



Presented by Perimeter Church

Restorers Fellowship

Jesus is renewing and reconciling all things—from the deepest places in our heart
to the ruling powers in the cosmos.



I am making all things new.

- Revelation 5:21

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Restorers Fellowship equips followers of Christ to live out the gospel through their work with greater intentionality, integrity, creativity, and excellence.

Participants will:

- » **Deepen their understanding of the purpose and place of work in the biblical narrative**
- » **Support one another in applying this to their specific vocations in a way that glorifies God and contributes to the flourishing of shalom in the region**

LEARNING FRAMEWORK:

Restorers Fellowship engages participants in a three-part framework for transformational learning:



» **Head** - Transformed understanding of work: Foundational concepts, key definitions, theological framework



» **Heart** - Redeemed attitude toward work: Spiritual condition, identity, values, motives, priorities



» **Hands** - Righteous practice of work: Focus on applications in the context of specific vocations, relationships, social/cultural background

5 BIG IDEAS:

The core content of RF can be summarized in five main take-away concepts (all to be unpacked and applied in greater detail over the nine-month initiative):

- 1 **My work** is part of God's good design.
- 2 **My work** reflects the sinful brokenness within me, and in the world.
- 3 Jesus redeems **my work** to be an expression of my love and worship of God.
- 4 Jesus redeems **my work** to be an instrument for the flourishing of *shalom*.
- 5 **My work** serves and is served by the body of Christ.

VALUES FRAMEWORK



» **GOSPEL-CENTERED**

The gospel is the good news that Jesus is renewing and reconciling all things—from the deepest places in our heart to the ruling powers in the cosmos (Col. 1:15-22). Restorers Fellowship (RF) will help unpack the life-giving implications of the gospel for our work (alongside every other part of our lives). As Bethany Jenkins of The Gospel Coalition puts it, “Faith and work is not a program; it’s about getting the gospel into another part of our hearts.”



» **Praxis-oriented**



» **Narrative-based**



» **Community-building**



» *Shalom*-seeking

VALUES FRAMEWORK



» **Gospel-centered**



» **PRAXIS-ORIENTED**

While orthodoxy (right thinking) is a critical foundation, RF also emphasizes orthopraxy (right practice). Implementation will focus on nine broad vocational channels of cultural influence: business, healthcare, education, government, non-profits, legal & judicial, arts & entertainment, media, and family. RF aims to equip participants to live out the implications of the gospel for why, how and what we do in the nitty-gritty of our work life.



» **Narrative-based**



» **Community-building**



» *Shalom*-seeking

VALUES FRAMEWORK



» **Gospel-centered**



» **Praxis-oriented**



» **NARRATIVE-BASED**

We recognize the Bible as “the one true story of the world,” as Michael Goheen puts it. A narrative approach to theology anchors our paradigm of work and personal applications in the grand story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.



» **Community-building**



» *Shalom*-seeking

VALUES FRAMEWORK



» **Gospel-centered**



» **Praxis-oriented**



» **Narrative-based**



» **COMMUNITY-BUILDING**

God did not design Christians to live out the gospel in isolation but as members of the body of Christ. As the name implies, Restorers Fellowship emphasizes building Christian fellowship and creating space for authentic friendships. RF also helps participants nurture a healthy balance between their work life and other communities of which they are a part: church congregation, family, and the broader community.



» *Shalom-seeking*

VALUES FRAMEWORK



» **Gospel-centered**



» **Praxis-oriented**



» **Narrative-based**



» **Community-building**



» **SHALOM-SEEKING**

God's intent is that His creation may experience *shalom*, or wholeness in every arena of life. Through our work, we can participate in the work of God that is restoring *shalom* in ourselves, our community and our world. RF will introduce a biblical vision for the common good, and explore ways that work can contribute to the flourishing of life in the greater Atlanta area.

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

- 1 Structural Overview, Requirements and Key Resources
- 2 Introduction to Cord Groups
- 3 Session 1A: The Intrinsic Goodness of Work in the Genesis Narrative
- 4 Break
- 5 Session 1B: The Inescapable Fallenness of Work

MAJOR TEXTS

Monthly group sessions and reflection questions will focus on the following books, supplemented by various articles and online videos:

- | James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (part III, chapters 3-6)
- | Tim Keller with Katherine Leary Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*
- | Tom Nelson, *Work Matters*
- | Scott Rae and Kenman Wong, *Business for the Common Good* (selected chapters)
- | Amy Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good*

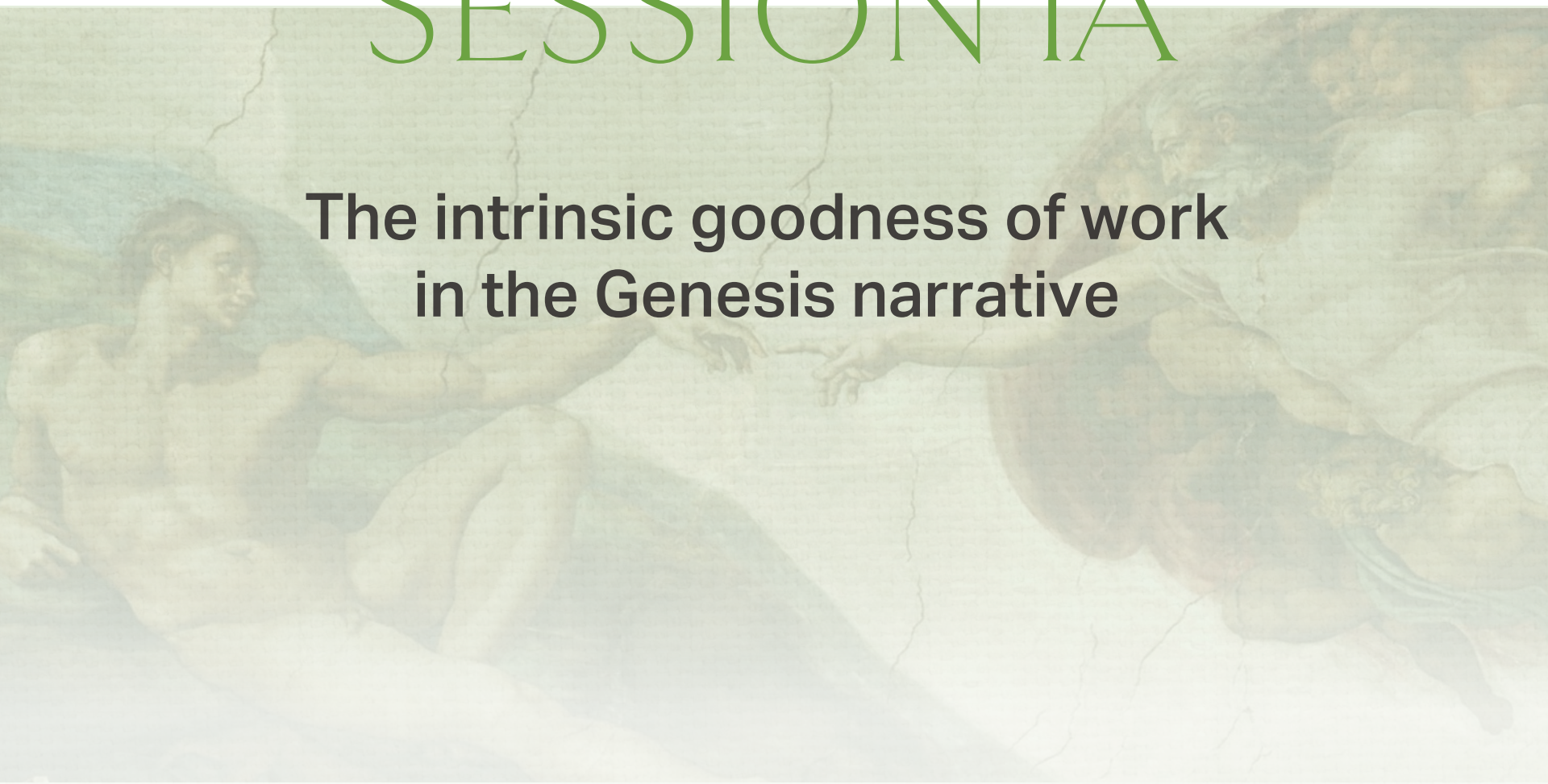
CORD GROUPS

*And though a man might prevail against one who is alone,
two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

- Ecclesiastes 4:12

SESSION 1A

**The intrinsic goodness of work
in the Genesis narrative**



THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE: TWO-CHAPTER OR FOUR-CHAPTER?

Two-Chapter:

- » **People are separated from God because of sin.**
- » **Jesus offers the solution through his incarnation and his work on the cross**

Four-Chapter:

- » **Creation**
- » **Fall**
- » **Redemption**
- » **Restoration**

WORK'S INTRINSIC GOODNESS

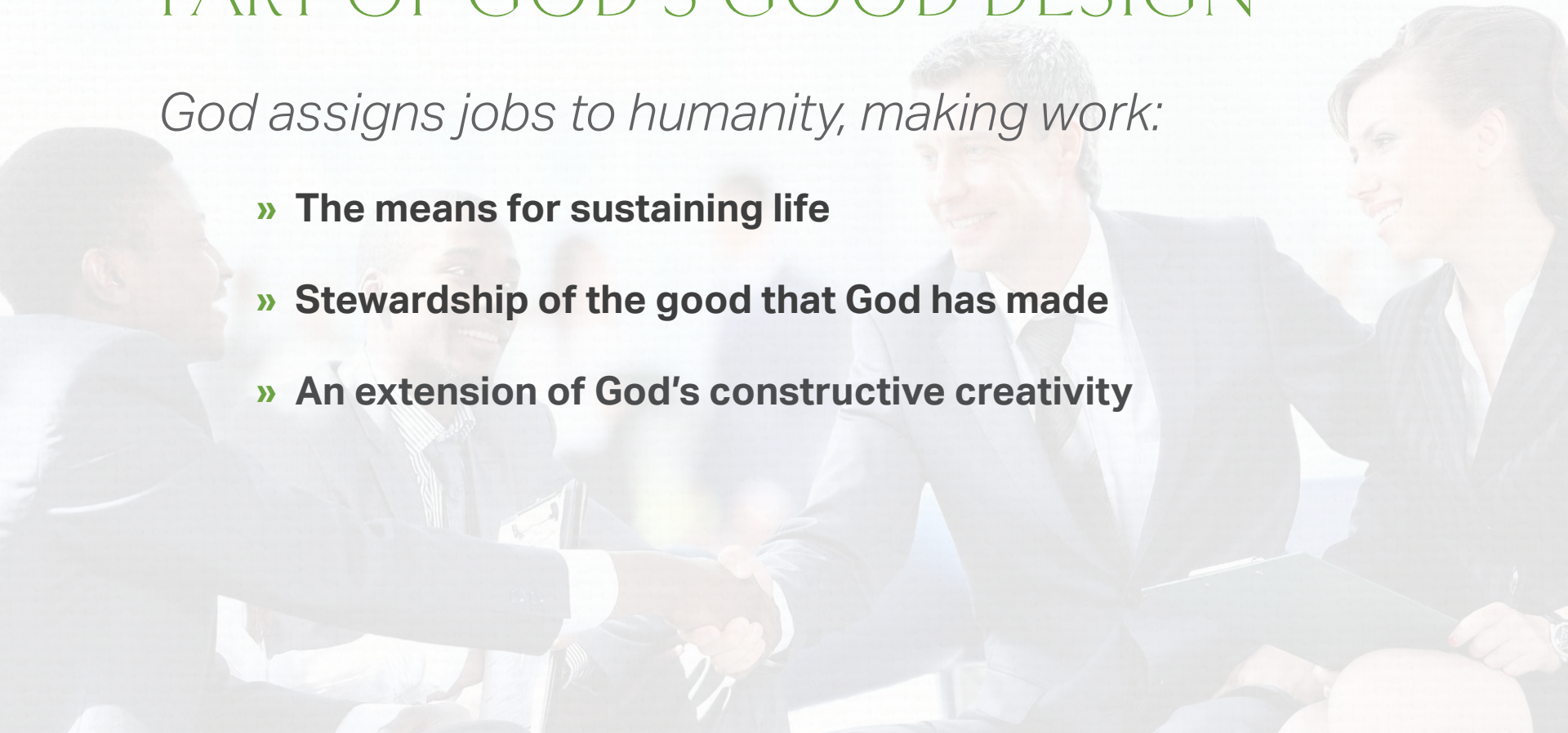
The Genesis Narrative Reveals Work is:

- » **Part of God's good design**
- » **Rooted in the *Imago Dei***
- » **Rooted in the creation mandate**
- » **Inherently dignified**

PART OF GOD'S GOOD DESIGN

God assigns jobs to humanity, making work:

- » **The means for sustaining life**
- » **Stewardship of the good that God has made**
- » **An extension of God's constructive creativity**



ROOTED IN THE *IMAGO DEI*

Humankind is created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27) and:

- » **Bears His likeness**
- » **Reflects His character**
- » **Is formed to share in His work**

God is a Creator who labors, enjoys the results of His work, and rests

- » **We work because God works – work is inherent in human nature**

Jesus also reflects the nature of God as laborer (John 5:17)

Through work we participate uniquely in the imago Dei

ROOTED IN THE CREATION MANDATE

- » **Our creation mandate (also called cultural mandate) comes from Genesis 1:28.**
- » "Subdue" and "rule" do not imply a right to exploitation but the responsibility of stewardship.
- » All humanity (not only Christians) participates in God's command to sustain and develop His gifts of nature and culture, in order to meet human needs and also to creatively expand the goodness, beauty and functionality of the world that ultimately belongs to God.



And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- Genesis 1:28

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The pattern for all work....is rearranging the raw material of God's creation in such a way that it helps the world in general, and people in particular, thrive and flourish. ... So whether splicing a gene or doing brain surgery or collecting the rubbish or painting a picture, our work further develops, maintains, or repairs the fabric of the world. In this way, we connect our work to God's work.

- Every Good Endeavor (pp. 59, 61)

INHERENTLY DIGNIFIED

- » **Work is a gift and calling from God who placed humans in a world that required their physical and intellectual input. The call to cultivation is part of what makes creation “very good” (Gen. 1:31).**
- » **All types of labor, whether mental, manual or creative, are rooted in work that God Himself has done in the creation story. There is no hierarchy of status for work that is done “for the Lord” (Col. 3:23).**
- » **Work that stewards and cultivates the material world is not inherently less important or pleasing to God than ministry that cultivates the cultural or spiritual realms.**



No task is too small a vessel to hold the immense dignity of work given by God ... The material creation was made by God to be developed, cultivated, and cared for in an endless number of ways through human labor. But even the simplest of these ways is important.

- Every Good Endeavor (p. 50)

CORD GROUPS





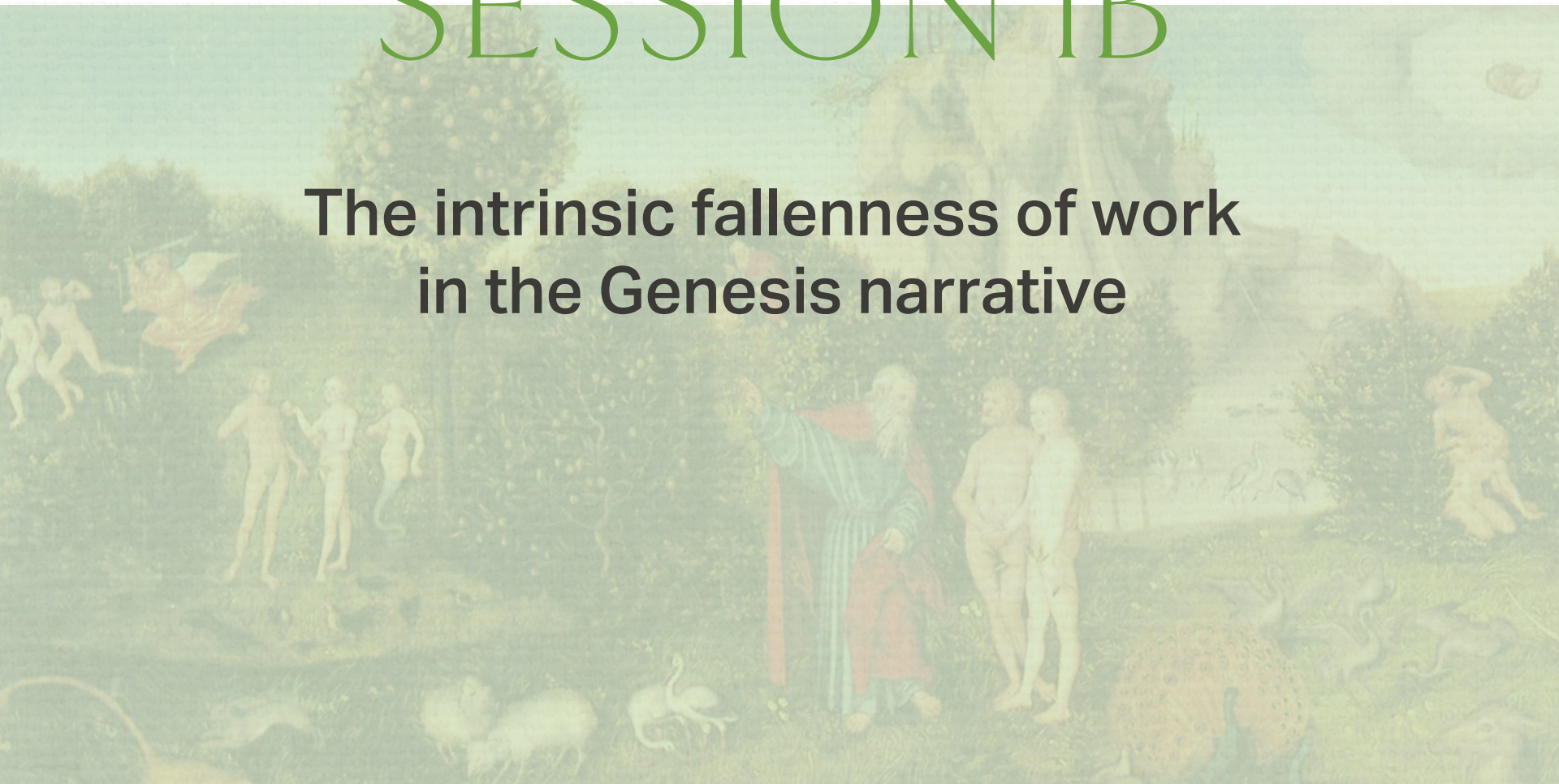
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15-Minute Break



SESSION 1B

**The intrinsic fallenness of work
in the Genesis narrative**



WORK'S INTRINSIC FALLENNESS

In Genesis, We Can See:

- » **The consequences of sin for work**
- » **The multiple dimensions of sin's impact on work**
- » **The problems with work** (*Every Good Endeavor*)



Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

- Genesis 3:17b-19

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN FOR WORK

- » *Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, doubting God's goodness and rejecting His authority. As a result, God's good design—including work—fell under a curse.*
- » *Sin distorts but does not eliminate the cultural mandate. Work is now inevitably characterized by struggle—the pleasant, productive trees of Gen. 2:9 replaced by thorns, thistles, sweat, and dust.*
- » *Work may still be fruitful and productive, but it can never fully reverse the fallen state of the created world and human culture.*

MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF SIN'S IMPACT ON WORK

Sin leads to brokenness in humanity's fundamental relationships:

- » **With God**
- » **Within our own nature**
- » **With one another**
- » **With the created environment**

The first murder (in the field—Cain's workplace) arose from Cain's severed relationship with God.



The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." Cain spoke to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

- Genesis 4:6-8

SIN'S IMPACT ON WORK (continued)

Our internal brokenness at work diminishes us physically, mentally and emotionally:

- » **Overwork or idleness**
- » **Prideful ambition or shamed hopelessness**
- » **Foolish recklessness or paralyzing fear of failure**

The social dimension of sin corrupts and disrupts our work in multiple ways. Sin may be manifest in:

- » *Individuals*
- » *Institutions*
- » *Policies and systems*

SIN'S IMPACT ON WORK (continued)

Sin's entry into the world has also twisted the mutually beneficial relationship God intended between work and the natural environment

- » *The fallen state of nature harms human enterprise (e.g., drought withers crops, parasites kill livestock, natural disasters disrupt commerce, disease decimates the workforce)*
- » *Human enterprise harms nature (e.g., overfishing, strip mining, industrial pollution, consumer waste)*

PROBLEMS WITH WORK

(Every Good Endeavor)

- » *In a fallen world, work can be fruitless—yet we are consoled by hope.*
- » *In a fallen world, work can be pointless—yet we can accept the gift.*
- » *In a fallen world, work can be selfish—yet we can choose to serve.*



You will become a person of greatness not by trying to make yourself into one, but by serving the One who said to his Father, "For your sake, thy will be done."

- Every Good Endeavor (p. 128)

SUMMARY

**Recognizing the fallenness of work,
in the context of God's good design for
work, is essential for realistic integration
of faith and work.**

**It drives us to Jesus, our Redeemer
from sin in all its forms**

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GROUPS





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