

# The Gift of Work

*"The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." Genesis 2:15-17*

**We are designed to physically and spiritually work; to tend, cultivate and preserve.**

*<sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children..." Genesis 3:16*

*"To Adam he said... 'Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.' " Genesis 3:17*

**Toil is work removed of God's provision, favor and blessing.**

*<sup>20</sup> Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, <sup>21</sup> the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. <sup>22</sup> For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. <sup>23</sup> And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering..." Romans 8:20-23 (NLT)*

**There is a Biblical & Realistic difference between work and toil. (Eccl. 2:10-11; 22-23)**

**Toil is meaningless. (Eccl. 4:1-8)**

**The fruit of toil is oppression, exploitation, loneliness, and misery. (Prov.24:30-34)**

**Work is meaningful.**

*"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, <sup>12</sup>so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody." 1Thess. 4:11-12*

**Our lives and work should be attractive to outsiders.**

**We are all spiritually called, in Christ, to work to bring God glory.**

*"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Eph. 2:10*

*"But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you" 1Peter 2:9 (MSG)*

**We are externally called to a vocation, in order to tend, cultivate and preserve God's creation.**

*"And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father." Col. 3:17 (NLT)*

*"Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him." 1Cor 7:20*

## Small Group Questions

1. What does it mean to tend, cultivate and preserve? Can you think of a time in your own "work" where you have done that?
2. What do you think are the Biblical and realistic differences between work and toil?
3. What does a life look like when someone ends up toiling? Do you see things like oppression, exploitation, loneliness and/or misery when people toil?
4. Read 1 Thess. 4:11-12. What does this verse have to do with our discussion of rest and margin, and in particular, our work?
5. We talked about being called in two ways - spiritually and externally. How would you describe them both, and specifically, what do you believe you are externally called to?