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## **STUFF NEVER SATISFIES** (Ecclesiastes 5:1-20)

...Try as we may, the things we buy with our hard earned money will never deeply satisfy our hearts. We tend to live with the illusion, "if I only had...I would be happy." Stuff never satisfies, never! Jesus told us that "a man's life does not consist of things." Yet, we all tend to clutter up our lives...

...Solomon, writing now as an old man, gives us the wisdom of all his years as he writes this book. He has told us that God has a plan that includes all people, and all events, during all times. It is a beautiful story, one that we can only get glimpses of. Now he tells us that life is more than things. God gives us things, but they can only be enjoyed as God gives us the ability to do so.

## **TWO LESSONS INSTRUCTING US THAT ENJOYMENT OF LIFE COMES FROM GOD, NOT FROM THINGS.**

...Words from a man who had everything!!!

### **I. If You Make Stuff The Focus Of Your Life, It Will Greatly Disappoint.(1-17)**

...For God did not make you to be deeply satisfied with passing wealth and the things it can buy.

- A. For your hard earned wealth may be lost to God through a rash vow. (vv 1-7)
  - 1. This opening section is not about worship, prayers, and vows. Rather, Solomon is warning against the folly of rash vows which could cause the loss of wealth(stuff). So, he warns against uttering a hasty and ill-considered vow to the Lord. (v.2)  
...the basis of this: Deut. 23:21-23. A vow is voluntary yet binding.
  - 2. He further warns, a person's mouth can "lead them into sin." (v.6) This results in God's displeasure(v. 4) and anger. (v.6) God may "destroy" the wealth of such a one.  
...God must be "feared." (v.7)
- B. For your hard earned money may be lost to corrupt government officials. (vv.8-9) (extortion)
  - 1. These verses point to a hierarchy of corruption in government. Officials strip the worker of the fruit of his labor. All his labor was for naught. Gone! (inflation?)
  - 2. Samuel had warned Israel of the evils of kingship. (1 Sam. 8:10-18) These officials did not care about the poor, but only how to squeeze more and more revenue from people.
- C. For the fruit of your labor may consume you, keeping you from enjoying life. (vv.10-12)
  - 1. The covetous heart, the heart that loves money, will never be satisfied. (v.10)  
...for it never finds rest, because it craves for more and more stuff.  
...thus it robs him of the pleasure he could have in life. He is consumed. His only passing pleasure is to look at his stuff...but he does not really enjoys them.
  - 2. The problem is the increase of "goods" brings with it the increase of worry.(v.12)  
...now he cannot sleep at night for he worries about losing his stuff.  
...In contrast, the poor man, the laborer with little, sleeps like a baby. (v.12)
- D. For the fruit of your labor will be taken from you, whether through unforeseen things, or finally at death. If you have made stuff your focus in life, you will end up miserable.(vv.13-17)
  - 1. Solomon ends his teaching of the "meaninglessness of toil" by showing how transitory wealth and its fruits really are. (vv.13-14) "lost in a bad venture" Nothing for his son.  
...this man hoarded up his wealth and then lost it all through some misfortune. He did not enjoy his money, for which he traded his whole life, and now to have it disappear.  
...How depressing is this!
  - 2. Solomon argues further, that even if wealth is not lost, but kept through life, it will finally be striped from him. "You enter with nothing, and you take nothing with you." 16  
...this kind of life results in misery, vexation, and anger. (v.17) Disappointment!!!!

### **II. God, Alone, Gives The Gift Of Being Able To Enjoy Life & His Blessings.(18-20)**

- A. Solomon again recommends the enjoyment of life. (v.18) It is God who has given us the days of our lives, and the ability to enjoy each one of them. It is His gift to us. He "enables" us...
- B. Learn to find pleasure in your work, to accept your "lot," and be "happy in your God." This is really living! If you do, God will give you happiness of heart and you will hardly notice the passing of your days. You will not worry about the future.  
...But first, you must have a relationship with the Lord...you must be "born again."

## **LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES:**