

# Gospel Shaped Work

## Session Nine: *Review & Application*

### **Session 1: *Created to Work*** (Genesis 1:26-2:3)

In session 1, we were taught that God made humanity to work; that's why we're here. In fact, we were made in God's image and God Himself is a worker. Then we looked at the commands that God gave in Gen 1:28 and identified how our work falls into 3 categories: Creation, Collaboration (with God & others), and Cultivation. In other words, our work is a participation in God's mission. That means we were made to be workers, and work is fundamentally good.

1. How might the idea that we were made to work challenge our understanding of why we're here?
2. How does the view that work is inherently good line up with common, cultural perceptions of work?
3. If our work is a participation in God' mission, is there such a thing as menial work? Why not?

### **Session 2: *Work and The Fall*** (Genesis 3:1-19)

In session 2, we learned why we often find work to be frustrating, difficult and exhausting: because we now experience brokenness in our creation, collaboration, and cultivation efforts. Because of the fall, our work is full of thorns. Things often fail to work as they should, people often fail to collaborate with God & others, and the hard work of our cultivation can result in fruitfulness that gets consumed by difficulty. In all of this, we aren't simply victims of the brokenness, we are co-conspirators because of our own sin.

4. How can this help us to be realistic about our work? Why is that important?
5. How does understanding that you are a co-conspirator (not merely a victim) shape your response to the brokenness you see at work?

### **Session 3: *Renewed Work*** (Romans 8:18-23)

In session 3, we were encouraged to consider that God is at work in the brokenness we see, bringing about the redemption of His people and His creation. This redemption is past (at the cross), present (in the ongoing work of God redeeming people today), and future (when Christ returns & the impact of sin is completely done away with). In the meantime, God is using the brokenness we experience to reshape us into the image of Christ and focus our hope on our future redemption. He is also giving us a present opportunity to contribute to the renewal of creation in any way that our work creates beauty, corrects injustice, creates peace, or leads to the flourishing of humanity.

6. How might God be using the difficulties we face at work to reshape us and produce endurance?
7. How does understanding that God has commissioned us to participate in the redemption and renewal of creation give lasting value and significance to your work?

### **Session 4: *Glorifying God Through Work*** (Matthew 11:28-30)

In session 4, we were challenged to lean away from our tendency to separate our work life and spiritual life. Instead, we were encouraged to work in light of who we are as Christians. We were taught that Jesus doesn't expect us to compartmentalize, but instead, calls us to "whole-life discipleship" as He invites us to take his yoke, follow his lead, and learn from him. Tom made the point in this session that our work situation is a custom-made yoke for us designed to lead us to maturity and also to rest.

8. How can our work situations be custom yokes designed to lead us to maturity?
9. How does being yoked with Christ lead to rest for our weary souls?

### **Session 5: *The Gospel & Your Work*** (Philemon 10-17)

In session 5, we were encouraged to view our work through the story of the Gospel. That is, that we as Christians should view the work we do, the people we work with, the resources we utilize, and the circumstances we find ourselves in through the lens of the gospel. This also means that we anchor our identity in Christ, and not in what we do.

10. How does seeing your identity as a Christian first impact the way you might view your work?
11. How does viewing your work through the story of the gospel change the way you might see difficult circumstances or difficult people at work?

### **Session 6: *Work and Power*** (1 Thessalonians 5:15, Jeremiah 29:4-14)

In session 6, we were challenged to consider that we have all been given a certain amount of power and influence where God has placed us. God desires that we use that power to seek the good of others and bless our community. Tom used the example of Israel in Jeremiah 29:4-14, where God commands his people to work for the common good of Babylon.

12. Why would God desire for his people to seek the welfare of a pagan nation?

### **Session 7: *Work and The Common Good*** (Matthew 25:14-30)

In session 5, we were taught that we have all been placed in charge of an economy that has been entrusted to us by Christ, and that we ought to consider how we make the best use of those resources. We were challenged to consider that all of life is stewardship (our jobs, money, time, relationships, giftedness) and that we will give an account to Jesus for how we've used them. Jesus is looking for faithful *and* fruitful followers that use their resources to shine the light of the gospel and seek the common good.

13. What are we to be doing while we wait for Jesus to return?
14. Why is it right for Jesus to have that expectation?

### **Session 8: *What We Are Working Toward*** (Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-5)

In the final session, we learned that we are looking forward to a new creation in which there will be a physical space for us to live in resurrected bodies, where we will dwell in community with God and with each other, and where we will engage in the work we were designed for, without the corruption of the fall and all of its frustrating effects impacting our work. This lesson clarified that we ought to view our work through the story of the gospel (creation, fall, redemption, new creation) and that Jesus is calling us to take part in this narrative.

### **Breakout:**

- a. Discuss one big thing that you've personally been challenged or encouraged by during this course...
- b. How has your view of work changed as we've worked through this study?
- c. How might you start (and continue) to think and act differently with respect to work as a result?
- d. How can you help yourself and our church to avoid compartmentalizing work/faith and help to live out our identity as Christians in all of life?

Prayer: Pray for the things discussed above amongst each other and pray for our church in the same regard.