

Book:	Ecclesiastes
Series:	Two Ways to Live: Under the Sun or In the Fear of God
Lesson 4:	The Futility of Life, Part 3
Text:	Ecclesiastes 2:18-26
Date:	Sunday, February 3, 2013
Next Lesson:	Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

INTRODUCTION

3,000 years ago, the great philosopher-preacher Solomon began a quest for meaning, significance, and fulfillment in life lived “under the sun,” and his journey took him through the workplace. And yet, even there, the same conclusion bitinglly echoed—**life merely lived “under the sun” is futile**. Today, we’re going to trace how Solomon got to that conclusion and follow him throughout the workplace. And since we easily recognize that people are addicted to work because of the *profit*, we’re going to start our analysis there.

EARNINGS ARE _____ (vv. 18-21).

1. *The successor is _____ (vv. 18-19).*

2. *The successor is _____ (vv. 18, 19, 21).*

Application:

EARNINGS ARE (vv. 22-23).

1. The _____

2. The _____

Application:

EARNINGS ARE (vv. 24-26).

1. To the righteous, God gives _____ in his work (vv. 24-26a).

2. To the sinner, God gives _____ in his work (v. 26b).

Application:

CONCLUSION

The New Testament builds upon Solomon’s solution with more clarity. While we ultimately struggle with “toil” “under the sun” because of the curse upon our sin (Genesis 3:17-19), “God [through the effective ‘work’ of His Son] will one day deliver the redeemed from this plight in the future kingdom when man’s labor will no longer be toilsome, but profitable, fulfilling, and enjoyable (Isa 65:17–23).”

A Worker’s Prayer

Dear Lord, As I pray to you now my mind is full of my work. Its pleasures and pains, its stresses and rewards are burned into my brain. Quiet my soul for these few moments and hear my prayer as one of your workers in the world.

*My work is hard, Lord. I need Your counsel and comfort:
when things fall apart,
when I'm confronted with evil,
when my co-workers' needs are too great,
when I'm tired to the insides of my brain,
when work is not appreciated.*

*My work is necessary, Lord. I need Your gifts and Spirit:
when things are developing well,
when I'm making positive changes,
when society is made better because of what I do,
when I'm working efficiently and effectively,
when I'm honored as a valuable worker.*

*Every day of my work:
I want to remember that You are my God,
I need to know that You're there with me,
I count on Your blessings for my successes,
I want to thank You for the chance to work in this place,
I need courage and conviction to see myself as Your worker.*

For Your gifts and Your grace that come to me as a worker, I praise Your name and thank You for being my God. Amen.