

SESSION 3

Escape & Corruption of Work

CATEGORIES OF WORK

Work: _____

Rest: _____

Recreation: _____

Escape: _____

_____ is part of the biblical story and part of our story.

Escape is when I _____ from _____.

FORMS OF ESCAPE

Escape usually takes the form of either _____ or _____.

RESPONSIBILITY

INDOLENCE

EXIGENCE

Indolence is an _____ of work and results in escape _____.

In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to marry a young woman named Tamar. But Er was a wicked man in the Lord's sight, so the Lord took his life. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your brother." But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having a child who would belong to his brother. But the Lord considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the Lord took Onan's life, too.

— Genesis 38:6–10

Exigence is an _____ of work and results in escape _____.

I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire! So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

— Ecclesiastes 2:4–11

I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned. And who can tell whether my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet they will control everything I have gained by my skill and hard work under the sun. How meaningless! So I gave up in despair, questioning the value of all my hard work in this world. Some people work wisely with knowledge and skill, then must leave the fruit of their efforts to someone who hasn't worked for it. This, too, is meaningless, a great tragedy. So what do people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety? Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even at night their minds cannot rest. It is all meaningless. So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him?

— Ecclesiastes 2:18–25

Signs of Indolence (escape from work):

Signs of Exigence (escape into work):

**The gospel calls us to _____ and have a _____
in our work.**

As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, “Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. So they went on to another village.

— Luke 9:51–56

A healthy ambition avoids being _____ or _____.

**The gospel frees us from escape because it removes the
_____ of _____.**

Discussion Questions

1. Share one area where you think you are hiding from responsibility.
2. In what ways are comfort, pleasure, or accomplishment causing you to run from work? Have you crossed into indolence or laziness in these areas?
3. In what ways are fear, power, greed, or affirmation pushing you into work? Has this caused you to be exigent and to overwork?
4. Once you've identified these areas, what does it look like for you to reject passivity and accept responsibility?
5. What are some ways you "bleed off energy," which takes away from productivity in your vocation?
6. Have you lost ambition in your career or workplace? Have you fallen into being domineering or disengaged? What does it look like for you to begin to pursue God in your workplace with a healthy ambition?
7. How does the gospel free you from escape?