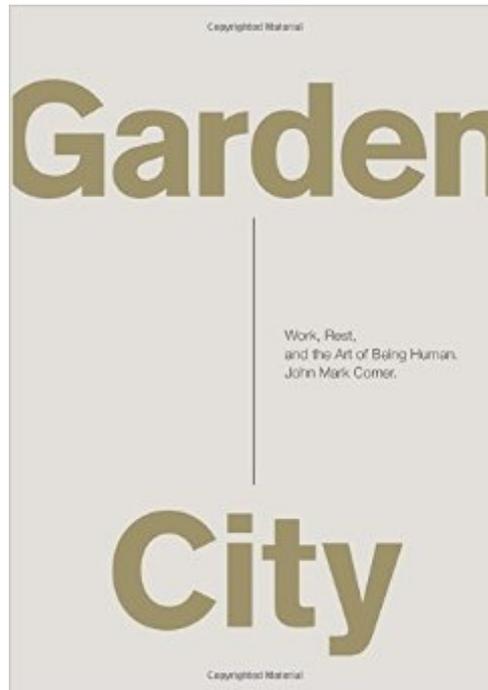


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# Garden City: Work, Rest, And The Art Of Being Human.



## Synopsis

You<sup>™</sup>ve heard people say “Who you are matters more than what you do”. Does the Bible really teach that? In Garden City, popular pastor and speaker John Mark Comer gives a fresh take on our calling and our purpose, with a surprisingly counter-culture take. Through his creative and conversational style, Comer takes a good look at Genesis and the story of a man, a woman, and a garden. He unpacks God<sup>™</sup>s creation and his original intent for how we are meant to spend our time. Here, you<sup>™</sup>ll find answers to questions like “Does God care where I work?” “What about what I do with my free time or how much rest I get?” “Does he have a clear direction for me?” Practical and theologically rich, Garden City speaks to twenty and thirty-somethings who are figuring out next steps and direction in their lives. Garden City is the Purpose Driven Life for the next generation—the book that helps us answer why we are here and what should we do about it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book was a bit different than most. The style of writing was hard to get used to. It<sup>™</sup>s written in a very “blog-ish” style that gets a little melodramatic at times (frankly, it got annoying). The book is filled with one sentence paragraphs and no paragraph indentations. The page layout is more akin to a list of proverbs or bullet-points than a storyline. Yet there was a story, and a good one at that. The use of three word sentences and ellipses were excessive. I had to learn to ignore the fact that it read more like a cell phone texting conversation than a book. Yet, putting aside the

stylistic issues, I found the content to be insightful and useful. In particular, I liked Comer's description of Sabbath, how it can be observed from a practical point of view, and its spiritual implications. I found the new kingdom theology of the book refreshing. So few Christian leaders embrace and communicate the literal new heavens and new earth paradigm that Comer reminds us of. He explains that we were built for this planet, and that we have purpose and work to do here, now and in the eternal future. This vision of a new Earth and our vocation on it is an important message, and Comer explains it clearly and biblically. I really liked the themes outlined in this book. However, I did struggle with the lack of complexity around the vocation topic. The book somewhat assumes that you know (or can know) your role or vocation and that you will be most content when you are doing it. Although that is likely true, I would venture to say that most of us don't know our true vocation (God help me if my present job, which did feel like a calling, is also my eternal vocation).

I'm almost finished with Garden City, and I can't wait to read it again! Comer begins with laying the groundwork on what it means to rule over the earth, as Adam and Eve were commanded. I've heard different teachings and perspectives (from different theological camps) on this over the years, but I have to say that this was the best and most challenging take on this important doctrine. From there, he deals with what it means to work and to rest, and brings it all home to our identity in and walk with God. The chapters on work will bring fresh perspective on whatever it is you do, and will motivate you to do it well for the glory of God--or find something else! Not only will you be challenged in the way you work, but you'll also find yourself appreciating excellence and thinking more about what you purchase and consume. The concept of secular vs. sacred ("Christian" products like music) has been talked about lately, and Comer does a good job addressing this. Right before this book I read another good book on the importance of structured rest as a lifestyle. Really, the section (just a few chapters) in Garden City addressed this even better. Keep in mind that this isn't meant to be a deep work of theology, even though it is theological. I appreciated the engaging use of original Hebrew language and Jewish traditional and contemporary teaching. But this book is above all practical and applicable, and can help you deal with your perspective on God, work, family, and life as a whole foundationally. There's no reason to read this if you're not willing to change. I didn't agree with every little point Comer makes. But I don't have to in order to see the overall greatness of this message, and its importance to me and those I know.

I always enjoy trying a new book by an author I haven't read before. In this case, the book was

"Garden City" by John Mark Comer. The subtitle caught my attention from the start: "Work, Rest, and the Art of Being Human." Now that's an ambitious topic to tackle in 323 pages, but he did it. This book is a grand tour of the big question: Does what I do really matter? (There's a thousand sub-questions, but that's the main one.) To get us to an answer, John Mark starts way back in Eden when man was first given work in a wild and vibrant garden. Adam and Eve's calling was to make culture and civilization out of a glorious wilderness. The earth was full of raw material, John argues, ready to be shaped and tended and stitched and hammered into everything that humanity needed. When you think of it that way, the essence of man's work has never really changed. We're still cultivating our way towards increased human flourishing, whether that cultivation comes by planting fields or repairing electrical lines or treating cancer or policing a city. And let's shoot straight here. Even the work that nobody wants to be stuck in, the part-time entry-level minimum-wage work matters. If you're waitstaff or a dishwasher or a janitor, you are cultivating the world to a good end, and we damn sure appreciate it when you do your part well. So, there is work to be done. We're invited/commanded/designed to do this work, and we're not slaves or robots or even mere laborers while do it. John Mark makes the case that when we do good work, we're partnering with God. That's ultimately how we decide what work is good: is it the sort of thing God does? Does this give order to the world? Does it take care of people?

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