

The Utility, Not Futility, of Work

Work, Part 4
Selections from Ecclesiastes

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The Futility of Work under the Sun (2:11)

Your Inheritance Enjoyed by Someone Else (2:18-21)

Stress (2:22-23)

Competition (4:4-6)

Being a Workaholic (4:7-8)

You Can't Take It with You (5:13-17)

The Utility of Work under God

Satisfaction (2:24-26)

Joy (3:12-13, 3:22, 5:18-20)

Lifelong Companionship (9:7-10)

Chances Paying Off (11:6)

Conclusion: Fear God and Keep His Commandments
(12:13-14)

Work for Yourself
Work for Others
Work for God

Believe that God Has Worked for Us

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

You † Your Family † Your Friends † Your Community Group

1. Have you ever thought to yourself about your work, "This is useless. Why am I even doing this?" Share the situations when you felt this futility. Remember, you can consider not only your paid work, but also unpaid work – school, extracurricular activities, volunteering, parenting, homemaking, even marriage.
2. Which of the "futilities" of mentioned in Ecclesiastes and the sermon apply to those situations? Are there others not mentioned? More importantly than the external circumstances, what was the condition of your heart during those times of frustration? Were you looking at the big picture (of God) or thinking about your individual results and satisfaction?
3. Now consider the counter-points from Ecclesiastes and the sermon about finding context and fulfillment in labor in God. When in your life has God granted you grace to feel satisfaction, joy, success, etc. in your work? How have you reacted toward God in those seasons? (Read Deut. Chap. 8 to spur your heart.)
4. The danger in any sermon is to hear (or preach!) only the "do's" and "don't's" and miss the main point that the Good News is that the work of salvation is "done." How is the gospel (good news) of Jesus good news for those feeling frustration or futility in their labors?
5. Uplifted by the gospel, how can you fulfill God's calling to spread the good news about Jesus? Who in your life needs to hear it? Name them, pray for them, and go talk to them this week about Jesus.

Catechism Question of the Week

Question 49. Where is Christ now?

Answer: Christ rose bodily from the grave on the third day after his death and is seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling his kingdom and interceding for us, until he returns to judge and renew the whole world.

Scripture reference: Ephesians 1:20-21