



THE JOURNEY

from Creation to New Creation

Part 3 Crowned and Commissioned

Introduction

These notes give some guidance on how to lead the group through the questions and discussion. *There are also additional Bible references in the notes, and you may like to ask group members to read out some of these, as appropriate.*

You may want to begin by asking if anything particularly struck people as they watched the video. However, it would be wise to limit this part of the discussion to ten minutes at most.

Read [Genesis 1.26-30](#) and [Genesis 2.15](#) again. If there is time, also read [Psalm 8.1-9](#).

Question 1

What was mankind's 'job description'?

God gave us work to do. God commissioned mankind to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over every living thing.

In fact, God called mankind to complete His work of creation. During the six creation days God brought order out of chaos. Then He filled the Earth. Now God wanted mankind, under His guidance, to continue His 'world project' and finish it. We were to go on forming the Earth – arranging, ordering, beautifying, just as a gardener or town planner strives to create order and beauty from a wilderness. And we were to continue filling the Earth - colonising the planet. In Albert Wolters' words, "[In a single word, the task ahead is civilization](#)". God wanted us to care for this planet, make it a beautiful and productive paradise, and build a rich and godly civilisation here.

And in calling us to complete His 'world project', God called us to be His partners. Hugh Whelchel writes: "[From the beginning, God is prepared to entrust the garden to man and for us to become his](#)

[co-workers](#)." God intended us to complete His 'world project' in dependence on Him and in relationship with Him. We were to be God's co-workers. We were to be guided and empowered in our task by His Holy Spirit.

God told Adam to "*subdue*" the Earth (Genesis 1.28). Subduing the Earth would be a challenge. Humanity's task was to make Earth a paradise. But this wouldn't happen immediately or without effort. Earth was to be brought under control by the exercise of power and authority. Our task would challenge us and 'stretch us'. It would engage all our physical, mental, imaginative, and creative powers to the utmost.

Read [Ephesians 4.28](#), [6.5-9](#), and [Colossians 3.17,22-24](#).

Question 2

What should be our attitude to our own work (whether paid or unpaid, and whether at home or outside the home)?

To work is God-ordained. In fact, it's something that God Himself does. God "*formed the man of dust from the ground*" (Genesis 2.7) and "*planted a garden*" (Genesis 2.8). He "*formed*" beasts and birds "*out of the ground*" (Genesis 2.19). God, so to speak, did manual work! In Genesis 2.2 we read that "*on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done*".

So God is a worker. We humans are made in God's image. And so we are created to be workers, too.

Jesus Himself worked as a skilled manual worker - a carpenter (the Greek word can also mean 'builder') - for most of his adult life. We might have expected the Son of God to come as a great philosopher, or a noble statesman. But He didn't. He came as a worker, a carpenter.

Before Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, work was pleasurable and satisfying in every way. Now it is often not - but we are still called to work. Tim Keller writes: "The fact that God put work in paradise is startling to us, because we almost always think of work as drudgery or even a punishment. First, this shows us that work is as much a basic good need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality. Work is not simply a 'drain' but an important means of fulfilling our deepest needs and thus an important component of the 'good life'."

Tim Keller writes: ". . . all kinds of work, both manual to mental, from simple to highly sophisticated, are noble and have dignity." All work of whatever kind, if done in obedience to God, is sacred and pleases God.

As Hugh Whelchel points out: "Paul . . . emphasizes a positive view of work, commanding all Christians to continue in their work and to work well. It is apparent from his own writings that he continued in his trade as a tentmaker during his church planting ministry."

Question 3

What do we really need to experience true satisfaction and fulfilment in our lives?

- ▶ **A relationship with God** In Saint Augustine's words, "You made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless, until it rests in You." We are naturally drawn to worship God and find our life in Him. Our deepest yearning is to know God as our *Father*. At the Last Supper, Philip said to Jesus: "*Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us*" (John 14.8). Jesus came to show us what the Father is like (see John 14.9). And He came to *bring us to Him* – as He said, "*No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14.6)
- ▶ **An eternal destiny** Western society lives, to a large extent, in a world from which the supernatural and the eternal is excluded. Our human nature rebels against this. C.S. Lewis remarked: "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."
- ▶ **To belong to a family and community** Mankind is a family. We instinctively long to be part of a group. We feel the need to belong. We crave fellowship, friendship, love. We dread exclusion

and loneliness. The sense of being unwanted crushes us.

- ▶ **Respect** Alongside this need to belong, we look for respect from others. We need to know we have a place of value and honour in the eyes of others, however helpless or lowly we may be.
- ▶ **To rule** God gave mankind the mandate to rule this Earth (see Genesis 1.26,28, Psalm 8.6). God made us to be His royal family! However, because of humanity's rebellion against God, that urge to rule descends so often into ruthless oppression of man and beast, and wasteful looting of Earth's resources. But the basic urge to rule is good. God built it into us.
- ▶ **To have significance and purpose** Bernard Bell writes: "Psychologists know that a sense of purpose is essential to emotional and psychological health." We need to know our lives count for something, that there's a reason for our existence, that we have a purpose in life.

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