

EXCERPT



The Seamless Life
A Tapestry of Love & Learning, Worship & Work

January 14, 2020 | \$20, 136 pages, hardcover | 978-0-8308-4595-8

What if we began to see all we are and all we do—our work, our play, our relationships, our worship, our loves—as significant to God and to what God is doing in the world? In these essays Steven Garber challenges us to move beyond our fragmented sense of reality to an understanding of the seamless life—recognizing the hand of God and the handiwork of God right in the middle of our ordinary lives.

What Does It Mean to See Seamlessly?

Almost always, when someone asks, “Why do you think about vocation like you do?” I will simply say that it begins with my Grandfather Gilchrist, and tell the tale of the way that *ora et labora*, prayer and work, were woven into the meaning of his life. That he allowed me in—summer after summer, year after year, giving me the gift of seeing over his shoulder and through his heart as he prayed and worked—has formed me, heart and mind, soul and strength.

My grandparents lived between Durango and Cortez, Colorado, in the grand geography known as the Four Corners—the wonderful place in the American Southwest where the mesas meet the mountains. It is a land that I still love. My earliest memories are of its air and the wonder of the wind blowing through the aspen leaves, gracing its meadows and river valleys, making the world new again, morning by morning. At least, it seemed that way to me as a child. They had cattle, and I gloried in them, from my first years knowing the differences between the breeds and why they mattered. I still remember an exceptional morning walking through the corral by the barn, a very little boy that I was, and meeting an Angus bull who began to chase me. I thought I was going to die.

There were better days though, many of them. Riding horseback through the pastures, catching frogs in creeks and bringing them home for my always-and-ever kind grandmother who fried their legs.

One day a Navajo man came to the ranch, asking if my grandfather would trade a blanket for a cow. They made a deal, and through the years of my boyhood the blanket was my grandfather’s saddle blanket; not a collector’s item, but a simple, ordinary saddle blanket, bearing the smells and sweat of a horse. When my grandfather died, the blanket became mine, and over many years I have prized it, loving what it means to me about the life and world that is mine to remember.

The blanket now graces a shelf full of books that matter to me, all on the theme of vocation, the complex and rich word that it is. As this book was being born, one morning I laid the blanket out on the floor of Regent College’s art gallery, and then walked around it, wanting to get the light and shadow right, hoping that I could find a way to capture its native beauty and textured meaning—its history threading its way through the years of my life, a memory for me of what seamlessness is and ought to be.

This is a book about vocation, but a different book, a collection of essays and photos. An unusual effort for the publisher, it is new for me too. Rather than making an argument that is developed over scores of pages and many chapters, this one is a deeper and deeper reflection on one question: What does it mean to see seamlessly? To see the whole of life as important to God, to us, and to the world—the deepest and truest meaning of vocation—is to understand that our longing for coherence is born of our truest humanity, a calling into the reality that being human and being holy are one and the same life.

—Adapted from the introduction

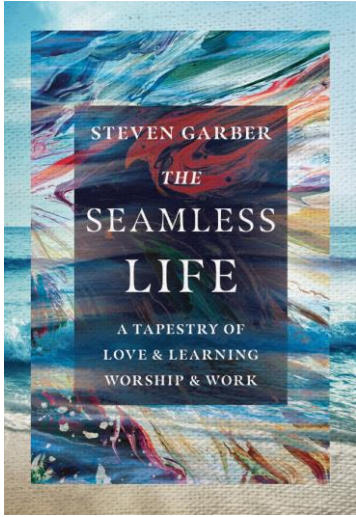


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ENDORSEMENTS



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Steven Garber is professor of marketplace theology and director of the program in leadership, theology, and society at Regent College, Vancouver, BC. Through his many years as a professor, he has become a teacher of many people in many places, serving as a consultant to foundations, corporations, and universities. His books include *Visions of Vocation* and *The Fabric of Faithfulness*, and he is a contributor to the books *Faith Goes to Work: Reflections from the Marketplace* and *Get Up Off Your Knees: Preaching the U2 Catalogue*.

"All of Us Were Made to Live a Seamless Life"

"*The Seamless Life* is a scrumptious feast for mind and heart, meticulously prepared in bite-size pieces of timeless wisdom, transforming truth, and life-giving grace. The depth and beauty of the poetic words as well as each breathtaking photograph point longing hearts to a God well loved and a life well lived. Steve Garber is a remarkably good man with a rare gift of storytelling. This may be his finest work. I highly recommend it."

Tom Nelson, senior pastor of Christ Community Church, Leawood, Kansas, and author of *The Economics of Neighborly Love*

"Steven Garber takes us on a personal journey—with many stops, and in many dimensions, transcending time and geography—to see life as he sees it: seamlessly. His collection of essays guides us in understanding the meaning of vocation and affirms our humanness; made in the very image of God, we cannot but care about the way the world is."

Philip Ng, chairman and CEO of Far East Organization

"Steven Garber takes the complex subjects of who we are as human beings and why our work matters and makes them come alive through captivating personal stories and photography. Reading *The Seamless Life* is a journey through profound essays and stunning images that provoke the reader to stop and contemplate the deepest questions of our generation. The book is a feast for the eyes, the mind, and the heart, and Garber's best work yet."

Uli H. Chi, chairman of Computer Human Interaction, LLC, senior fellow at the Max De Pree Center for Leadership

"In *The Seamless Life*, Steven Garber culls a lifetime of observation, reflection, and writing into what can only be called a masterpiece on vocation. With gentle, persuasive, artful language, Steven gives the reader a true picture of a faithful life. It is a seamless vision of word and work based in love, lived for the benefit of all and the glory of God. I cannot recommend this manual of meaning and mission more strongly."

Charlie Peacock, Grammy Award-winning music producer and cofounder of *The Writer & The Husband* blog

"Steven Garber's delightful prose reminds us once again of the importance of reflecting deeply upon that which is most meaningful: our very purpose. By embracing our vocation, we can each move the needle a bit from how things are to how they ought to be, showing us that we are all implicated in the way the world turns out."

Jay Jakub, senior director of external research, Mars, Incorporated, and coauthor of *Completing Capitalism: Heal Business to the Heal the World*

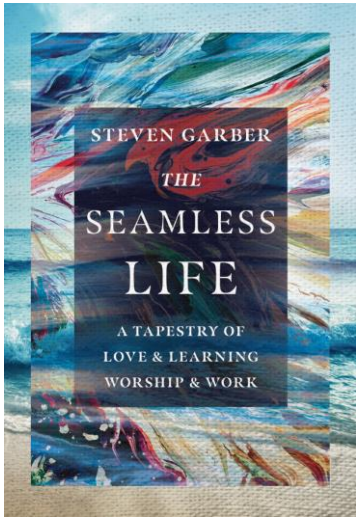


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"This modern life often feels fragmented. Steve Garber's new collection of words and writings, *The Seamless Life*, gently weaves coherence and grace from the far corners of vocation, friendship, and spirituality. A skillful storyteller, Garber puts himself forward effortlessly. *The Seamless Life* is like good conversation, and it reads as if you are sitting with an old friend across the table. These chapters can be savored daily, as each page is filled with sacred questioning, wisdom, and hope."

Sandra McCracken, singer-songwriter and recording artist

"I do not think I can name another author whose books are so intensely esteemed and indeed treasured by a cadre of followers, readers who in many cases have become friends of the author, than Steven Garber. His transforming words are always given flesh in his books as he moves deftly from big ideas to daily consequences, between hearing and doing, principles and practice. But in this new collection of essays, stories, anecdotes, and reflections, he allows us deeper into his life, his work, and his marriage. *The Seamless Life* is a kingdom-sized glimpse of a good life lived with coherence and commitments, animated sometimes with rather ordinary days and then with astonishing episodes of extraordinary experiences. This is one of the best collections of essays I have ever read and is perhaps Garber's finest achievement yet. Don't miss this wise, achingly beautiful book."

Byron Borger, Hearts & Minds bookstore, Dallastown, Pennsylvania

"I frequently meet people who are engaged in fruitful work for the life of the world, and in most cases I discover that those people are just a few degrees of separation from someone who has had a life-altering conversation with Steven Garber. This book gives you the sense that you are sitting with him, sipping coffee, and gleaning from his wisdom. As your eyes move across its pages, you will notice that you are able to see with greater clarity the world beyond this book, the world as it really is, full of beauty to be cultivated and brokenness to be mended—seeing yourself as you are, and seeing yourself as implicated to steward some aspect of God's world, giving you a glimpse of the God who weaves our stories together into his ultimate story of redemption. The depth of wisdom, compelling stories, and honest questions make *The Seamless Life* a unique gift to those who seek to pursue the common good in this complex world."

Jim Mullins, pastor of vocational and theological formation, Redemption Church, Tempe, Arizona, and coauthor of *A Symphony of Mission: Playing Your Part in God's Work in the World*

"Down deep I think all of us were made to live a seamless life . . . one of coherence, connectedness, and deep meaning. The problem is sometimes the 'down deep' is so deep down that I lose my awareness of that longing and find myself living scattered, hurried, and a bit adrift. Steven's book is a map of how to live well in this world. I was moved to tears, mentally challenged, and soulfully stirred to navigate my life by this truest of North Stars."

Nancy Ortberg, CEO of Transforming the Bay with Christ



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