

STUDY GUIDE:

For The Life Of The World | Creative Service

For The Life Of The World - Letters to the Exiles: This series is about exploring God's mission in the world and discovering our role in His great plans. This week we watch all of Episode 3: Creative Service.

INTRODUCTION

Work, what's it all for? It may not look like it, but perhaps our daily work is a call to reflect an infinitely creative God. In this episode, we'll explore the goodness of work. That's right. Work is a gift. It was not always tangled with thorns and thistles. Glimmers of its original purpose cast an unmistakable glow through our creative service.

KEY IDEAS from the video:

We are Makers: A part of what it means to be made in God's image is to be a maker like him and with him in this world.

Work as Calling: Each of us has been created for a purpose, to fulfill a key role in serving others with the gifts and talents God has given us. Truly, you are a uniquely designed 'tool of gift'.

Value in Exchange: It's in the exchange with others where value is created. It's in the relationship with others where there is profit. Everything is collaboration, the fruit of labor is relationship.

Words to Keep in Mind for the Journey

"How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom you made them all..." (Ps 104:24)

"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce" (Jer 29:5)

"Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes..." (Luke 12:22-23)

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves..." (Phil 2:3-4)

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord..." (Col 3:23)

Discussion Questions

1. How does the “Un-giving Tree” help us understand what work isn’t? How might the tree’s behavior bear resemblance to the fortification approach to the world? Does this approach or lifestyle reflect God’s glory and his gifts to the world?
2. How many hands, or roles, are employed in making the craftsman table? Think of your daily work — How many lives and exchanges are intertwined? What is your part in all of those connected lives?
3. In God’s great *oikonomia* of economics, we play a role. What does it then mean to profit? How is wealth and profit a God-given responsibility? In Deuteronomy 8:17-18, God reminds the israelites that all is a gift from him. What does this responsibility require of us? How does Deuteronomy 18:17-18 relate to the parable of the talents in Matt. 25:14-30? What could it look like to use your profit to *seek the welfare of the city*?
4. How might we seek justice in areas where there is exploitation? Others benefit when we bring wisdom, virtue, and God’s love into our exchanges, into our work. How does wisdom and virtue transform the way we exchange our gifts? Do you view other people as gift-bearers?
5. How do our possessions reveal the gifts of others? Are we alone, surviving by our own wits? Are you involved in the collaborations taking place at work and in the areas where you live? What does Proverbs 31:13-20 tell us about work and profit?
6. Can you identify or sense where God is nudging you to be his love, healing, and blessing to others in your daily work, in your everyday exchanges in your city? Do you have a grand vision for blessing the city?

Prayer for Your Journey

Thank you Father, that I am not alone, and that my needs and desires are supplied by the gifts you have given through the work and service of others. Help me see and appreciate others. Lord, help me to remember that my work is personal and relational. Your plan for creative service — a vast collaboration designed for flourishing and the welfare of those around me — reaches far beyond my imagination. Grant me your imagination and vision for blessing others. Amen.

Close in Prayer for One Another

