

*Work, Play, Love: A Visual Guide to Calling, Career & the Mission of God*

Available October 2014

\$16, 240 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-3673-4

**Mark Shaw** is the director of the world Christianity program and professor of historical studies at Africa International University in Nairobi, Kenya. He has studied world Christianity at the University of Edinburgh (MTh) and the history of Christianity at Westminster Theological Seminary (ThD).

## The Pursuit of Happiness

Our pursuit of work-life balance has taken us deep into the story of the Bible. Lady Wisdom has called us to a life of primary play in which we playfully delight in whatever we do, whomever we do it with, and all because of what we see happening wherever we look – an almighty and all loving Father making all things new. To experience this life of playful delight I need to get folly out of my head and heart. Biblical thinking is the key to this transformation of the mind and soul. Abraham’s call to believe, the Exodus call to freedom, David’s call to relationships and the singers’ call to lovemaking are all part of that new perspective on work-life balance. But the unexamined premise behind all of this is our desire for happiness. The dream of happiness is one of humanity’s oldest and most elusive dreams.

After centuries in which happiness study was the exclusive province of theologians and philosophers, a shift has taken place. In the last twenty years positive psychology, a movement within the behavioral sciences, has made important contributions to our understanding of happiness. Students at our most elite institutions cram the classrooms of courses devoted to happiness. A leading voice among this new generation of happiness scientists is New York University’s Jonathan Haidt.



In his book *The Happiness Hypothesis*, Haidt looks at a number of the factors that make people happy. Genes play a role, and external conditions may play a minor role. Values are very important. One of the surprising factors Haidt focuses on, given his atheism, is what he calls “divinity.” He writes that people who experience “elevation,” who feel inspired and sense the sacredness of life, tend to cope with adversity better than those without such sensibilities. He reiterates the research that shows that religious people tend to be happier than their nonreligious counterparts. One of the benefits of a religious life is a having a story that makes sense of adversity. Haidt cites research that indicates the power of “making sense of life” through a positive narrative, especially in times of crisis or trauma, as an important factor in people recovering and expanding their happiness. When we experience awe in an encounter with a vastness that exceeds our expectations or categories, our values and life narratives change and expand and become more useful in explaining the unexplainable things of life. Linking our little stories to a story of cosmic scope seems to be one of the golden keys to happiness. Lady Wisdom notes the role of linking little and large narratives in Proverbs 9:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” This is her call to wow, to an encounter with the Almighty that inspires fear and awe. Through this encounter we feel our small stories becoming a part of the greater story of God himself.

– Taken from chapter nine, “The Isaiah Call to Wow”

 **INTERVARSITY PRESS**

Visit [ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)



**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT:**

Krista Carnet, broadcast publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kkcarnet@ivpress.com](mailto:kkcarnet@ivpress.com)

Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)

Adrianna Wright, online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [awright@ivpress.com](mailto:awright@ivpress.com)

[ivpress.com/books](http://ivpress.com/books)

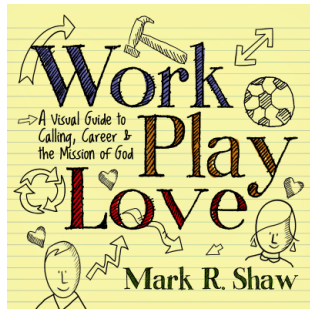


# BOOK EXCERPT



**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT:**

Krista Carnet, broadcast publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kkcarnet@ivpress.com](mailto:kkcarnet@ivpress.com)  
Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or [awissman@ivpress.com](mailto:awissman@ivpress.com)  
Adrianna Wright, online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4096 or [awright@ivpress.com](mailto:awright@ivpress.com)  
[ivpress.com/books](http://ivpress.com/books)



*Work, Play, Love: A Visual Guide to Calling, Career & the Mission of God*

Available October 2014

\$16, 240 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-3673-4

*What would it take to have a life of meaningful work, refreshing fun and great relationships? Mark Shaw paints us a vivid picture of human flourishing, where pursuing wisdom and guarding against cultural pitfalls can give us a renewed sense of vocation, fun and community.*

## Work, Play, Love Gives Wings to Our Longing for Holistic Living

*"There are some books which come at you sideways. They make you look again at familiar texts and teaching with fresh eyes and unusual perspectives. This book is like that, and I enjoyed it greatly. It offers a 'whole Bible' view of some of the great questions of life: who we are, why we are here, what God wants, how we should then live. And it does so with a light touch, but strong biblical roots. And the pictures help! A creative and imaginative piece of work, and a stimulating, thought-provoking read."*

—**Christopher J. H. Wright**, international ministries director, Langham Partnership

*"Work, Play, Love is a much-needed and imaginative contribution to our quest for a greater understanding of vocation. Drawing love and play into our understanding of calling and belonging to God and to others is freeing and makes so much sense at a soul level. What Shaw does in this book in the area of vocation gives wings to our longing for holistic living, integrating the dimensions of the human experience in a way that is sure to bring greater fruit, freedom and fun to reader's lives."*

—**R. York Moore**, national evangelist, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA

*"In Work, Play, Love Mark Shaw displays the wisdom of a senior theologian and the creativity of a master teacher. Shaw, who has been a seminary professor in the United States and Africa, uses plain language and illustrations to explain important concepts that should shape our lives. He provides a helpful corrective to incorrect aspects of a popular cultural understanding of the Protestant work ethic. This book will help the reader understand the joy and delight God intends for us. The discussion questions are insightful and thought provoking, making this an outstanding choice for small group discussion."*

—**Paul V. Sorrentino**, director of religious life, Amherst College

*"Like many millennials, I'm no stranger to a constant barrage of opportunities, busyness, responsibilities, entertainment and the pursuit of the ever-elusive 'balance.' And while these aren't necessarily bad things, a coffee-fueled survival of the workweek leaves me feeling like I've missed something. Mark's book is a wise, refreshing and compelling conversation that gets right to the heart of things. It challenges my compartmentalization and idolatry and helps me reimagine an integrated life of work, delight, rest, relationships and worship. It's an invitation to join God in his redemptive work and to pursue the flourishing of others. Consider this book an adventure guide and explore what it looks like to be freed from the struggle to find identity in work, play or love alone, and truly embrace the wholeness of living the life God desires for his people."*

—**Hannah Teague**, communications director, Peninsula Community Chapel