



### **Discussion Guide for Labor Day Weekend**

**September 2, 2018**

#### **Introduction:**

Colossians 3 – Paul worked as a tent-maker [see Acts chapter 18] and so besides planting churches, he knew what it was to live by the sweat of his brow and labor with his hands. He had this to say about a proper perspective on being a part of the work force . . .

<sup>22</sup>Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, <sup>24</sup>since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

#### **Questions to ponder and discuss:**

**[Those who are now retired, please share your experiences from your days of employment, and think of your present retirement situation as the next way to put your available time and energy in the hands of God as an act of worship and blessing to others.]**

1. What is the best job you ever had? How about the worst job? What was it that made them good or bad?
2. How easy or difficult is it to regard your job as actually working for the Lord? If you make that mental shift, in what practical ways would your day at work be different than it is now? Is that an impossible shift to make? Why or why not?
3. Bart talked about work as an act of worship [honoring, revering God] when we see it as [1] partnership with God in ruling over the creation, [2] a means of loving our neighbors, and [3] a place to carry out the mission of Christ in inviting others to follow him. Do you have any particular thought or reaction to any or all of those 3?
4. When has the outcome of your work been a practical blessing in the life of another person? Perhaps it has blessed a co-worker, or someone who is affected positively by the end product of your work?
5. Can you think of any examples when you were able to actually speak of your faith with a co-worker, employee, boss or supervisor? How did that go? Was your story or insight well received? Have you ever had anyone push away from you or call you out for verbalizing your faith in the workplace? How did you react?

6. Read through the following list of questions and pick out the ones that are of special interest to discuss.

**Why** do we tend to focus on non-profit mechanisms to alleviate poverty, when for-profit businesses are natural and biblical mechanisms for creating wealth?

**Why** do we tend to value wealth distribution and often neglect wealth creation?

**Why** do we tend to limit the contribution of Christian business people to donating money to non-profit ministry programs when there so much good they can do beyond charitable giving?

**Why** don't we more often ask business people how we can pray for them and their businesses, as if wealth production is something God would not care about?

**Why** do we often settle for doing good business and forget the bottom line of making Christ known among the people we work with and do business with?

**Why** are we not telling more stories of godly business people who are and have been instrumental in holistic transformation of people and societies through business?

**Why** are so few mission thinkers and strategists dealing with the global shortfall of 1.8 billion jobs (3); mainly in areas where the name of Jesus is rarely heard? The good and interesting news is that the means of access to limited access countries comes chiefly through business platforms because explicit mission work is not allowed. Business is the only means available for Christians to gain access to many 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries.

**A Final Blessing and Benediction by Paul over all those who labor in partnership with God.**

**I Thessalonians 4:10-12**

But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, <sup>11</sup> and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and **work with your hands**, just as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> **so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.**

**God bless you and prosper you and work through you in your place of  
employment to accomplish his mission to the world!**