Grateful, Week 3

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Nov. 15th

NOV 15TH SERMON SUMMARY

GRATEFUL FOR WORK

How we feel about work drastically affects how we feel about life (Eccl 3:22; Gen. 2:15, 3:17; John 4:34, 5:17; Heb. 12:2). Here are 3 simple, practical, but challenging ways we can be more grateful in work:

- **Pray for clarity** (Phil 4:8-9). Take time to pause and think about what's good in your work. Ask God to show you the less obvious, particular things He wants you to see.
- **Pray for counsel** (Deut. 11:26-28, Rom. 12:1-2)**.** Ask God to speak; invite Him to have a say in your work, how you work, what you do.
- **Pray for courage.** God will work in us wherever we are. Ask Him for courage to do what God asks you to do.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION: Share briefly about your favorite job, or the most unusual job you've had.

II. THINK AND REFLECT.

1. The principles in this message/study can apply to work in its many forms: employed at a job, work at home, care for family, going to school, serve in the church, active in retirement, etc.

   a. Which of those applies to you? If you do not currently have a job, what constitutes work for you?

   b. Whether your work is through employment or otherwise, what do you enjoy about it?

   c. What do you wish were better in your current situation?

2. Read the following verses from Genesis 2-3.

2:8-15: 8 Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. **9** The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **… 15** The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

3: 17: To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'
"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food from it
all the days of your life.

a. What was God's original intention for work (2:8-15)?

b. How did that change after the Fall, because of sin (3:17)?

c. How do you see both God's original intention and the effects of sin today?

3. Read the following from Timothy Keller (which was quoted in the message):

"Work is as much a basic human need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality; it is not simply medicine but food for our soul. Without meaningful work we sense significant inner loss and emptiness. People who are cut off from work because of physical or other reasons quickly discover how much they need work to thrive emotionally, physically, and spiritually. You will not have a meaningful life without work, but you cannot say that your work is the meaning of your life. If you make any work the purpose of your life – even if that work is church ministry – you create an idol that rivals God." (From *Every Good Endeavor*)

a. Discuss the following ideas from Keller. Agree or disagree? Why? Give examples. [Note: If your group is primarily retired or not employed, be sure to discuss how these ideas apply to your specific situations.]

- We all need meaningful work. How is it "food for our soul"?
- Work cannot be the meaning of your life. How can it become an idol?

b. How does this contribute to your sense of gratitude for work?

c. How does this show the need to pray for clarity and counsel, to seek God's guidance?

III. PERSONAL APPLICATION (Choose 1 of the following if time is limited)

4. How have you felt God speaking to you about work, your job, or your situation?

5. How do you need to pray for greater clarity, counsel or courage?

6. How can you be more grateful for work, for your job, or for your current situation?