

Midweek Bible Study

An Exposition of Qoheleth Challenges to Enjoying the Gift (4) Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

Chapter six wraps up the challenges to beauty and joy. It is a dark part of the forest, but necessary.

Challenges to God Making Everything Beautiful

- Injustice (3:16-22)
- Oppression (4:1-3)

Challenges to Enjoying Life and Labor as a Gift

- Envy (4:4-6)
- Loneliness (4:7-12)
- Politics (4:13-16)
- Shallow, careless worship (5:1-7)

Challenge to God Making Everything Beautiful

- Graft in High Places (5:8-9)
The oppression and injustice here is brought about by bureaucrats, kings, politicians, those in office.

Challenges to Enjoying Life and Labor as a Gift

- Loving Money (5:10-12)
- Hoarding Money and Losing Money (5:13-17)
The problem wasn't saving or investing – the problem was thinking it secured the future.

Recall the Remedy (5:18-20) – this is the third time we have the corner pieces of the puzzle. 2:24; 3:12-14, 22, and now again.

Chapter six continues the theme of money and work.

It appears that 6:9 is the conclusion to the first part of the book. The following sections seem more loosely connected.

I. The Gift of Enjoyment Withheld (1-6)

- A. The person in question
- B. The evil stated (1-2)
- C. Children and Death (3-6)



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II. The Limited Benefits of Labor and Wisdom (7-9)

- A. All a man's labor is for his mouth/yet his appetite is not satisfied
- B. Wisdom is not the ultimate answer
- C. Seeing eyes better than wandering desire

III. Who Knows What is Good? (6:10-12)

This is the beginning of the second part of the book.

"The frugality of the fifteen Hebr. words in v. 10 has somehow produced a proliferation of large, history, dramatic, and theological interpretations that span the garden of Genesis to the ash heap of Job."¹

- A. A man has got to know his limitations (10)
- B. Words are a vapor (11)
The more one argues with words, the less he accomplishes. How does that benefit him? (Ecc 6:11 NET)
- C. Who knows? (12)
 - 1. Who knows what is good?
This does not expect a negative answer – this is not the pessimistic sage.
The wise man who knows God knows!
We know this because he has already answered it!
Cf. 2:24-25, "better"
 - 2. Life is a shadow – Job 8:9; 14:2; Psa; 102:11; 109:23; 144:4; 1 Chron. 29:15
 - 3. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?
You don't know, so trust God now!

The call of Ecclesiastes 6 is to find satisfaction in life *as God has given it to you*. If you don't, then it would be better not to have been born. Indeed, as Jeremy Taylor warned long ago, "God threatens terrible things if we will not be happy."²

¹ Fredericks, 163.

² Quoted by John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1986, 1996), 9.

