

STUDY NOTES

THROUGH THE DESERT

A Series At New City Church

newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "Why Do You Work" on 9/1/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis, but rather an overview of the main ideas. To use this study guide effectively, you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on it for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: ECCLESIASTES 2:18-23

WORK AS TOIL

Genesis 3 describes post-fall work as something that will be toilsome or tedious. The writer of Ecclesiastes describes their feelings in a way that is more intense than what someone usually feels when work is difficult. He says, for example, that his days and nights are filled with sorrow. Even if it manifests differently for you, we need to be aware of these feelings and pay attention to what they are trying to tell us. They could provide important insight into our spiritual state.

- *How has work been difficult for you recently?*
- *We usually just listen to culture's pressures rather than listening to God and ourselves. Think about the pressures that culture teaches us about work. What have you learned about work from the culture around you?*

WORK AS IDOLATRY

Disgruntled feelings at work could be telling you that you are actually pursuing idolatry, which is "the extreme love of something." That means we might be pursuing the extreme love of something over the extreme love of Jesus. Yet the thing that we love may not be the work itself. It could be things like money, recognition or comfort. While those aren't bad things, we often allow them to become the ultimate thing that motivates us.

- *What things compete with Jesus for your motivation to work? How can you tell when they are becoming the "ultimate thing" in your motivation?*

Our identity should be in Christ; and from Christ, we should be motivated to work. God's character can permeate everything that we do. Every single one of us needs to see how our work is a part of God's care for the world. We need to find a God-sized purpose in our work.

When we work, we are leaving the fingerprints of God on the world.

- *What are some ways that you can see God's care for the world in what you do for work?*

WORK AS CALLING

Find the point to what you do, or change what you do.

If you have unsettled feelings at work, it could mean that God is calling you to something new. God does call people into new things. Only you and God can really answer that, but here are some tips to finding that answer:

1. Seek God and others regarding your calling.
2. Trust God, even if it's scary.
3. Step out in faith.
4. Wherever God has you, or takes you, be the best at it that you can be.

Read Colossians 3: 23-24. We have to switch our perspective on what it means to be God-honoring in our work. One of the ways that we can be the best witness for Jesus in our work is by being really good at what we do.

Before you change what you do, try being better at what you do.

- *Have you ever switched careers? How did you know that you were being called into something new?*
- *Why do you think trying your best is God-honoring in your work?*
- *Pray with each other to find a God-sized motivation for your work.*