

Q&A Series: God, Wealth, Heaven & Contentment

Ecclesiastes 5; Mark 10 & 1 Timothy 6

What is Ecclesiastes 5 about?

Be Honest to God (Ecc. 5:1–7)

Be Honest to Others (Ecc. 5:8–9)

Be Honest to Yourself (Ecc. 5:10–20)

As I pondered Ecclesiastes, the 4th Wisdom book, I was deeply struck by a sermon one pastor presented on Ecclesiastes 5.10-15. Here were his points. See if they strike you like they struck me.

1. “Whoever loves money never has money enough” (v. 10). The more you have, the more you want.
2. “Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income” (v. 10). The more you have, the less you’re satisfied.
3. “As goods increase, so do those who consume them” (v.11). The more you have, the more people (including the government) will come after it.
4. “And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them?” (v. 11). The more you have, the more you realize it does you no good.
5. “The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep” (v. 12). The more you have, the more you have to worry about.
6. “I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner” (v. 13). The more you have, the more you can hurt yourself by holding on to it.
7. “Or wealth lost through some misfortune” (v.14). The more you have, the more you have to lose.
8. “Naked a man comes from his mother’s womb, and as he comes, so he departs” (v.15a). The more you have, the more you’ll leave behind.

9. "He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand" (v.15b). The more you have, the more you can send ahead to Heaven.

Lessons from Ecclesiastes 5 for Contented Living

He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss. He who spends his life moving away from his treasures has reason to despair.

He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him, death is gain. He who spends his life moving toward his treasures has reason to rejoice.

Is the passing of time causing you and me to despair or rejoice? God's kingdom was the reference point for these men. They saw all else in light of the kingdom. They were compelled to live as they did not because they treasured no things, but because they treasured the right things.

We often miss something in missionary martyr Jim Elliot's famous words, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." We focus on his willingness to go to the mission field. That willingness started when he relinquished his hold on things as MINE!

Seven Keys To Promote & Protect Contentment from I Timothy 6

1. **Always remember things are only temporary.** 1 Timothy 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
2. **Only seek necessities, wait for the rest.** 1 Timothy 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.
3. **Avoid a consuming desire for prosperity.** 1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
4. **Flee materialism.** 1 Timothy 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.
5. **Cling to eternal life.** 1 Timothy 6:12, 15, 19 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. 19

storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

6. **Pin your hopes on God.** 1 Timothy 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. (I hope we have enough to...I hope that this investment will...I hope this job will last...)
7. **Give until it hurts.** 1 Timothy 6:18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,

1. **Is saving money showing a lack of faith? No, but obey the doctrines of stewardship.**

We are to give to God sacrificially, proportionately, and systematically through life, even in our abundant poverty.

2 Cor 8;

1 cor 16;

cut your portion in seven

Beware of Over-indulgence, it leads to leanness of the soul Psalm 106

Principles on Money & Stewardship

Four questions we must ask:

- Do I really need more?
- Is God testing my faith?
- Did I misuse what He already gave me?
- Have I violated Biblical Principles?

Beware of STINGINESS: Prov 11:24 (NKJV) There is *one* who scatters, yet increases more; And there is *one* who withholds more than is right, But it *leads* to poverty.

Beware of HASTINESS: Prov 21:5 (NKJV) The plans of the diligent *lead* surely to plenty, But *those of everyone who is* hasty, surely to poverty. Phil 4:19 (NKJV) And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Beware of STUBBORNESS Prov 13:18 (NKJV) Poverty and shame *will come* to him who disdains correction, But he who regards a rebuke will be honored.

Beware of LAZINESS Prov 20:13 (NKJV) Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; Open your eyes, *and* you will be satisfied with bread. Proverbs 23:21b (NKJV) For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, **And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.**

Beware of INDULGENCE Prov 23:21a (NKJV) **For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,** And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.

Beware of FOOLISHNESS Prov 28:19 (NKJV) He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, **But he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!**

Ancient Investment Advice from the World's Richest Man

Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 (NIV) Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return. ²Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

2. What was Jesus saying to rich young ruler? Get saved

Mark 10:17-22

The Doctrine of: Mankind and Labor

1. LABOR IS GOD'S GIFT TO US Ecclesiastes 2:10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. (NKJV)
Ecclesiastes 5:18 Here is what I have seen: [It is] good and fitting [for one] to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it [is] his heritage. (NKJV)
2. LABOR MUST BE ENJOYED Ecclesiastes 2:24 Nothing [is] better for a man [than] that he should eat and drink, and [that] his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. (NKJV)
3. LABOR IS HARD Ecclesiastes 2:23 For all his days [are] sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity. (NKJV)
4. LABOR IS TEMPORAL Ecclesiastes 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing [that will come] after him. (NKJV) Ecclesiastes 1:5 The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, And hastens to the place where it arose. (NKJV) see also 3:1; 7:14
5. LABOR ALONE NEVER SATISFIES Ecclesiastes 5:10 He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also [is] vanity. (NKJV) Ecclesiastes 6:7 All the labor of man [is] for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied. (NKJV) Ecclesiastes 10:8-9 He who digs a pit will fall into it, And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent. ⁹ He who quarries

stones may be hurt by them, [And] he who splits wood may be endangered by it. (NKJV)

6. **EVEN OUR LABOR IS GUIDED BY GOD** Ecclesiastes 9:11 I returned and saw under the sun that -- The race [is] not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. (NKJV)

Chapter 9 gives us four conclusions to live by:

1. **Be contagiously, overflowingly happy by choice. Rise above circumstances by the fruit of the Spirit called joy!** Ecclesiastes 9:7 Go, eat your bread with joy, And drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works. (NKJV)
2. **Be continually free of guilt and rid of its bondage as God's children. Be aware His forgiveness and approval.** Ecclesiastes 9:8 Let your garments always be white, And let your head lack no oil. (NKJV)
3. **Be constantly committed to God as a fearer in my personal life, married life, work life and so on.** Ecclesiastes 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that [is] your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun. (NKJV)
4. **Be completely in gear throughout life by the power of the Holy Spirit live life to the max.** Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do [it] with your might; for [there is] no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (NKJV)

Self Life Is Futile, Christ Life Is Everything!

Frustration is produced by putting out gaze on self or circumstances instead of on the Lord! (Heb 12:2) When we look at self or the world around us it is depressing because both are not designed to last forever! Note in chapter 2 the personal pronoun "I" is used 36 times. This is much like Romans 7 where Paul describes the self-life struggle personally over 30 times. Then in Romans 8 life in the Holy Spirit almost erases Paul's self awareness.

The Doctrine of: Wisdom versus Folly

Ecclesiastes speaks of wisdom in a non-moral way. It is skillfulness, practicality and common sense. The advantage of wisdom is you are not foolish.

The Potential uses of Human Wisdom are:

- As a gift to God Ecclesiastes 2:26 For [God] gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who [is] good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to [him who is] good before God. This also [is] vanity and grasping for the wind. (NKJV) also 12.11
- Strengthens 2.19; preserves life 7.10-12; gives success 10.10; superior to weapons 9.13-18; superior to money 7.12; gives perception 2.14 and it is better than folly 7.4-5.
- Builds Moderation Ecclesiastes 7:16-17 Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? 17 Do not be overly wicked, Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? (NKJV) life is not to be extreme in human terms. This is not altering the God ordained mandates of righteousness. It is just in everything else we are to be regulated by moderation!
- Protects Reputation Ecclesiastes 7:1 A good name [is] better than precious ointment, And the day of death than the day of one's birth; (NKJV)
- Encourages Socialization Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two [are] better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him [who is] alone when he falls, For [he has] no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm [alone?] 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (NKJV)

- Protects one from Slandering Ecclesiastes 10:20 Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter. (NKJV)
- Encourages Fiscal Conservatism Ecclesiastes 11:2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, For you do not know what evil will be on the earth. (NKJV)

The Doctrine of: The limitations of Human Wisdom are:

1. ONLY GOD GIVES TRUE WISDOM Ecclesiastes 7:23-24 All this I have proved by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise"; But it [was] far from me. 24 As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, Who can find it out? (NKJV)
2. ONLY GOD REVEALS SPIRITUAL SECRETS Ecclesiastes 11:5 As you do not know what [is] the way of the wind, [Or] how the bones [grow] in the womb of her who is with child, So you do not know the works of God who makes everything. (NKJV)
3. ONLY GOD KNOWS THE FUTURE Ecclesiastes 10:14 A fool also multiplies words. No man knows what is to be; Who can tell him what will be after him? (NKJV)
4. ONLY GOD CAN SATISFY Ecclesiastes 6:7-8 All the labor of man [is] for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied. 8 For what more has the wise [man] than the fool? What does the poor man have, Who knows [how] to walk before the living? (NKJV)
5. ONLY GOD GRANTS ETERNAL LIFE Ecclesiastes 6:6 even if he lives a thousand years twice -- but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place? (NKJV) Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do [it] with your might; for [there is] no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (NKJV)

The Doctrine of: Reality of death and brevity of life

1. EARTHLY LIFE IS SHORT Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. (KJV) Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return. (KJV)
2. EARTHLY LIFE IS TERMINAL Ecclesiastes 5:15 As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand. (NKJV)
3. EARTHLY LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE Ecclesiastes 9:12 For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men [are] snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them. (NKJV)
4. EARTHLY LIFE SEEMS TO END LIKE THE ANIMALS Ecclesiastes 3:19 For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all [is] vanity. (NKJV)

5. EARTHLY LIFE ENDS IN DUST Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it. (NKJV) BUT DEATH DOESN'T END IT ALL!

The Doctrine of: Pleasure and Living Life

- A. PLEASURE IS GOOD
- B. PLEASURE IS A GIFT FROM GOD
- C. PLEASURE IS OKAY! Pleasure does not dispel the vanity of life. It is not the answer to life. But pleasures lived to the glory of God are worthwhile. It is okay to do things in life just because we enjoy them.

The Doctrine of: Mankind and our Creator

- 1. GOD IS THE LIFE GIVER Ecclesiastes 7:29 Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes." (NKJV)
- 2. GOD HOLDS OUR DESTINY Ecclesiastes 9:1-2 For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works [are] in the hand of God. People know neither love nor hatred [by] anything [they see] before them. 2 All things [come] alike to all: One event [happens] to the righteous and the wicked; To the good, the clean, and the unclean; To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good, so [is] the sinner; He who takes an oath as [he] who fears an oath. (NKJV)
- 3. GOD IS SUPREME Ecclesiastes 7:13 Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked? (NKJV)
- 4. GOD IS TO BE FEARED Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. 2 Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God [is] in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. (NKJV)
- 5. GOD IS JUDGE. HIS JUDGMENT IS:
 - EFFECTIVE Ecclesiastes 2:26 For [God] gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who [is] good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to [him who is] good before God. This also [is] vanity and grasping for the wind. (NKJV) Ecclesiastes 5:6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger [of God] that it [was] an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? (NKJV)

- COMPREHENSIVE Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil. (NKJV)
 - FINAL Ecclesiastes 3:14 I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does [it,] that men should fear before Him. (NKJV)
6. MANKIND IS ETERNALLY ORIENTED PLACED BY GOD IN OUR HEARTS
Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. (NKJV)
 7. MANKIND ARE EITHER GOD FEARERS OR NON-FEARERS Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil. (NKJV)
 8. NO ONE IS RIGHTEOUS ON EARTH Ecclesiastes 7:20 For [there is] not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. (KJV) 1 Kings 8:46 When they sin against You (for [there is] no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; (NKJV)
 9. GOD DESIRES RIGHTEOUSNESS OVER RELIGIOUS SACRIFICES Ecclesiastes 5:1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. (KJV) 1 Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams. (KJV)