

## **Ecclesiastes 2:1-16; 4:4-12** (NIV)

**2:17** So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. **18** I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. **19** And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. **20** So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labour under the sun. **21** For a person may labour with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. **22** What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labour under the sun? **23** All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

**24** A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, **25** for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? **26** To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

**4:4** And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

**5** Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves.

**6** Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

**7** Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

**8** there was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother.

There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.

'For whom am I toiling,' he asked, 'and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?'

This too is meaningless – a miserable business!

**9** Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour:

**10** if either of them falls down, one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

**11** Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

**12** Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

## ***The Meaning of Work***

### **A quick recap**

*Meaningless! Meaningless!*

*What do people gain from all their labours at which they toil under the sun?*

### **Why do we labour and toil?**

- To live
- To find satisfaction, significance, security
- Because we envy others
- To leave a legacy
- To make our lives miserable

### **What do we gain?**

- Little
- Lots (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- Therefore...