

Ultimate Professional Woman's Guide

5 Steps to
Connect Your
Faith and Work

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Bearing God's Image

Here at Polished, we believe that the greatest thing we can do is create conversations about the way the gospel of Jesus Christ intersects with our professional lives. This guide exists to do just that by walking through five attributes of the character of God that we, those who bear God's image, possess as well. We'll consider what the qualities say about God, what they say about us, and how understanding our role as image-bearers can help us connect our faith and work.

Attribute of God: Creator

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Genesis 1:1-3

The first thing we see God doing in Scripture is creating. God's first series of actions is to look upon the chaos and void, bring form to it, and fill it with light. God delights from the beginning to implement structure, to illumine the darkness, and to initiate beauty.

Genesis 1 tells us more about creation — from the specific, like "trees bearing fruit with seed in it," to the broad, like "dry ground called 'land.'"

What does thinking of God as Creator teach you about God's character?

Our Reflection: Workplace Innovation

"While the word for "creator" in Scripture is only used to refer to God, we know that God created us as image bearers. So while we don't have the creative powers God does — the powers that brought about something from nothing — we do have creativity that mirrors God's character.

Maybe you're able to spend time in a group of co-workers and figure out within minutes who would work well together on a certain project. Maybe you can read a financial statement and instantly see the implications for each department of your company. Maybe you think in entrepreneurial ideas, or in color-coded calendars, or in spreadsheets. One thing is for sure. You bear the image of a Creator God.

What are some areas of your job where your creative instincts emerge?

What step can you take to cultivate your creativity at work this week?

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Attribute of God: Relator

As we saw in Genesis 1, God creates because creating is inherent to God's character. The same is true when it comes to relating. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—known as the Trinity—existed in perfect relationship as One God in three persons before the earth had form or Adam ever drew his first breath. Perfect love, collaboration, and belonging.

From that perfect unity, God created sin. Sin fractured our relationships with God and others, but even then God sent His perfect Son as a sacrifice for us. Jesus died on our behalf, for our sin, then rose again as a victor over death and ultimate restorer of relationship between God and humans and humans with one another.

What does thinking of God as Relator teach you about God's character?

Our Reflection: Forming Office Friendships

In John 17, Jesus prays to God the Father. He prays that God will glorify Him, He prays for His disciples, and He prays for all believers—including those in future generations. Jesus asks that "all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you."

Jesus made a way for us to draw near to God. And God designed us to be people who help others draw near to God and to one another.

This isn't about personality. You can be a severe introvert who excels at bringing groups of people together, or an extrovert who can event-hop with the best of them but finds herself lonely at the end of the night. This is about recognizing that God wants to have a relationship with you. And from that recognition, you can invite others into belonging in your workplace.

Who would you like to prioritize building a relationship with at work? What are some practical steps—a coffee break, asking for input on a project, offering help on an assignment—you can take this month?

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Attribute of God: Teacher

As far back as Genesis, we see God teaching. God instructs Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. God gives Moses that law so that the people will know how to relate to God and to one another. God teaches through the prophets and the priests. And Jesus, God in the flesh, teaches continually—educating His disciples and hillside crowds in Who God is and how to live accordingly.

At the heart of God's teaching is wisdom, holiness, and love. God does not teach merely to dispense information nor to mandate rules. Rather, God teaches so that hearts might turn toward righteousness and minds might meditate on that which is good, true, and beautiful.

What does thinking of God as Teacher teach you about the character of God?

Our Reflection: Mentoring Co-workers

According to a 2019 Forbes article by Mary Abbajay, workplace "mentoring has proved so beneficial that 71% of Fortune 500 companies offer mentoring programs to their employees." Mentorship correlates with employee retention and promotions,. It also takes time and can be awkward.

Because we bear the Ultimate Teacher's image, we can embrace the challenges of mentoring. Don't strive for a perfect weekly appointment with measurable outcomes. Rather, develop a relationship with a senior employee who can impart wisdom, and a junior employee who can learn from you, with clear expectations about the most important things and flexibility about the rest.

If you tend to keep to yourself, consider reaching out to a junior coworker to offer assistance on a project. If you tend to be part of everyone's projects, consider scaling back and focusing on one or two co-workers.

Who might mentor you? Who might you mentor? How can you take a step toward each of them?

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Attribute of God: Knower

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" Romans 11:33

Imagine a grand library or an encyclopedia so weighty you can't lift it. While both would offer nerdy deep dives aplenty, neither hold a candle to the knowledge of God. God's knowledge is infinite, perfect, full. God knows our minds and our hearts, God knows that that fact is terrifying, and God knows how to make a way for us to take comfort in being known so intimately—the forgiveness offered to us through Jesus.

God's knowledge is neither merely intellectual nor is it merely practical. It's everything—the ethereal and the brass tacks—wrapped up together.

What does thinking of God as Teacher teach you about the character of God?

Our Reflection: Understanding Your Industry

One of the ways we can bear God's image is by reflecting God's love for knowledge. This isn't a love that's rooted in useless specialization or "getting it" better than the next person. Rather, this love for knowledge is rooted in God's passion for the truth—a passion we can possess, too.

How knowledgeable do you feel about your industry? Do you want to learn more than you know right now? If you tend toward the positive, maybe it's time to wonder about the things that give you pause. If you tend toward cynicism, you could learn more about the ways your industry has brought about goodness in the lives of others.

The ways to learn are many—through reading, through conversation, through podcasts or documentaries. Whatever the medium, be encouraged to know that you aren't simply accruing information. You're mirroring a love for the truth back to God.

What's an area of your industry you'd like to learn more about? What's one step you can take toward that goal?

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Attribute of God: Mediator

Just as Jesus participated in creation, provided a way for us to relate to God, teaches us how to live, and knows us wholly and completely, He also mediates for us. Romans 8 tells us that "Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." Not only can we relate to God because of Jesus, but we have a perfect advocate standing before a perfect judge on our behalf.

If you've ever felt unable to speak for yourself or like you needed a bodyguard/soul-guard—He's here in Jesus. You don't stand alone or forgotten. You stand protected by the One who, as Hebrews says, "sympathizes with your weaknesses in every way yet was without sin." Jesus stands before God with a spotless record and your name on His lips.

What does thinking of God as mediator teach you about the character of God?

Our Reflection: Advocating for Others

Whether you're at the top of the ladder or just arrived on the first rung, you're in between someone and someone else. If you're in the C-suite, you likely stand with clients or customers and employees one side of you with a board and shareholders on the other. Many of us stand between a boss and people who call us their boss. And those early in their careers often stand between customers and the people who make decisions that affect them.

Whoever you are, you can advocate for others. Maybe a co-worker's contributions go unnoticed and you can be the one to praise her publicly. Maybe customers keep lodging the same complaint to no avail, and you can prioritize their concerns. Maybe you've learned about unfair practices, or have noticed morale dipping due to overwork, or see a manager berating or harassing their staff.

Once you look for opportunities to advocate, you'll see them everywhere.

What's one way you can tune in to the needs of customers, clients, employees, or co-workers in the coming weeks?