

Can't Buy Me Love
Ecclesiastes 5:10-20
Reading: 1 Timothy 6:3-16

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She was *rich!* And *powerful...*and, no doubt, *pretty smart.*

The ruler of an ancient, African kingdom. But the stories of the wisdom & the wealth of the king of Israel were on every man's lips.

So the **Queen of Sheba** organized her retinue & loaded down her royal caravan, and traveled regally to the east?

They were *right!*

This guy was smart!

- 1 Kings 10:1 – *She came to test w/ difficult questions.* He answered them all! 1 Kings 10:3 – *Nothing was hidden from the king which he did not explain to her.*

This guy was rich!

- *Palace, feasts, servants.* And Solomon gave her *any gift* she could name.

The Queen of Sheba was overwhelmed. If she came out of Africa *skeptical*, she went back home *amazed*:

- *“It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words & your wisdom. Nevertheless, I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes had seen it. **And behold, the half was not told me.** You exceed in wisdom & **prosperity** the report which I heard.”*

Was this guy *rich*? Was this guy *smart*? *You ain't heard the half of it!*

Join me back in Eccl 5; read vv. 10-20. *You can't find fulfillment in wealth because at best you simply **enjoy** it here and **leave** it here, at worst greed consumes you and sucks the joy right out of your soul.*

The world's smartest & richest man runs the numbers on the dangers and deficiencies of riches.

1. **One wealth principle (10-12).**
2. **Two money evils (13-17).**
3. **One careful contentment conclusion (18-20).** *...pray...*

One wealth principle (10-12).

1. The Christian *bookstores & radio stations* have always been blessed with *financial counselors*; godly teachers like *Ron Blugh, Larry Burkett, & (recently) Dave Ramsey*. But surely *wise & wealthy Solomon* was one of the first *wealth management experts* on the scene! We *still* read his *stewardship advice* (Prov; Eccl); after all, **none** of those other money managers can claim to be *divinely inspired!* *Think about it...!*

2. So if you care about Christian *stewardship*, you'd better *listen* when *Solomon speaks...!* Here is his *number one wealth principle*; he puts it right up front so everything else is in reference to this: *He who loves money will not be satisfied w/ money. 2X*
 - a. Read carefully! *Solomon* doesn't say *possesses* money; money is not inherently evil. He warns the man who (lit.) *loves* its abundance. The problem is *greed*. Eccl. is all about *finding fulfillment*, and the *greedy* won't find *life's meaning* in a *Swiss bank account!*

 - b. The Hebr term your **OT** translates as *money* is lit. *silver*. How *ironic!* **1 Kg 10** records that *Solomon* was so rich he made *silver* as common as *gravel* in Jerusalem, he wouldn't even make *drinking cups* for his house out of *silver*; *not rare enough!*

 - c. The king's assessment of a *greed-driven* life is simple, sad & familiar: *vanity* (keyword in Eccl; lit = *futility*). The *love of money* is a waste of your life.

3. That's *easy* for *Solomon* to say, that guy was *loaded!* But he'd learned a few lessons, and he's willing to share them (**11**). *Money comes* and *money goes*; *silver* slips your *fingers* like *water* while you watch it. It has help! The rich man attracts all kinds of *people*: *predators, pickpockets & paparazzi*.
 - a. *Where* does it go? *Predators, competitors, thieves, taxes, time, depreciation, rust, moths, decay, toys, children!*

 - b. **V.11b** So *what* is the *advantage* to their owners *except* to look on – lit. *to see it with their eyes*. You watch your *money come*; before you can *do much with it*; you watch it *go* – the *only good* you got out of it was to *watch it!*

4. No wonder the *greedy* man is so frustrated! If you're all about *the money*, you know what that will get you? *Indigestion, insomnia & anxiety*. Not necessarily in *that order*! (**read v.12**)
- a. Not everyone is *greedy*. Not everyone is *rich*. (*Remember* – they're *not the same*! There are men & women who are *affluent & godly*.)
 - b. Solomon runs the *video* of the *blue-collar hero*. The working man who *puts* in his day, *kisses* his wife, *plays* w/ his kids, *pays* his bills, *hopes* it enough, & *sits down* to a simple meal at night. He can't even spell *escargot*, let alone bring himself to *eat one*! But when his *head* hits the *pillow*, **eight hours** away from starting it all over again, he *sleeps* like a baby!
 - c. Does his *greedy* cousin? His meal was *rich* & his stomach is *full*. But night brings *no rest*. His *full stomach & rich repast* reap only *indigestion*! His concern for the *predator* (**v.11**) robs him sleep. How can he *protect* what he's accumulated? How can he make *even more*? He *tosses & turns* – *anxiety* breeds *insomnia*...
5. Here is Solomon's *point*; his *principle of wealth*: *the greedy are never satisfied*. They're accumulation efforts are *pointless*.
- a. The Roman philosopher *Seneca* said it this way: *Money has never yet made anyone rich*.
 - b. *Paul & John & George & Ringo sang it* this way, *can't buy me love*!
 - c. But beloved, the **NT** puts a *moral* point on it, and that's eternally profitable, (**Col 3:5**): *Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to...greed, which amounts to idolatry*. Are you looking for *satisfaction in accumulation*?

God says greed is *futility & idolatry*.

Two money evils (13-17).

1. *Wealth & stewardship* were important topics to Solomon. He's already addressed them, *more than once*, in Eccl, & there will be *more to come*. For now, the king wants you to consider **two grievous greed evils**. The idea of *grievous evil* is strong language, & familiar (**1:18, 2:17, 2:23**).
2. *Grievous greed evil #1. Hoard it and loose it. Read vv.13-14.*
 - a. *Hoarding is greed on steroids. Piling* stuff up for the sake of *having* the pile.
 - b. Solomon uncovers a common *pitfall* for the hoarder. His *greed* lures him to a *bad* (risky) *investment* or *venture*, hoping to increase this pile, but the investment *goes south* & the pile goes w/ it.
 - i. Like a *gambler* on a roll who *stacks* the chips and *spins* the wheel *one time too many*. **Gone...**
 - c. Then life's responsibilities *raise their head* and you can't *meet them*. The *worst penalty* you can imagine: your *children* suffer for your *greed*.
 - d. It's not that this *always* happens to *every* rich man, but it can. And *evil #2* is *universal*...
3. *Grievous greed evil #2. Hoard it and leave it.*
 - a. Here is the unavoidable axiomatic truth that the greedy can't seem to get through their head: *you can't take it with you*. **Read vv. 15-16.**
 - b. Solomon had been reading the book of *Job* (1:21) – "*Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away, blessed by the name of the LORD.*"
 - c. Solomon's *recap* (**v.16**) reads literally: *exactly as a man comes, thus will he go*.

- d. So then, *what's the point* of all the *piling*? All you get is a *wallet full of wind*. More of the king's favorite language: *vanity, toil, wind...*
4. I believe **v.17** *subtotals* the cost of hoarding. A life of *frustration*. A life of *darkness*.
 - a. The *miser* eats in the dark. Maybe *literally* "*in the dark*" because he's *so tight* he *won't light a lamp!*
 - b. Maybe *figuratively*, because *greediness* is *sin* (i.e, greed is worshipping the *false god* of silver & stuff), & sin is spiritual *darkness*.
 - c. In **v.12** the rich man *eats* but can't *sleep*. Now he can't even enjoy his *meal*: great *vexation* (frustration), *sickness*, & *anger*. You know, of course, that *worry* makes people *sick...*
 - d. No wonder Solomon says *greed* is a *grievous evil!*

The greedy woman or man will never be satisfied w/what she has in this life, and even if she holds onto what she rakes together, she can't take it with her.

One careful contentment conclusion (18-20).

1. What is the *opposite* of *greed*? Is fair to suggest “*contentment*”? Solomon says that when comes to what you *have* (and what you *don't*), enjoy whatever God gives you. *Contentment* is the best answer ***under the sun***.
2. *Contentment* is a blessing for the *working man* (read v.18).
 - a. The idea of *enjoy oneself* is lit. to ***see good*** in all one's labors. The original text has the *faint aroma* of a command. You are *called* to see your *labor* & its *fruit* as good.
 - b. *Labor. Toil. Hard work ain't easy!* But you know, of course, that *work is not the curse*, the toil & frustration of *difficult fruitfulness* is the curse. God *blessed* Adam by giving him work, & then God *punished* Adam by making productivity frustrating.
 - c. Can you *enjoy* what you do, and what it *earns you*? That's the *blessing!* Solomon's *money management principle* has been *peppered* w/ the idea of *eating*: *simple* meals, *extravagant* feasts, dinners in the *dark*.
 - d. Now he reminds you that it's such a blessing to simply to *set yourself* to enjoy whatever God gives.
 - e. Friend, *life is short*; determined, intentional *contentment* is your best investment.

3. *Contentment* is a blessing for the *wealthy man* (**read v.19**).

- a. Here is a theological statement: *riches are a gift of God*. But as the Spirit has been saying, *wealth* comes with several big red *warning labels* on the box!
- b. What is your wealth? Is it *money*, or *position*, or *talent*, or *beauty*, or *smarts*, or *strength*? Here is the **point in v.19**; the secret is *to hold your wealth, w/o your wealth **holding you***.
- c. *To enjoy the gift, w/o forgetting the giver*. If you *have much*, use it as if you know *where it comes from*. Use your *wealth* as if you know there is *more to life*, than your *stuff in this life*.
- d. Because, again, *life is short*.

4. *Contentment* is a blessing for *every man*.

- a. Job said, “*As surely as the sparks fly up, so a man is born to trouble.*”
- b. But if you can focus on the *good hand of God* in your life, and live in *contentment & faith*, you won’t be prone to the problems that attend a *fixation on finances*, the troubles that come w/ *greed, discontent, worry, fear*.

Read v.20. *Working class hero. Wall Street warrior.* What could they have in common? The **one good God**, who grants *gladness of heart...now **that** sounds like a blessing!*

If you are looking for *meaning* or *happiness* in what you can *accumulate*, you'll get *burned*!

- * *Silver & stuff won't satisfy*. There is never enough ...
- * You could *lose it* all; you'll definitely *leave it all behind*.
- * If you are *all about accumulation*; you'll spend your *life* in *darkness*, *feasting* on your own *frustration*. Perhaps alone.

Doesn't sound *very satisfying*!

There is only one way to know you have *exactly what you need*.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:33)

There is only one *source of fulfillment*. It isn't anywhere to be found *under the sun*. Jesus lived & died to guarantee an *abundant life*.

*"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have **life**, and have it **abundantly**."* (Jn 10:10)

...pray...

Christian – *invest* in the kingdom; *invest* in the souls of men.

Unbeliever; seeker; skeptic – *invest* in your own soul! *repent, believe & believe* in Jesus