



Ecclesiastes

CHASING WISDOM

*“Hevel, hevel, everything
is utterly hevel.”*

Ecclesiastes 2:18-19

18 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, 19 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 *hevel*.

Ecclesiastes 2:20-21

20 So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, 21 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 *hevel* and a great evil.

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23

22 What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? 23 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 *hevel*.

THE CURSE OF WORK

- Notice at the outset the word Solomon uses to describe his work: toil.

THE CURSE OF WORK

- Death renders all work meaningless for — despite all the effort — there is no long-term gain in it.

Ecclesiastes 4:4

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is *hevel* and a striving after wind.

THE CURSE OF WORK

- The fuel that drives us in our careers, the thing that pushes us to sacrifice, innovate, and succeed, is often our jealousy and rivalry with others.

Ecclesiastes 4:7-8

7 Again, I saw *hevel* under the sun: 8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, “For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?” This also is *hevel* and an unhappy business.

Proverbs 6:10-11 & Ecclesiastes 4:5

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.”

“The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.”

THE CURSE OF WORK

- We are so hungry for gain that we will try to obtain it by any means—gain through overwork and careerism or gain through laziness and gaming the system. We are trying to control the *hevel* and wring profit the smoke.

THE BLESSING OF WORK

- Secret # 1 - In your work, seek the gift, not the gain.

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

24 “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, 25 for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

Ecclesiastes 2:26

26 For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the one who is offensive he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is *hevel* and a striving after wind.”

THE BLESSING OF WORK

- Secret # 2 - Get your heart right. Don't stop hustling, but stop striving. Stop trying to wring from work what it cannot give. Work is for bread, not treasure.

Ecclesiastes 4:6

6 Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.”

THE BLESSING OF WORK

- Secret # 3 - Let Jesus make all things new, even your work.

Colossians 3:17, 23-24

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him... 23

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.