questions like, "Well, what's actually behind this desire for ambition? What's the hole in my heart? Where did that hole come from?" Because our Lord wants us to enjoy these good things that He's placed in our lives well. So now that we've identified at least a little bit how we can identify idols in our own industry, idols in our own lives, Lauren, we'd love to hear from you, how can we break the hold of those idols on our lives? What specific practices would you encourage us in?

Lauren Gill:

I think you have to spend time with God each day in His Word and in prayer. I was struggling with an idol and really emotional about it this last week, and then I was praying about it. Nothing was getting through. Then I read the scripture, "Hate what is evil, cling to what is good." I don't know what it was about that, but now every time I think about that in the last few days, I just say that scripture to myself, and it just has really changed things for me. I think that God uses His Word to speak to us and to speak to those things, and it's only grace that sometimes He does it right away, and sometimes it takes a lot longer. But I think you have to be spending the time with Him regularly, and you have to also have conversations with people where they can hold you accountable to things. I think you're so blessed to work at the Denver Institute of Faith & Work.

I've been so blessed to work in Faith & Work organizations where we have these conversations all the time. My boss, Missy Wallace, would constantly say, "Hey, you got really upset about that thing in that meeting, and I think for you that was like, I think you were putting your righteousness and X, Y, Z instead of Jesus." What a gift to have those conversations with someone you work with in real time. So you may not be able to do that in real time, but you'll be able to, like you said, process them with one other



Christian friend who works in the same industry. You have to be vulnerable and take them to them and say, "This is what's coming up for me. Can you help me think through it?"

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

Yeah. I had one of those conversations with a friend yesterday, also someone who's been a pastor, and we were talking about this very thing, ambition as pastors and some of our disappointment in that. It was all over, this is like classic Colorado, all over a craft cocktail as well. That's probably also another Colorado idol. The bougier the cocktail the better. But it was so helpful to have this conversation because I was no longer alone in this idol of ambition. I spoke it out loud, and my friends spoke it out loud. There's that idea of when you turn on the lights, the cockroaches scatter. The grip of idols on our lives happens in isolation, and when we're not honest and authentic and own our own struggles. So this is the value of Christian community and those kinds of hard conversations, cause yeah, it's incredibly vulnerable to start talking about these things.

Joanna Meyer:

Lauren, as we wrap up our conversation, we like to give our guests the final word. I'm wondering if you would remind us of the grace that God offers as we wrestle with our idols.

Lauren Gill:

Yeah. I think God does not reveal your idols to shame or condemn you. There's no condemnation in Christ Jesus. He reveals them to you so you can have more of Him. Like that passage that Jeff read by C.S. Lewis, he wants you to have a deeper, purer, more beautiful love in your life. He wants the love of Christ to satisfy your needs for comfort, approval, and control far more than your work, your relationships, or any possession ever will because it's a love that died for you when you didn't deserve it. So I think just spending time meditating on that hopefully will make the things of this world seem strangely dim as the hymn says.

Jeff Hoffmeyer:

So good. Thank you, Lauren.

Joanna Meyer:

Such a beautiful reminder. Thanks for joining us, Lauren. It is just such a gift to have you in this conversation. Thanks for the good work and leadership you're doing in New York.

Lauren Gill:

Thank you for being here.



Joanna Meyer:

Gosh, I think I could listen to Lauren Gill all day. We have a load of resources in the show notes today, but I just want to highlight a few that are there. We'll be linking to the study series called The Missional Disciple that Lauren helped produce. Books will be referencing our Paul Tripp's book, *How People Change*. Chalmers book or a chapter in a Chalmers book, an article called *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*. If you're listening to the Teach Us To Pray Podcast, we encourage you to check out Episode 7 and 8, which talk about the temptation of Christ that Hoff addressed in today's episode. Finally, we'll link to the Self Counseling Project from the Center for Faith & Work, which contains an exercise that Lauren described in today's episode. Gosh, tons of resources.

Thanks for joining us today. I hope that this week is a thoughtful one as you consider the potential power that idolatry has in your own work and life, and the beautiful freedom that we can find in Christ. Thanks for listening. If you've enjoyed this episode or the Faith & Work Podcast, please subscribe, leave a review, or share it with a friend. Your support is critical to helping other listeners discover this vital resource. The Faith & Work Podcast is produced by Denver Institute for Faith & Work where we believe that work is a way to love God and serve our neighbors. To learn more or to make a financial contribution, visit denverinstitute.org.