



Workaholics and the Loss of Joy

Ecclesiastes 2:12-26

The fine art of badmouthing our work:

- **Question:** What if God designed work to be something of great joy? How?

Wisdom is better than foolishness but if disconnected from God is actually utter emptiness.
(vv 12-17)

- **Conclusion #1** In a relative comparison wisdom is better folly because a wise person can see where he is going and a fool is walking in the dark.
- **Conclusion #2** Wisdom is ultimately no better than folly because both the sage and the fool die and are forgotten.

Work is either wearisome or wonderful—depending on whether or not it is connected to God. (vv 18-26)

- **Problem #1** with labor disconnected from God: I leave the fruit of it to one who might be a fool and who did not work for it.
- **Problem #2** with labor disconnected from God: My days are painful and grievous and my nights are restless.
- **Solution:** Thoroughly and organically connect my work to God.

So, work becomes wonderful when it is our calling.

- Host of a fishing show or host of an interior decorating show? Or...

How to connect your work to God as a calling—five foundational guidelines:

- #1 View your work as a place to which God has called you, as one of your places of ministry.
- #2 Do a kind of work that utilizes your gifts and abilities.
- #3 Do a kind of work that matches your passions.
- #4 Understand why God gives us our work.
- #5 Submit all your work to Him and thus do it with excellence.

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

Basic Idea: Work becomes wonderful when it is our calling.

- **Today:** Invite God to show you how you are viewing your work.
- **Monday:** Do an experiment today—go to work today and view it as your calling from God. See if it looks and feels and goes any differently.
- **Tuesday:** Take your lunch break today to pray for the people in your workplace.
- **Wednesday:** Watch the people you work with—how are they approaching their work? How are they enjoying their work? What is the connection?
- **Thursday:** Eliminate your negative language about your work from your vocabulary today.
- **Friday:** Today help someone at your work place with their work.
- **Saturday:** Think about your work week. What are your conclusions? Can you view your work as your calling?

“Connection Group Papers”

Dialogue questions for helping each other in the Christian walk this week.

GETTING STARTED:

- What is the worst job you ever had? Why?
- What is the best job you ever had? Why?

LOOK AT THE TEXT:

- How would you describe the difference between the “work” before the fall and the “toil” after the fall?
- What is wrong with leaving your money to a fool?
- What is wrong with leaving your money to someone who did not work for it?
- How does Romans 14:7, 8 relate to our work?
- How does Eccl 2:24 fit into what Qoheleth has been saying about work?
- What do you think are the traits of the kind of labor described in verse 22?

LIVE DIFFERENTLY:

- Isolate and describe the most harmful thing you are doing to complicate your own work.
- To whom are you leaving your money? Are you doing the right thing in the way you have your will set up in light of Eccl 2:18-26?
- What do you need to do to enjoy your work more?
- What is stirred up in you when you read the five guidelines for turning your work into your calling?