
LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

LEADER DETAILS:

- **MAINTEXT:** Ecclesiastes 2:18-26
- **MAIN IDEA:** We can rejoice in our work when we see it as a gift from God
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** Application matters more than explanation.
- **ICEBREAKER:** What was the most interesting job you ever had?

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (Full details at: emergence.church/digital-bulletin)

- **Marriage Workshop** – February 14th – 8:30am-12:00pm. For those who are married, dating, or single. OVERFLOW SEATS available. LAST WEEK TO REGISTER.
 - **The Why** - Awesome, God-honoring marriages don't just happen but are cultivated with investment. The hope is that this workshop will be a meaningful investment into current, and potential future, marriages.
- **Family Dedication** - February 19 and 22 in both Ringwood and Totowa.
 - **The Why** - By publicly declaring their intent to raise their kids to love Jesus, parents will be encouraged to keep that commitment in the highs and lows of parenting. A great opportunity for those families to invite family/friends to hear the Gospel.
- **Student Ministry's Winter Retreat** - **February 20–22**. High Point Bible Camp – Pennsylvania
 - **The Why** – Huge opportunity for students to form deep friendships with other students, with leaders, and to begin and grow in their faith.

GETTING STARTED:

- **Pray:** To help turn the corner into the discussion
 - **Watch Community Extras Video** (length 3:35 – any questions are included below)
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LAST WEEK'S GROWTH STEP FOLLOW-UP:

[Leaders: These follow-ups are meant to offer some accountability while being low pressure. Keep it casual, like: "If you were able to try this last week, how did it go?" sharing is optional and always okay to pass.]

Last week's growth steps:

Outward Action: Show one act of kindness in Jesus' name to a fellow image-bearer of God, particularly to someone you naturally tend to not value the way God would want us to.

Inward Prayer: "God, help me remember you are my Creator when I'm tempted to _____ (fill in the blank)."

SERMON DISCUSSION: (prioritize quality over quantity)

Work Is Good

(optional) Remind of genre - Pessimistic/Critical Speculative Wisdom literature: the speaker casts everything in a negative light and is seeking out what is true through experience. We gain wisdom through the journey of the speaker, and in some of his conclusions along the way.

Read Genesis 2:5-8, 15; 3:17-19

In both the Ringwood and Totowa sermons, we looked at how the first person we see working in the Bible is God Himself, in the work of creation. Then, after Adam was created, God put him in a garden to work it, before sin ever entered the world. And God said all this was good.

♡ When you think of your work or main responsibility in this season, what emotions come to the surface? Why?

🧠 As we think about how God gave us work as something that is good, how might that start to shift our perspective towards our work?

When Work Becomes Toil

Read Ecclesiastes 2:18-23; 5:10-12

In the Totowa sermon, Pastor Steve pointed out from the verses above that work becomes toil when it becomes our God, or our source of identity and worth. He gave some “dashboard lights” that might indicate if this is the case:

- Success in my job inflates my sense of worth
- Failure at work means I am a failure
- Taking a rest from work feels irresponsible

♡ Which one of the above most relates to you? and if you can, share an example.

In the Ringwood sermon, Pastor Tyler pointed out from the verses above that work becomes toil when we use it in pursuit of achievement or money in and of themselves – which leave us unfulfilled.

♡ Which is more of a temptation for you to fall into? What drives that for you?

Work As a Gift

Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 5:18-20

In both sermons, we saw that when receive work as a gift from God, and worship God in it, our work can be a source of joy.

💡 A big part of how we can receive work as a gift is to realize that God has made us uniquely to display His glory (think from last week, Image of God, Psalm 139:13-16; Ephesians 2:10). What parts of your work feel most aligned with how God made you—and how could those become an act of worship?

♡ What's one part of your current work or daily responsibility that you usually endure—but could begin to receive with gratitude?

Receiving Christ's Work

Read Romans 6:23; Galatians 3:10-14

Ultimately, our “work” of sin earns us death, but through Christ’s atoning work, he offers us eternal life as a gift – which we can’t earn, and can rest in.

♡ How does the idea of receiving salvation as a gift help us stop trying to earn our value through work?

♡ What is one step we can take this week to rest in God’s approval in Christ, instead of working for it?

GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

Outward Action: As you go about your work or responsibilities this week, as you choose gratitude, let other people know (co-worker, a friend, etc.).

Inward Prayer: Pray for awareness where work defines your identity, and practice re-centering your identity in Christ.

PRAYER TIME

Pray for one another to connect their work to the mission and calling from God they have on their life.

Pray for awareness of the ways that we wrongly approach work and take steps to bring ourselves in alignment of how God desires us to approach our work.

That we would rejoice in work as a gift from God, that has eternal value as we live as God's light in the world.