

## ECCLESIASTES: THE LIMITS OF LABOR

(Various Passages)

Central Idea: *Correct expectations of work lead to satisfaction; misguided expectations lead to meaningless toil.*

I. Ecclesiastes 1:2-3. Work is *hevel*.

II. Ecclesiastes 2:4-11. The limits of Labor.

A. Work that brings delight.

B. Work that becomes meaningless.

III. Ecclesiastes 4:4-6. Envy versus tranquility.

IV. Ecclesiastes 5:18-20. Finding satisfaction in our work.

A. Correct expectations of work.

B. Incorrect expectations of work.

### Questions for Group or Personal Study

1. Read Ecclesiastes 2:11. The Teacher warns us against grounding our identity, purpose and self-worth in our work/career. What happens if we ignore the Teacher's warning?
2. Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-6. How is it possible for envy to become the underlying motivation for our work and achievements? (Remember, work is work whether paid or unpaid. Like, for example, a stay-at-home mom.)
3. Honestly assess yourself. How much of your work-related actions and aspirations are motivated by envy?
4. Do you have a healthy relationship with your career? Do you have healthy expectations of how much your work can satisfy and fulfill you? Are you sacrificing things on the altar of work that shouldn't be sacrificed?
5. Read Ecclesiastes 2:10 & 5:18-20. How can working hard and being good at what you do lead to joy and satisfaction?
6. How can having a mentally, physical and spiritually healthy approach to your career/work lead to joy and satisfaction?

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This outline is provided to assist you in understanding and applying today's message. "Ecclesiastes: The Limits of Labor" is the second message in a series on the book of Ecclesiastes. This message can be watched, listened to or downloaded at [cbcomaha.org](http://cbcomaha.org). You may also stream and download CBC podcasts from itunes or google play.