

Konkel Prov Session22

Hey everyone, welcome back for another deep dive. It's great to be back today. We're gonna be tackling a topic that I think is pretty Universal and that's work.

Yeah, and we're looking at it through the lens of a couple of books in the Bible Specifically Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, right? So have you ever just felt like you're kind of stuck in that hamster wheel, you know Putting in all the hours, but not really getting anywhere or maybe you're just like drowning in to dues Constantly busy, but wondering what it's all for. Yes Well, the Bible actually has some pretty interesting and surprisingly relevant things to say about all of that It really does and it uses some pretty Interesting terms to describe these experiences to like you have the word etzev Which means toil that sense of grinding labor, you know Just kind of that hard work that you never feel like you're getting ahead with yeah But then there's also this word Inyan which is more about that feeling of endless busyness Almost like our modern obsession with you know productivity and being so busy all the time Oh, yeah, Indian is something I can definitely relate to I feel like I'm always connected always on and it's exhausting Yeah, so I'm curious What does the Bible say about? Why we feel this way? Well Psalm 127 offers an interesting perspective Okay, it suggests that the sense of toil this striving it often comes from trying to build our lives apart from God It's like we're trying to do it all on our own and it's just leading to more exhaustion and frustration Yeah, it's like we think we can do it better ourselves, right? And if you remember the story of Adam and Eve they chose knowledge over trust in God, right? And as a result, they received this curse of toil But here's the thing work itself was already part of God's design before the fall No, that's it. They were tending the garden in Eden before, you know things went south, right? Yeah, so it's not that work is bad inherently, but it's our approach to it Yes, something got twisted.

Yeah. Okay, so it's not that work is inherently bad But something got twisted in our approach to it and that makes me think of the preacher in Ecclesiastes. Yes He basically did this big experiment with his life Trying to see if wealth and pleasure would actually bring him lasting satisfaction Spoiler alert it didn't it said it he went all in, you know He was chasing every desire building up all these riches and in the end he was left feeling empty But I think this is a good reminder for us that the Bible isn't against wealth, right But it does caution us against making it the primary goal of our work.

Yeah, don't make it your idol, right? Especially when you think about things that are happening in the world today like in Ukraine you see People losing absolutely everything they work for because of the war right? It really highlights how fleeting material Possessions can be that really puts things in perspective because I know I've definitely fallen into that trap of Thinking if I just get that promotion or that new car or whatever, then I'll be happy Yeah, but the preacher story and you know, even what we see happening in the world today It's a good reminder that true satisfaction doesn't come from those things. It really doesn't so if it's not about chasing wealth What does the Bible say about finding value in our work? Well Proverbs has some interesting insights, okay And it repeatedly emphasizes that there's inherent value in work Of course, it talks about work generating wealth, right, but it also talks about how it has merit even when it doesn't meet our expectations I like that. Yeah, it's like thinking about it like work allows us to provide for ourselves and for our families It gives us purpose and it allows us to contribute to the world around us.

Yeah, it's not just about the paycheck It's the dignity of the work itself. Exactly. It makes me think of that image in Proverbs about the ants Yes, you know, they're always working so diligently preparing for the future always working It's a great picture of just the wisdom of consistent effort even when it doesn't seem glamorous Absolutely Proverbs 6.6 tells us to go to the ant you sluggard consider its ways and be wise it has no commander No overseer or ruler yet.

It stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest I love that and while Proverbs acknowledges that Diligence too often lead to wealth it also recognizes that it's not always guaranteed Life is gonna throw us curveballs sometimes and despite our best efforts things don't go as planned. That's so true Yeah, but even when things don't go our way Proverbs is saying there's still value in the work itself There is and this is where I think the preacher in Ecclesiastes really resonates with me Because he comes to this conclusion that the best thing you can do is enjoy your work each day Savor those simple things like you know the food on your table Yeah, and he says finding satisfaction in the process is what matters not just the outcome That's such a profound point and it really challenges us to Rethink how we view work. Yeah, what if instead of constantly striving for more, you know, always looking at the next milestone We focused on finding joy and meaning in the present moment, you know in the actual tasks we're doing right now It's a huge mindset shift.

It makes me think about this whole concept of retirement Yes, yes, you know, one of the sources we're looking at today is by dr. Conkle and he poses this really interesting question When did we get this idea that we should stop working all together at a certain age? It's such an interesting question because as dr Conkle points out this idea of retirement as we understand it today isn't really found in the Bible Hmm, it's a very modern idea that came about because of specific social and economic conditions Okay, so if work really is an inherent part of being human, you know as the Bible suggests What does that mean for how we approach our work now regardless of what age or stage of life we're in? Yeah, that is a big question. It is as a big question I mean if I think about my own life like the idea of stopping work altogether Feels kind of foreign.

Yeah, like work is such a huge part of my identity how I spend my time You know, even how I connect with people it is and I think that's a really interesting observation Yeah, because it really highlights how in a lot of ways our modern concept of retirement It can actually feel at odds with this idea that work is just an inherent part of being human, you know Right something that gives us purpose and meaning totally It's like we're working so hard to get to this point where we don't have to work anymore But what happens when we get there exactly, you know, if we've built our whole identity around our careers then what's left? You're right, and it's not that rest and leisure aren't important, right? They are of course, but I think dr Conkle's point is that maybe we've created this artificial separation between work and life when in reality they're intertwined So maybe the goal shouldn't be to escape work altogether Okay, but to find a way to work that brings us joy and fulfillment even as we get older. Yeah, I love that Yeah, it's about finding that rhythm of work and rest Yes throughout our lives not just striving for this end point of retirement exactly But it also makes me wonder, you know If work is inherently valuable as Proverbs says does it really matter what kind of work we do? That is a great question. And I think Proverbs offers some wisdom here Okay, if you remember how we talked about the inherent dignity of work

Yeah, Proverbs reminds us that there's actually merit in all kinds of work Okay, even if it's not glamorous or hype right like those ants again exactly they're not CEOs right but they're doing important work They are so whether you're a farmer a teacher a stay-at-home parent a CEO.

Mm-hmm, or yes Even an ant an ant you're contributing to the world in some way yeah, and that brings us to another interesting point is this idea of seeing our work as a way of Participating in what God is doing in the world. Mm-hmm. That's interesting Yeah, so it's not just about earning a paycheck, right? It's about using our skills and talents to serve others Yes, you create something good.

Yes, something beautiful to make a difference. That's exactly it's about seeing our work Not as this separate secular thing But as an act of worship Wow as a way to partner with God in making the world a better place I love that. I'm starting to see how this whole perspective on work Can be really transformative, yeah, it's like instead of just grinding through the day Yeah, we can choose to find purpose and meaning in even the most ordinary tasks Absolutely, and it brings us back to what the preacher was saying in Ecclesiastes Yeah about the importance of finding joy in the everyday If we can shift our focus from the outcome to the process from pursuing wealth and status to pursuing Excellence and service.

Yeah, then work becomes less about toil and more about fulfillment. I love that It's like choosing to see our work as a gift, you know an opportunity to Use the skills and talents that we've been given to make a positive impact on the world around us That's such a beautiful way to put it. You know, it's about choosing to focus on the good Yeah on the ways we can use when the work to bless others and bring a little light into the world You know listening to all this it makes me think about all the times that I've complained about work Yeah, you know focused on the things I don't like or wishing I was doing something else Mm-hmm, but what if I focus on the parts of my work that actually energize me, you know, yes, even just the small things That's a great question to ask yourself and it's something I think we can all do no matter what kind of work we do Yeah, what are those tasks that make you feel like you're really using your strengths that make you feel alive? How can you bring more of that into your everyday work, yeah, it's like choosing to see our work through a different lens Yes, one that highlights the good the beautiful the meaningful.

Yes, even in the midst of the mundane exactly And even if our circumstances don't change overnight our perspective can right and that's where the wisdom of the Bible comes in You know, yeah, it reminds us that true fulfillment doesn't come from chasing external things like wealth or status right, but from Finding joy and meaning in the work itself seeing it as a way to connect with something bigger than ourselves So it's not just about what we do, but how we do it. Yes, and why we do it exactly It really feels like a mind shift That's doesn't that it does like instead of seeing work is this thing? I have to do what I am if I saw it as an opportunity to like express my creativity or connect with people or Use my skills in a way that brings maybe even just like a little beauty or order into the world I love that and it reminds me of that verse in Colossians 3.23 Where it says whatever you do work at it with all your heart is working for the Lord not for human masters Hmm, so even if you're doing something that seems really ordinary, you know Yeah, even if you don't have that dream job, you can still choose to do it with excellence with integrity with purpose Yeah, because ultimately we're working for an audience of one that's right and that changes everything it

does I'm, also curious you mentioned earlier that the bible doesn't really talk about retirement in the way that we think of it today Right. Are there any examples in the bible of people who are you know working in their later years? And finding purpose and meaning even as they aged.

Oh, absolutely think about mooses Okay, he was 80 years old when god called him to lead the israelites out of egypt And then he led them for another 40 years right or noah, okay, he was 600 years old when he built the ark That's true. So these weren't people just sitting back and relaxing in their golden years, right? They were actively engaged in god's work using all their wisdom and experience to make a difference. Those are really inspiring examples It's like their age wasn't a barrier to their purpose.

It wasn't it was almost like an asset You know, they had all this experience and wisdom to draw from yeah But I think in our culture like there's this idea that once you hit a certain age You're supposed to retire and step aside. Yeah, let the younger generation take over Yeah, but I wonder what if instead of seeing older workers as over the hill, right? What if we saw them as a valuable resource? Yeah as mentors as aides exactly What if we created more intergenerational workplaces? People of all ages could learn from each other and contribute their unique skills and perspectives. I love that I think we have so much to learn from those who have come before us.

Yes, and they have so much to offer but I can also see how You know even with this new perspective on work It can still be hard to find that joy and meaning in the every day Yeah, especially when we're facing challenges and setbacks or just like plain old monotony. Yeah so what advice would you give to someone who's like Really struggling to find that sense of purpose in their work. That's a great question And it's something I think a lot of people wrestle with.

Yeah, I think first just remember that you're not alone Okay, you know, it's really normal to have seasons where work feels more like a grind than a gift Yeah, and then second try to shift your focus From what you don't like about your work to what you do like, okay Even if it's just one small thing find something that brings you satisfaction Yeah, even if it's just for a few minutes each day, okay And then finally remember that your work isn't the sum total of who you are Right, you have value and worth because you're a child of god regardless of what you do for a living Those are great reminders. It's so easy to get caught up in like that pressure, you know It is find our identity and worth in our work. Yeah, but ultimately it comes from something much deeper much deeper So as we kind of lap up this deep dive on work and wealth through the lens of the bible What's one key takeaway you hope listeners will walk away with If I had to boil it down to one thing i'd say this will work in its truest form It's about more than just earning a living.

Okay. It's about participating in something bigger than ourselves Yeah about using our gifts and talents to serve others to create something beautiful to really make a difference in the world Yeah, and when we approach work with that mindset, it can become a source of joy meaning and even worship Regardless of our circumstances that is a powerful thought to leave us with. Thank you so much for joining us on this Deep dive into the biblical perspective on work and wealth.

It's been a pleasure We hope it's been insightful and maybe even a little bit challenging Yes, and as you go back to your own fields of work, whatever they may be We hope that you approach them with this Renewed sense of purpose. Yes, knowing that your work matters and that you are a valuable part of god's ongoing work in the world Absolutely until next time keep seeking keep exploring and keep diving deep