



Disciples in the Marketplace

Episode Two: My Hands, Your Eyes

Quick Look Discussion Guide

Check out the *Disciples in the Marketplace* [landing page](#) to view the **streaming video interview** with ocularist, Erika Hedtcke. You will also find additional backstory/bonus clips, as well as links to a [full transcript of this video](#) and the bonus/backstory clips. See group discussion questions for this episode about seeing grace at work below.

“I feel closest to God when I get to polish an eye.”

-Erika Hedtcke

In this episode we focus again on seeing and sharing grace at work through our daily efforts on behalf of life (our own and others). Specifically, we look at grace at work through the reach and effort of our hands that can help bring greater wholeness to others. Our work life becomes a witness and place where we are the hands of Christ on the job. And through the lens of ocularist Erika Hedtcke’s daily work life and witness, we discover how manual skills (handiwork) create opportunities to help others see grace in their own lives as they themselves are regarded and ‘seen’ into greater wholeness.

Our Parents’ Work

The connection between **work** and **hands** seems obvious. Practically, hands are the way we get many if not most things done. Work almost always involves our hands. And while many of us grew up in a culture that revered hard work and being ‘handy,’ we may have simultaneously looked down upon those who make a living with their hands. So, on the one hand, while we praise the work of artisans, on the other we disparage the ‘hired hand’ who was merely extra labor with less pay and respect. Often when we call this manual labor (literally, ‘hands’ work), we know we need people to do it (sometimes for us), while maybe silently hoping for a less strenuous occupational future for our own children. 

In the category of ‘**what did your mom or dad do for a living?**’ take a few minutes to reflect on and/or discuss one or two of the questions below.

Opening Group Reflection/Discussion Questions:

- **What kind of jobs did your parents (or grandparents) have?** Do you remember how they got ready for work (work clothes/shoes/gloves/uniform, tools, preparation)? Did they dread it or seem to enjoy preparing for the workday? What were they like when they came home for work? Happy? Exhausted? Relieved? Did they bring work home with them? If they worked at home (farming, telecommuting), were there natural boundaries between work life and home life?
- **Where did you see grace at work in your parents’ experience on the job?**
- Where do you see echoes of your parents’ struggle and grace in your own ‘9 to 5’ work life?
- **Were there any recurring manual labor responsibilities or chores at your house** that were distinctly or primarily yours (taking out the trash, cleaning the garage, mowing the lawn,

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washing dishes, etc.)? If you had siblings, were these tasks fairly distributed by age/ability or did some things always seem to fall on you or another designated family member? Were these assigned based on stereotypes or traditional gender roles?

- **Who taught you the value of work?**

Video Discussion Questions: What Did You See?

Cut to the chase: Watch [Episode Two: My Hands, Your Eyes](#) clip. See the video discussion questions below. Erika remembers that her ‘why’ is ‘with.’ For her, the work of her hands is an effort to enhance life – both her own through satisfaction and compensation and the lives of those she sees and helps. Her patients discover the possibility of wholeness through her craft, artistry, and attention to detail. She meets God and shares grace on the job because she sees others, remembers her ‘why,’ and is a witness to grace-at-work, for life.

Choose one or two of the questions below to ask yourself and/or the group gathered to consider what it means to be disciples in the marketplace:

- What did you hear/see in Erika’s story? What will you remember?
- Do you see grace at work in her journey to become an ocularist? In her ‘eyes’ (both the ones she sees with and the ones she makes)? How? In what way?
- In what ways does she see more than trauma or loss when caring for her patients?
- What do you think her patients see in her eyes? Regard? Care? Help? Love? Hope?

Another option for Reflection/Discussion:

Listen to one of the songs from the unofficial [Disciples in the Marketplace-SATP crowdsourced Spotify](#) playlist (“He’s Got the Whole World In His Hands,” “These Hands,” “Put Your Hand in the Hand,” “Hold My Hand,” “Write My Number On Your Hand,” “Keep Your Hands to Yourself,” “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” “In Your Eyes,” “Walk,” “Healing Hands,”). Play the whole song together and ask the group to listen for what kind of relationship (with others, work, life, joy, God) the song communicates about our work life in our own or God’s ‘hands.’

- What’s the song about? *Whose* hands (or eyes) does the song talk about? Does this rhyme or resonate with your own experience of companionship or work?
- Would you say this song sees hands as our connection to others?
- Do you have your own favorite song that makes you want to throw your hands up in joy, celebration, or worship? What is it and how does it help?
- Listen to “Put Your Hand in the Hand”² by the one hit wonder band, Ocean, for a lyric from the song that stands out to you. Whose hands does the song speak about? What makes the singer ‘tremble’? What was Jesus doing with his hands in a temple that in his time was often treated more like a marketplace for commerce than a place to meet God (John 2:13-16)?

Erika Hedtcke Quotes from the My Hands, Your Eyes Video

“I have hands that God gave me to do this and to help somebody in a way that I never really imagined I could. it’s very humbling and it shows me grace every single day.”

“I’m always surprised at the faith that people still have after the hand they’ve been dealt and I always wonder if I were in their position, would I react like that? Would I have the faith and the hope to want to continue?”

Bonus/Backstory Video Discussion Questions: Stories Behind the Eyes

Erika's History (01:42)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- What kind of arts, crafts, and/or tools did you work with as a child? Do you see a connection with the work you do today (or used to do during another phase of your work life)?
- Has/Does your own work require a little 'McGyver-ism' (dynamic improvisation on the fly to meet a challenge on the job)? Share a story of one of your own 'improv' moments at work. Do you see grace at work in this story/memory? What did you learn from the experience?

The Emotional Journey I (01:56)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- What is the context for many of Erika's patients? (a specific loss, trauma, abuse) What questions do these contexts of grace raise for them (how will people see me? Will I be okay)?
- Do you have work experiences where you must accompany someone through a process of significant change? When did your work provide an opportunity to hold someone's hand through a difficult time (whether that was in your job description or not)?

Continuity of Care (01:11)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- Where do you get to witness growth in your work (your own, that of your customers/co-workers)?
- Do you have any examples of following a person's life across time in your job? What changes did you witness (in them, in you, in others around them/you)?

The Lighter Side (00:53)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- Some jobs have little room for levity. Do you laugh at work?
- Would your job be more difficult without laughter? How so?

Challenges (01:31)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- What challenges do you face at work?
- What do you do when your work comes up short? What does that mean for those you help or serve in your line of work?

The Emotional Journey II (01:40)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- Do the people you engage at work teach you more than you teach them? How? Share a specific example/story.
- Do you have opportunities in your own work to relieve the anxiety of those you serve/work with? Give an example.

Unusual Requests (02:02)

Bonus/Backstory Questions

- Erika describes people who don't really know what color their own eyes are. Do you encounter people in your working life who have never taken a close look at themselves (physically or metaphorically)?
- Does your work allow customization or fun? How can tailoring our work to someone's unique situation bring more joy to them and us?

End Notes

■ Work as toil and curse has been connected with our hands from the very beginning: "...he named him Noah (one who brings rest from work), saying, 'Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from **the toil of our hands**'" (Genesis 5:29, NRSV).

■ This song was number two on the U.S. Billboard charts in 1971 and remained in the top 10 for almost two months. It was only kept from the top spot by the Three Dog Night's, "Joy to the World."