

# TOIL UNDER THE SUN

Ecclesiastes 2:18–26

1. We cannot take the \_\_\_\_\_ of our labor into \_\_\_\_\_. vv. 18-21

2. Work is a \_\_\_\_\_ . vv. 22-23

3. How we \_\_\_\_\_ the fruits of our labor \_\_\_\_\_ all the \_\_\_\_\_.  
vv. 24-25

a. \_\_\_\_\_ them as from the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

b. See them as an \_\_\_\_\_ to invest in \_\_\_\_\_.



## **Ecclesiastes 2:18–26**

<sup>[18]</sup> I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, <sup>[19]</sup> and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. <sup>[20]</sup> So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, <sup>[21]</sup> because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. <sup>[22]</sup> What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? <sup>[23]</sup> For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

<sup>[24]</sup> There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, <sup>[25]</sup> for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? <sup>[26]</sup> For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind. (ESV)

# Toil Under the Sun

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April 18, 2021



**Open:** Thinking about your current job, what do you enjoy? What do you not enjoy?

**Read:** Ecclesiastes 2:18-26

## Discuss

1. Looking at verses 18-21, how would you describe this man's emotional state? What reasons would you surmise for why he felt this way? How does it make you feel to know that others (who did not take part in your work) may squander the resources you leave? Why?
2. The phrase "under the sun" appears throughout Ecclesiastes, and is seen here in verses 18, 19, and 20 (and again in verse 22 as "beneath the sun"). How would you explain what it means to consider life only as seen from "under the sun"? Where do you find this way of thinking in our culture today? How can followers of Jesus be tempted to embrace this way of thinking?
3. What observations are made about work in verses 22-23? How have you experienced the burdens of work in your job?
4. How do verses 24-26 involve a shift in perspective from the previous verses? What are some positive results mentioned in these verses that can come from work? How have you experienced some of these benefits in your own life?
5. According to verse 25 it is impossible to find enjoyment from our toils apart from God's grace. How would you attempt to explain this to a person who was just considering faith in God?
6. **Read Genesis 1:28-29.** How do these verses describe mankind's relationship to creation? How should God's design for creation shape the way we view work in a fallen world?
7. **Read Colossians 3:23-24.** How does Paul say that we should think about our work in this world? What would doing this look like as we daily toil in our labor under the sun?

**Apply:** How can you redeem the work you do to give it eternal value?

**Pray:** Ask God to help us view all our work, labor and toil from a joyful, God-centered perspective.

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## **Genesis 1:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." <sup>29</sup> And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

## **Colossians 3:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (ESV)