3: What does one really get from hard work?

King Solomon asked that question some 2,900 years ago (**Eccles. 3:9**), after he came to realise his vast wealth, incredible wisdom & lifetime of hard work had brought him a whole lot of misery!

His life reminds me of a business owner I once knew - very successful at his trade, he made a stack of money. But as a workaholic, he faced serious health issues and was alienated from staff & family.

I sense these character traits weren't deliberate; it was just the way he was wired, likely from childhood. In truth, he was lonely, loveless & lost; his self-worth and value came from his work.

One day, he was too busy to come to a meeting I had arranged; his wife was there; she expressed her disappointment…then shared that he was rarely home; and he never bathed the children!

It pains me just thinking about that bloke, his business career and his wealth. He and Solomon had a lot in common…self-absorbed, chasing worldly things and it seems, little concern for others.

Solomon finally realised his error, concluding, "*…as I looked at everything I had tried, it was all so useless, a chasing of the wind and there was nothing really worthwhile anywhere*" - Eccles. 2:11 TLB

What can we learn about work from the king and the workaholic?

Simple. If you find yourself heading down the same, work-is-my-life, my identity path, your thinking and priorities are all wrong.

Jesus didn't go to the cross to set us free from the law of sin and death so we could spend our lives in a job or business making money and accumulating things on our own account!

While work and business are important human activities, both are temporal; through toil our needs are met. But we are here for a much higher purpose, that is, the eternal.

Verily, verily - most assuredly I (PF) say unto you: *There will be no towbar on the hearse that carries any of us out, everything will be left behind - $$, business, reputation, influence, family + regrets…then the judgement!* In the end, this is what woke Solomon up to his plight.

Strategies to help overworked, stressed, business owners:

1. **Acknowledge** it's the Lord's business, you are a manager; if Jesus turned up for morning tea and a progress report, would you be proud of the way you've been running things?
2. **Reconnect** with God's Handbook, the Bible, because it contains all the business principles we need for control, growth and success
3. **Stop** trying to solve all the problems yourself…learn to delegate and to trust your team
4. **Start** a giving program to help others in need, thus taking the whole focus off yourself
5. **Plan** to work less in future in the form of a 4-day-week - your reward for all that hard work.

My counsel: Remember the challenge in Solomon's question of himself, and us as business owner/managers; a question that demands an answer…

"What does one really get from hard work?"