



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Every Good Endeavor Book Club

Conversation #2 - Our Problems with Work

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

CHAPTER FIVE - WORK BECOMES FRUITLESS

“Philosopher Al Wolters explains it like this: ‘The Bible teaches plainly that Adam and Eve’s fall into sin was not just an isolated act of disobedience but an event of catastrophic significance for creation as a whole... The effects of sin touch all of creation; nothing is in principle untouched by the corrosive effects of the fall. Whether we look at societal structures such as the state or family, or cultural pursuits such as art or technology, or bodily functions such as sexuality or eating, or anything at all within the wide scope of creation, we discover that the good handiwork of God has been drawn into the sphere of mutiny against God.’ ... Work, even when it bears fruit, is always painful, often miscarries, and sometimes kills us.” p. 88

“‘We accept the fact that in this world our work will always fall short, just as we sinners always ‘fall short of the glory of God’ (Rom. 3:23) because we know that our work in this life is not the final word.’” - p. 96

CHAPTER SIX - WORK BECOMES POINTLESS

“Whether quickly or slowly, all the results of toil will be wiped away by history. The person who takes the business after you, or who picks up the cause or organization after you, may undo all you have done... everything and every accomplishment under the sun will be ground to dust in the end - even civilization itself. All work, even the most historic, will eventually be forgotten and its impact totally neutralized. In short even if your work is not fruitless, it is ultimately pointless if life ‘under the sun’ is all there is.” - p.102

“Work can convince you that you are working hard for your family and friends while you are being seduced through ambition to neglect them.” - p. 106

“... [there is a] need for everyone to work out in clear personal terms how their work serves the world.” - p. 109

CHAPTER SEVEN - WORK BECOMES SELFISH

“Our pride and need for personal significance necessarily lead to competition, disunity, and strife. So a life of self-glorification makes unity and love between people impossible. It leaves us with the dreary choice between making the self an idol (which leads to the disunity of individualistic cultures) and making the group an idol (which leads to the suppression of individual freedom in tribal or collective cultures). The two things we all want so desperately - glory and relationship - can coexist only with God.” - p. 116

CHAPTER EIGHT - WORK REVEALS OUR IDOLS

“The implicit idea is that science, given enough time, will be able to answer all question and solve all problems... Modern culture stopped looking to the wisdom of ancients or to any revelation from religious authorities except for optional, private ‘spiritual’ comfort. To build a flourishing society, we need only human reason informed by the scientific method. - p. 141

“... there was no standard higher than the right of the individual to choose the life he or she wanted to live. The only moral wrong, in this view, was to keep other individuals from choosing to live as they found fulfilling. That meant, ultimately, there was no moral authority or cause higher than the happiness of self... In other words, the human self had replaced God. - p. 141

BOOK DISCUSSION

What were you tempted to underline, and why?

What made you want to pound your fist on the table, and why?

What left you feeling confused or wanting more?

Is there something you question or disagree with?

What is one thing you hope to take with you into your work from this section?