

Enjoy the fruits of your labor ~ This is from the hand of God

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***We now come to Solomon's conclusion,***

How should someone who is a Christian, and wise, live their lives in this present world? This is VERY IMPORTANT, because there are so many professing Christians who are living in this world like they are of it, and in love with it.

Can a man or woman find complete fulfillment and satisfaction by laboring and wearing themselves out for earthly pleasures and happiness? By endlessly pursuing the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and in the pride of life?

The Apostle John defined these three (3) as loving this world; if you love this world, the love of the Father IS NOT IN YOU! Can the getting of earthly possessions/riches ever satisfy your soul, which is that inner part of you that will continue in an eternity after your die and after your body returns to the dust of the earth?

***How are all of your labors (in this life) PROFITING your soul, that part of you that in the beginning was created in the image and likeness of God? But was ruined by our sin!***

Christian, the longer you are a Christian, are you becoming more Christ-Like? Are you closer & more intimate to God than you were yesterday?

Are you separating from this present world, and are you GAINING heaven and eternal life?

Or are you casting your Creator and God aside, and laboring for sinful, perishable, and the waning pleasures of this present world.

Listen to the Psalmist about THE SOURCE of true, real, HEAVENLY and lasting pleasures; pleasures that ACTUALLY satisfy the soul:

Psalm 17:15: As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be SATISFIED, when I awake, with thy likeness

Psalm 16:11: In thy presence, there is FULNESS of joy; at thy right hand there are PLEASURES evermore.

These are NEVER-ENDING SINLESS pleasures. We don't really know what that is yet DO WE? The pleasures of God are pure and without sin, they are not earthly and sensual. But shouldn't WE KNOW what it is to (by faith) be in that pleasant place of God's presence? Don't you have a foretaste NOW of what heaven will be? When your faith will be sight? If fullness of joy and everlasting pleasures ONLY exist in the REAL presence of God; shouldn't that be where we are (BY FAITH) living now?

And where will we experience these pleasures? These joys? NOW?

In the gathering of the saints on the Lord's Day! In your personal devotions in the Word! On your face in your secret place of prayer! When you are witnessing the truth of the gospel to the lost!

This should be YOUR LIFE saint of God, you should be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ , and laying hold of ETERNAL life with all of your heart with each passing day!

The sinful and perishable pleasures and temporary joys of this life are ending; leave them behind and run to Christ.

**Where are you this morning? What are your affections fixed upon? Are you laboring/wearying yourself in this life for a few acres of perishable earth, or for riches that you can't take with you? Will you labor and toil to gain YOUR portion of this world at the expense of losing YOUR own never dying soul?**

The answers to this life ARE NOT found IN THIS LIFE! The answers to your happiness is NOT found UNDER heaven, but above heaven and in the presence of Christ!

The happiest, (the most blessed) people in this life are those that find their GREATEST satisfactions in God. They work hard and enjoy what God gives them, (which is where we will be today in our study); they don't seek for riches or fame in this life, but if by the blessings of God they have riches and fame, they despise them IF they would ever encroach upon their love for the true and unsearchable riches which they possess in Christ. Their happiness is in God!

Psalm 144:15: Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD

**Of wisdom, madness, and folly, Solomon concluded that there are great advantages in possessing wisdom over being a fool, (wisdom is valuable to us in this life), yet, all of my wisdom does not exempt me from many of the same earthly ills and dangers that befall the fool; or from that ONE EVENT that happens to us all.**

Death comes to the wise and to the fool; the wise for all of their wisdom are not exempted from cancer and strokes and heart attacks or dying from these same diseases just like the fool.

What good, then, is all of my wisdom (saith Solomon) if it makes me no better than the fool in this respect? If you recall, Solomon then went from being a DETERMINED man to a DESPAIRING/PESSIMISTIC man.

**That's when he declared: Therefore I hated life. Why did Solomon say this?**

Because after all of his earthly work and labor and wearisome toil; and after applying his heart (by wisdom) TO KNOW wisdom and madness and folly; all of it brought him no fulfillment or satisfaction in this life. After all of his seeking/searching he found nothing in this world worthy spending his life's labor for!

Solomon then despaired when he thought of ALL his earthly possessions being left to another man after his death. It was as if Solomon wanted to prevent all of what he had amassed in this world from falling into the hands of a fool!

Ecclesiastes 1:18-19

Solomon lost sleep over the thought that all what he had worked so hard for & all of the successes of his labors might be left to the

man that had not labored for them. This is what drove Solomon to HATE LIFE in this world; this is why he despaired.

But remember what we learned last week from Solomon's experience; don't labor to leave earthly possessions and riches to your children; labor to leave to them a spiritual legacy; leave to them that which will never die; leave them the memory of the gospel & the words of Christ which came to them from your life and from your testimony!

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**THIS is the 2<sup>nd</sup> mention of God in Ecclesiastes**

THIS is different! All of a sudden there is a change in his attitude; Solomon now sounds optimistic and positive, instead of despairing of life and being full of pessimism, Solomon is teaching us to ENJOY what we have labored for because it is from the hand of God

What is he saying? That there is NOTHING BETTER for us in this life than to eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die. So, get all you can get and enjoy this life, because after you die, that's it, it's over! Is that what Solomon is teaching us NOW? NO!

Solomon is NOT teaching us to live like atheists, who give themselves up to sensual gratifications/earthly pleasures; NO! But what Solomon determined and discovered is; YOUR LIFE was given to you by God, therefore enjoy your life in this world, and enjoying the fruits of your labors in this life! What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God and ENJOY HIM forever!

That is HOW we ENJOY LIFE, but FIRST ENJOYING GOD! Although there is no permanent satisfaction found in this life; and although the pleasures of this life are earthbound and perishable; there is the PROPER USE and RIGHT ENJOYMENT of the pleasures of this life, and of your labors under the sun! The great danger is when we turn away from Christ & FALL BACK in love with the world & the pleasures of this life with inordinate affection. Inordinate means Disproportionately Excessive!

1 Corinthians 10:1-12, 31, Colossians 3:23

Take heed to the warnings and directions of God's Word; but also understand that Solomon is teaching us that there is a way to ENJOY your life in this world that is NOT dishonoring to God.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-13, 5:18-19, 9:7-10

So, labor on; but in your work under the sun, give yourself and your heart in your work to the Lord, to honor Him; and there will be profit; and ENJOY the fruits of your earthly labors knowing that THAT is a gift from God!

**For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto more than I?**

OR, apart from ENJOYING God, who could enjoy the pleasures of this life more than I? Or, who can hasten hereunto, or who can prove this by experience more than I? With all that God has given me.

**Solomon realizes that his wisdom was a special gift from God, along with his knowledge and his joy!**

You can clearly see the doctrine of election here, for no one is truly good in God's sight unless God gives them a new heart & a new spirit! After God saves a sinner, God then gives that former sinner/new-born saint everything that they need to live the Christian life:

2 Peter 1:3: According as His divine power hath given to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue

NOW, as a child of God: If we would have wisdom that comes from God, along the knowledge of God and joy in this life, we MUST pray for it and expect it from God ALONE!

God gives to those that are good in His sight wisdom of heart to enjoy and make good and proper use of the fruits of their labors, and to do good with what they have for the good of their fellow man!

**BUT TO THE SINNER he giveth travail, to gather and heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God**

In contrast to the good man: The sinner works and toils and gathers up possessions and riches, (without wisdom and knowledge; and without true joy that can only come from God); the sinner does not enjoy their work and they find no real pleasure in his labors, because the sinner refuses to recognize that all that they possess is from God, and it is to be used for the glory of God and for the good of their neighbor.

So, the sinner's life & labors are full of travail and trouble; they don't enjoy their life/labor/work because their possessions and riches are being gathered up and hoarded to be dispersed to others, that are good before God. The wicked are always worried about their earthly possessions when they should be concerned about their GREATEST possession; never-dying souls! Jeremiah 17:9-11, Proverbs 13:22, 28:8

We are NOT to despise our lives in this world, but if we would love this life, we must first love God, who has given us this life!

We are to enjoy our lives in this world! But we are NOT to enjoy them such ways that are sinful, ungodly, and sensual, and in ways that will draw our hearts away from God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

As for the fruit of our work and labors? We are to enjoy what God has given us in this life as gifts from Him. And we are to be CONTENT with such things as we have, knowing that God has given them to us.

If you're lost and undone; don't toil and labor and weary yourself for a portion of this world; it will never bring you satisfaction, and you can't take it with you.

**Labor NOT for perishing things, but for eternal life!**