

## Seeking Transcendence at Work | Ecc. 4:4-6 Sermon Discussion Leader's Guide

**Purpose of Discussion:** To identify one way you are tempted to make success an idol, one way you're tempted respond, and one way you can rest in Jesus this week.

**Sermon Refresher:** From infancy to adulthood, we have been trained to worship success as an idol. But how can we get off the achievement treadmill? Resting in Jesus is the only way to be set free.

**Icebreaker:** In Shay's sermon he talked about the "professionalization of childhood." He explored how our culture pushes our children to be best from the youngest age. How have you seen this in your own life or in the larger community?

**Transition:** As a culture, we worship the "idol" of success. Today, "idol" is a strange word. It makes us think of stone statues that ancient pagans worshipped. But according to Tim Keller, an "idol" is anything we live for and can't live without.

### **Discussion:**

1. Today, we are tempted to make success and achievement an idol. Why do you think so many people live for success today? What promises does success make us?
2. Take 60 seconds and quietly write down one specific way you are tempted to live for success right now. Then write down a promise success is making you. Share with the group.
3. Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-6. We will look at two foolish ways to respond to the demands of success (in **bold**), and one wise way (*in italics*).

### **Ecclesiastes 4:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> **Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves.** <sup>6</sup> *Better one handful with tranquillity than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.*

# THE **crossing** **small groups**

In verse 5, the author describes someone sleeping with their arms crossed. It's a picture of laziness and boredom. Why is it tempting to respond to the demands of success with lazy boredom?

4. In verse 6, the author describes someone anxiously clinging to their work with two hands. Why is it tempting to respond to the demands of success with an anxious desire to control things?
5. Take 60 seconds and identify one way you are responding to success with either lazy boredom or anxious control. Share with the group.

**Transition:** In verse 6, the author offers a different option. One hand clenched and one hand open. This is the wise approach to the demands of success: work hard and leave the results open to God. Shay said the only way to do this is "working from rest." Only those who are resting in Jesus by trusting in him for their ultimate security and worth are freed to work hard and trust God.

6. How could trusting Jesus for your ultimate security and worth free people from the demands of success?
7. Read Matt. 11:28-30. Take 60 seconds and write one burden you can give to Jesus.

## **Matthew 11:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

## **Sharing and Prayer:**

Pair up with someone else in the group. Share the burden you want to give to Jesus. After that, each of you can give that burden up to Jesus in prayer.