

## **Ecclesiastes**

### **“Life Only Under The Son”**

- I.) Chp. 1:1-11 What’s empty?**
- II.) Chp. 1:12-2:26 What’s life all about?**
- III.) Chp. 3:1-4:16 Life’s not fair!**
- IV.) Chp. 5:1-6:12 No satisfaction!**
- V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!**
- VI.) Chp. 10:1-12:8 Cures for the curse!**
- VII.) Chp. 12:9-14 Now That’s wisdom!**

Ecclesiastes  
 “Life Only Under The Sun”  
 I.) Chp. 1:1-11 What’s empty?  
 Eccl. 1:1-3  
 “The search for emptiness (part 1)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-3 Wind Collector

\* What would you like we live if you could pursue everything you least desired.  
 We come now to a new book for our study, Ecclesiastes which is Greek for the Hebrew *most of us complain that our lives are full of disappointments never getting what we really want.*  
 title. The word in the title is found only seven times & only in this book where it is *of saying*  
 always rendered “Preacher”, which means “*a gather for an assembly*” or a “collector”.

But what has called this speaker to gather us to his words which he tells us that he;

*“pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs to find acceptable words so that what was written was upright; words of truth like goads & well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd?”* (12:9-11) I believe that there are several clues to answer this question to be found in his use of repeated words & phrases.

- **Vanity**: This word the author uses 38 times in this book. Now when we use this word in English we use it to describe a person who spends too much time in front of a mirror but that is not what the word means in Hebrew. The name Able comes from this word which means emptiness & is rightly defined by the author in 1:14 as “*grasping for the wind*” (nine times in Eccl).
- **Under the sun**: This phrase is used 29 times & serves to give us the **perspective** in which the author writes these 12 chapters. His concern is from the human point of view what he can gather from the natural world from the visible world. He is not concerned with heavens perspective. It is “**under the sun**” “**under heaven**” (three

times) that he applies his wisdom to understand the complexity of mankind's existence.

- **Profit**: Used ten times in this book as the author uses it to ask what *benefit, advantage or gain* does mankind get out of his life on this earth.
- **Labor**: Used 23 times & describes “*working to the point of exhaustion while experiencing no fulfillment in the labor*”. There is an old blues song that sums up the thought here, “*Work your fingers to the bone & what do you get? Bony fingers!*”
- **Wisdom**: Twenty eight times he uses this word with more than 40 references to it. In verse 13 he declares, “*I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven*”. It is clear that the author set out to understand one of the greatest questions man has ever asked, “*What is life really all about?*”
- **Evil & Man**: Eighteen times he uses “*evil*” & forty eight times he uses the word “*man*” as he describes the injustices of living on this planet. He ponders mankind's situations & continually comes back to the fact that something is wrong with the world.
- **God**: Forty times in 36 verses he uses this word but what is interesting to me is that he always uses the same Hebrew word for God, “*Elohim*”. Not one time in those 40 uses does he ever use the covenant name “*Jehovah*” which describes God as eternal & self-existent & yet gracious & willing to relate to sinful man. Instead Elohim is the word that describes God only in terms of being “*mighty, powerful the glorious creator who alone is sovereign*”. It is clear from this that the author

believes in God but does not see how this all-powerful God has any real concern with the affairs of man. Like the deists of Benjamin Franklin's time who saw God only as a watchmaker who wound up the world only to forget about it!

Recently I was watching a T.V. interview with Tommy Lee, former husband of Pamela Lee Anderson & drummer of Motley Crew, as he was asked why he had a complete Starbucks in his home, his answer, "*Because I can!*" Moments later as I switched channels I caught the price tag on former Beetle's star Paul Mc Cartney's wedding to a super model 30 years his younger which was estimated at 1 ½ million dollars. It was then that during a commercial spot advertising a Dateline special on starving people that the absurdity of the above two stars hit home. What has happened to the world in which God proudly looked over "*everything that He had made, & declared indeed it was very good?*" Clearly something has changed from "*very good to emptiness*"! That is the author's pursuit & he journals for us his quest to find the answer to the meaning of life. Reading through these 12 chapters is to realize that he did not write this as fiction, nor did he write it as time went on. Instead it was his life experience that he wrote about at the end of his life. The benefit of the study of this book is that we don't have to repeat the same mistakes as the author has & yet we too can come to the same conclusion (12:13), "*Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the duty of every person.*"

### I.) Vs. 1-3 Wind Collector

Vs. 1 Ok now it's time to unveil the author; again seven times he refers to himself in this book only by the same title of the book "*preacher*" or as I prefer "*collector*" as the word literally means a "*collector or assembler of sayings*". That does not help much does it? Here's what he does reveal about himself in this book:



- 1:1,12 Son of David & King of Jerusalem
- 1:16 Wisest of all who were before him as King
- 2:1-3 Indulged in every imaginable pleasure
- 2:4-6 Accomplished great architectural works (buildings, gardens etc.)
- 2:7-10 Unparalleled wealth
- 12:9 Pondered & wrote many proverbs

By now you have most likely solved the mystery & concluded that it was David's son by way Bathsheba, Solomon. You are no doubt familiar with his prayer at the start of his reign where in humility he prayed in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3:9, *"Give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"* To which God replied in verses 11-13 *"Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days."*

Vs. 2 Now remember what *"vanity of vanities"* means is emptiness or nothingness. Solomon's summary of all that earthly life has to offer mankind as too any lasting enjoyment is zero, a big fat goose egg! This from a man who had the **resources & opportunity** to pursue all that his heart desired. All of this earthly life Solomon says will not satisfy you ultimately. You can gather every little gadget, pursue every single

pleasure, enjoy every earthly relationship, go after every creative endeavor, follow every philosophy of life to satisfy you, says Solomon, & you will find nothing that will do so!

Now it's one thing to make a statement like this of Solomon's it's quite another to discover the truth of this over a lifetime of having both the resources & opportunities to pursue their quest. Solomon comes back at the end of his life with this summation that all of life's pursuits are, as he will say in 1:14 "*grasping for the wind*". What a vivid description that is, "*Oh got some! Then you open up your hand to observe what you've got & discover that you have nothing!*"

Have you ever found yourself saying words like, "*If I could just have more money, this promotion, better health, this relationship, the Sacramento Kings win the NBA championship, then I would be happy?*" Then when you get one of those things you soon forget your momentary pleasure, either because:

- It was not what you thought it was going to be.
- It only leaves you, like the influence of a narcotic, wanting something more to maintain the high.

Now as I studied this week about Solomon I was reminded of how I used to quote Paul's words in Philip. 4:12 (NLT) "*I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.*" I used to say "*I know how to live on almost nothing*" but sure would not mind learning how to live "*with everything*". You see no matter how much of something we seem to get we are never satisfied with just that. In other words,

**"Everything goes to nothing once nothing has gone to everything!"**

With all of Solomon's wealth, possessions, wisdom & accomplishments that he had over his life he says that they amounted to nothing! Now in light of this fact I have come with two searching questions as we start Ecclesiastes:

1. What caused Solomon to go down this road?
2. What did he find that brought life back into focus?

The first question requires us to look outside the book of Ecclesiastes to what happened over his life. Now go back to 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 3 & look at what God said right after verse 13 where he said, *"And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days."* In the 14<sup>th</sup> verse God continues & says, *"if you follow me and obey my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."* You see Solomon, it appears, was a man with a divided love, or as James puts it 1:8 a "double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." In the third chapter in verse three of 1<sup>st</sup> Kings we are told that, *"Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the instructions of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local altars."*

**Oh dear Christians do you see the danger of loving the Lord & yet still worshipping at the altars of the world?** Jeremiah the prophet put it this way when the Lord spoke to him concerning the divided love of the nation Israel, *"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water."* This divided love caused immediate compromise in Solomon's life. You see we are told in Deut 17:16-20 that when Israel choose a King it ought to be one that, *"shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you,*

*'You shall not return that way again. Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left...'* Solomon was now the third King of Israel & look at what 1<sup>st</sup> Kings says about him in 3:1 he *"made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married one of his daughters. He brought her to live in the City of David."* It is the old three-fold attack of the enemy when the believer fails to observe the word of God in their lives, **POWER, PLEASURE & PROSPERITY**. Although Solomon's wisdom, we are told in 1 Kings 4:29, *"excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt"*, it was not always applied to himself. So by the time we come to the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> kings this continual divided love has taken its toll. There we are told that, *"King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites"*. The number of women he loved blows us away even in light of the late Wilt Chamberlain's sinful standard. Verse three says that *"he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart."* The outcome of this divided love was *"that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David."* It became so corrupt that he *"went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites... built*

*a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab.*” These were the gods of the people who had dwelt in the land prior to God bringing His people into the land & the worship of these gods was practiced by sacrificing humans & other abominations. How tragic it was that Solomon *“clung to these in love”* & not to the One who so loved Him!

## *2. What did he find that brought life back into focus?*

Vs. 3 This verse answers the second of my two questions. You see it is not what he found it is rather what he didn't find in the world. You see it is only when a man considers that there is someone “over the sun” that the things “under the sun” are seen in there true light! At the end of this divided heart life style he asked, *“What profit has a man from all his labor..?”* What's left over for a man that finds no fulfillment in his life? As the famed Mick Jager of the Rolling Stones sang so many years ago, *“Can't get no satisfaction!”* Though Paul wrote to Timothy that God, *“gives us richly all things to enjoy”*, just before saying this he said, *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God.”*

You see Solomon tried everything in life apart from a obedient relationship with God & found that there was no lasting satisfaction in processions, pleasures, power or prestige. No matter what he accomplished or acquired life was empty! Solomon like so many of us saw life only under the sun instead of looking as Paul said to the Colossians in chapter 3:1-3 to *“Seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”* Jesus asked in Matt. 16:26 *“What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”* Solomon made the mistake as many of us do by placing the world above the Word & the outcome was a

disaster in his life. If life is only measured between the limits of the earth & under the sun then what is our benefit? We all spend our lives working, laboring if you will & in the end what will we have to show for it? Only one life to live only life lived for God will matter! Oh dear Christian won't you like me say the words of Solomon at after completing his quest for the meaning of life, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."*

Ecclesiastes  
*“Life Only Under The Son”*  
 I.) Chp. 1:1-11 What’s empty?  
 Eccl. 1:4-11  
 “The search for emptiness (part 2)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 4-7 Unnatural tendency

III.) Vs. 8-11 Can’t get no satisfaction

I.) Intro.

Now two weeks ago we started this book examining Solomon’s quest for the question that at one time or another we all ask ourselves, *“What is life really all about?”* Now most of us will ask that question without every really having the **resources & opportunity** to pursue all that our heart’s desire. In other words we will always be thinking of the *“greener grass on the other side of the hill!”* Our pursuit of this question will always be seeking the answer from the point of view of not having instead of having! That was not the Solomon’s perspective. He had it all wealth, wisdom, wild popularity; he was a man who could clearly say as he does in verse 9 that *“there is nothing new under the sun.”* But he was also a man who knew God but never really surrendered his heart to him. You will recall those words of the author of 1 Kings (Jeremiah) in chapter three where concerning Solomon he says, *“Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the instructions of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local altars.”* You see like many of us Christians Solomon **“loved the Lord but he was still worshipping at the altars of the world!”**

While on vacation I started reading a very convicting book by Mark Buchanan called *“Your God Is Too Safe”*. In it Mark brings to light that most of us Christians live in

what he calls “*Borderland*” that place like Solomon between “*loving the Lord & still offering sacrifices at the local altars*”. What this produces in us is a very unsatisfied Christian life. A life described best by the words of Mark Twain’s fictional character Huckleberry for his friend Tom Sawyer concerning living with the Widow Douglas & going to Church, “*I’ve tried it. & it don’t work, Tom. It ain’t for me!*” Folk’s living the Christian life like Solomon will to cause us to say (NLT), “*Everything is meaningless...utterly meaningless!*” Over the next 14 verses Solomon is going to declare three areas that he has seen are utterly meaningless:

- a. Vs. 4-7 Nothing has changed
- b. Vs. 8-11 Nothing is new
- c. Vs. 12-18 Nothing can be understood

## II.) Vs. 4-7 Unnatural tendency

In this first section Solomon sees that “nothing has changed” as he observes the transient nature of mankind with that of permanence of nature. He is going to give three examples of cycles in nature as seen in:

1. Vs. 5 Sun
2. Vs. 6 Wind
3. Vs. 7 Sea

Vs. 4 Now as we consider what Solomon is saying here it will blow your mind. We know according to Genesis 1:26 that God’s design for man in His creation was to “*have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*” Yet it appears from Solomon’s perspective that nature with its cycles has eternal dominion over man. We



jokingly speak of the unpredictability of weather by saying “*Mother nature*”. A mother gives birth to her child, she has dominion over her child’s plans & wishes. Man ought to be the one that is permanent & nature transient, mankind ought to be the one that is endless & nature ought to be that which is passing from generation to generation. But observes Solomon, it is not that way “*One generation passes away, and another generation comes.*”

Now this brings me to a side point as it deals with mankind’s transient existence we all at some time or other want to leave our “*mark*” upon the world. So we dream of being famous or wealthy so that in the proceeding generations someone will pick up a book & read our names in it as if that is really going to matter to us at the time. How “empty” is that in the scheme of things? Consider the home run record of Roger Marris once thought invincible topped by Saint Louis slugger Mark Mc Guire then again just last year again by Barry Bonds. At first I could not even remember Mark’s name! Human history marches on with wave after wave of mankind’s rise & fall. Those that were who’s who in their day will soon just be the Who of tomorrow. You see even in mankind’s so called great achievements the person who accomplished them are soon forgotten. A man was walking through a grave yard one day reading the interesting words people choose for their tombstones when he paused to read this one. “*Remember, friend, as you pass by as you are now, so once was I, as I am now, you to shall be, prepare for death & follow me.*” Underneath these words of warning was a hand written reply, “*To follow you I’m not content until I know which way you went!*”

Now, we now according to 2 Peter 3 that the earth will not abide forever yet from

Solomon's view "under the sun" the house remained but the tenants continued to change!

Solomon could well have written the Pink Floyd lyric "*All we are is another brick in the wall!*"  
 or *NANAS* "All we are is dust in the wind" *Life is a vapor!*

Vs. 5 Solomon observes the cycle of the sun rising in the east & literally "panting" it's way across the sky to the western horizon. Now of course Solomon is speaking of the earth's rotation upon its axis, which causes this effect. Back Genesis 1:4 we are told that God "*divided the light from the darkness, calling the light Day, and the darkness He called Night*" & it has been doing the same every since. Ps. 19:4-6 declares that God, "*has set a tabernacle for the sun. Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.*" Then in Ps. 104:19 we are told God "*appointed the moon for seasons; The sun knows its going down.*" Again to quote the sage "Pink Floyd" in their song called "Time" said it this way, "*You run & run to catch up with the sun, but it's sinking & racing around to come up behind you again. The sun is the same in a relative way, but you're older, shorter of breath & one day closer to death!*"

Vs. 6 From the cycle of the sun Solomon now moves to the cycle of the winds. Now today these are now by the scientific term of "*atmospheric circulation*" or by the familiar terms of jet streams or air streams, which we can observe by looking at satellite photos. Solomon even tells us in which direction the circuit runs, South to North whirling around something that was not discovered until 100's of years later. The cause of such movement is a change in barometric pressure caused by the fluctuation of heat which causes high's & lows where cold air comes in to fill the void where hot air has risen.

Here is Solomon's point, the wind is constantly moving yet it is still consistently the same day after day year after year. We hear it, see it's effects & over the centuries it has continued to do the same Man has come & gone but the constantly changing wind is changeless. Ps. 135:7 declares that God, "*releases the wind from his storehouses.*"

Vs. 7 The final cycle that Solomon speaks of is called the "*hydrologic cycle*" or water cycle which through evaporation maintains the ratio 97% of water that is in the oceans to .0001 percent which remains in our atmosphere enough for about 10 days of rain. The cooperation of the *atmospheric circulation* with that of the *hydrologic cycle* makes it possible for the water to continue to circulate but the level of the seas not to change. The sun upon the ocean cause the water to vaporize or turn into a mixture of hydrogen & oxygen which goes up to form clouds that are carried by the winds over land masses. When they begin to cool water, hail or snow falls, which runs into stream, rivers & lakes, they in turn run back into the seas, then the process starts all over.

Solomon's point is that in nature we see motion without promotion & thus nature has to it a monotony that is to his understanding that is eternal. Like some great unthinking machine that just continues on & on. Nature does not create it does not think, feel or communicate it's boring. Yet, man who according to Genesis was created in the image of God who, can think, feel & communicate does not gone on in this life. Something has gone wrong is his point! What has happened that has brought this death upon us? Well we are going to find out that was SIN!

So  
point

### III.) Vs. 8-11 Can't get no satisfaction

Vs. 8 Now if nothing ever changes then says Solomon there is nothing really new & that makes life a burden. It seems that Solomon discovered why mankind continually searches for something new, the weariness of life. The trouble with this is that because man is constantly looking for something new it causes him more labor to obtain it, this there is a never ending cycle to mans labor. The eye says, "*I wish I could see that!*" then the moment it has seen what it desired it presses to see something more. I came across this the other day:

*"The average 70 year old man has spent 24 years sleeping, 14 years working, 8 years in amusements, 6 years at the dinner table, 5 years in transportation, 4 years in communication, 3 years in education, 2 years reading & 4 years in miscellaneous pursuits. Of those miscellaneous pursuits he spent 45 minutes in Church on Sunday & 5 minutes in prayer a day. Add those up & you get a totally unimpressive 5 months he gave to God in his 70 years."*

The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing! How many hours a week do we waste in front of the "*one eyed bandit?*" Now you all know what is fueling the entertainment industry in our country, the hunger of mankind for something new, something they have not heard or seen before. Now have you ever noticed that as soon as one network comes up with something new all the others rush to do the same? We have been inundated with "*reality based?*" shows over the last two years. This is why talk radio & gossip T.V. is so popular the thirst that we have for something to get us beyond the mundane life of the routine. "*Hey, pastor why are we like this?*" Well I think old Solomon hits it on the head in chapter 3:15 when he says that God, "*has put eternity in*

*their hearts.*” Mankind has a vacuum for things eternal & those are the things that Paul says can not be fulfilled with what the eye & ear can perceive. In 1 Cor. 2: 9 Paul says, “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*” You see what Paul is saying to us? The thirst for something new will never be satisfied with anything under heaven. Man you want to have your scenes blown out love God!

— Intends if it  
when we  
consider  
things over  
human.

Vs. 9 Even with all the new advancements that science & technology is making “that which has been will be! Life is just a recalculation of applying God’s laws of nature to benefit mankind. Hey, folks we now have DVD’s & palm pockets & I still can’t get my VCR to program to tape the right shows!

Vs. 10-11 The proof of the fact that there is nothing new is to be found in two places:

- a. Vs. 10 History: Solomon says, “*Just when you think you have discovered something new, someone comes along & says you we have had that for years.*” Just take a look at fashion, the clothes that were twenty years ago are now back in. The hair cuts popular in the 20’s are again popular. The trouble is just when long hair is going to be popular again I won’t be able to grow it long.
- b. Vs. 11 Faulty memories: Why do things appear new? Well we have just forgotten what was once. The only people who think they have something new are the ones who memory or experience is so limited that what they are experiencing is for the first time or those who like seeing a movie years ago have forgotten that they has seen it.

Someone well said, "*Methods are many principals are few methods may change but principals never do!*" One ancient stoic philosopher put it this way, "*They that come after us will see nothing new, & they who came before us have seen nothing more than we have seen!*" Life apart from a relationship with Jesus is an empty pursuit because the more things change the more they stay the same.

Ecclesiastes

*“Life Only Under The Sun”*

II.) Chp. 1:12-2:26 What’s life all about?

Eccl. 1:12-2:11

“A scavenger hunt for emptiness”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 12-18 We’ve fallen & we can’t get up

III.) Vs. 1-11 Life in the fast lane

I.) Intro.

Solomon looked out upon the created world in which we live & saw that something was wrong as it related to mankind. The sun, wind & seas operated as some giant machine left in the ON position & forgotten. As such he realized that they have no soul or spirit, they can not communicate, create nor have a conscience yet they are seemingly eternal. While mankind, clearly their superior in creation, is transient, “*one generation passes away & another comes.*” Since mankind could not out last creation perhaps, Solomon thought, we could out live it, yet again he saw that nothing truly satisfied the longing of the human heart.

Now remember that these are Solomon’s observations & though he possessed the means as well as the opportunity to pursue this investigation, still his perspective was “*under the sun*”. During Solomon’s reign Israel fought no wars & the prosperity & popularity of the nation was at its zenith. So in this book we are going to read about Solomon’s 40-year quest for the answer to this question. Jeremiah who wrote about Solomon in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings records his spiritual decline but has nothing to say about his quest nor what his final outcome was. Except for an ancient Jewish historian who recorded that, “*When King Solomon was sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, his heart became*

*greatly elated with riches, and he transgressed the commandment of the Word of God; and he gathered many houses, and chariots, and riders, and he amassed much gold and silver, and he married wives from foreign nations. Whereupon the anger of the Lord was kindled against him and he drove him from the throne of his kingdom, and took away the ring from his hand, in order that he should roam and wander about in the world, to reprove it; and he went about the provincial towns and cities in the land of Israel, weeping and lamenting, and saying, "I am Coheleth (the preacher), whose name was formerly called Solomon, who was King over Israel in Jerusalem."* We can't be sure to the authenticity of that document but Ecclesiastes does agree with what happened to him. So for most of its 12 chapters we are just going to look at blackness or nothingness until the very end when we are going to see the great jewel, "that apart from an active relationship with God life has no meaning it just doesn't make sense."

## II.) Vs. 12-18 We've fallen & we can't get up

So in the rest of chapter one, after Solomon has given us the summation of his quest, "*Everything is meaningless...utterly meaningless!*" And before he gives us the details of his search, he gives us what qualified him for the job to begin with. Now notice with me as he lists two things that made him uniquely qualified to undertake this:

### 1. Vs. 12-15 Position:

- a. Vs. 12 King over Israel: Solomon had a unique perspective that no one else in the world had, he was the King of Israel. As I said during his 40-year reign he amassed the greatest wealth at a time when it did not need to be used to defend the nation. Further more because of his reputation as the wisest man in the world other nations were sending delegations to check



him out. So he had a knowledge of other cultures & places that was unsurpassed. Solomon had a monopoly on life as he alone had the resources necessary to experiment with any & everything to see “what made life worth living”. Like the kid who is winning big at the Milton Bradley game “Monopoly” Solomon could say, “*I’ll buy it!*” Physical pleasures, (*I’ll buy it!*) great costly building projects, (*I’ll buy it!*) expensive possessions, (*I’ll buy it!*)

- b. Vs. 13 Investigator: Not only could he buy it, he made sure that he researched it well enough. He uses two different words to describe his research: “Seek” which, means to get to the root of the matter & “Search” which, means to explore all sides! Notice to that his investigation was exhaustive as he applied this wisdom to “*all that is done under heaven.*”

Vs. 13b So as the man who had the means both to purchase & investigate “what made life worth living” Solomon’s summation is interesting. First based upon the words, “*this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man,*” the scope of his summation deals with the nature of man. You see the word “*man*” here is the word Adam. Solomon is saying that based upon his unique ability to pursue & investigate what makes life worth living, **something is broken something is missing!** To make sure that you & I understand what he is saying he clarifies it by saying that all of mankind’s effort in trying to find out what makes life worth living is just grasping for the wind, (verse 14). Then in verse 15 he gives us a little proverb that tells you that concerning finding out what makes life worth living, “*What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered.*” So what is Solomon saying to us? Well he is saying, “**Mankind is broken &**

what's worse yet even with the means & wisdom Solomon possessed man can't be fixed.” On our own folk's, as far as finding “what makes life worth living”, we are just hopelessly broke “bankrupt” if you will. Not only are we broke beyond the ability to repair ourselves “There is something missing that can't be found!” So we are hopelessly broke & hopelessly lost as far as mankind is concerned. Now remember that Solomon is making this observation “under the sun” he has left out a relationship with God. You see folks, when we put into the quest for “what makes life worth living”, God, then the answer comes back that He alone can fix that which is broken & find that which is lost even if from our perspective it is hopeless!

2. Vs. 16-18 Practice: Solomon did not just set about this quest for “what makes life worth living” he pursued it very moment of every day. He attained “greatness” by its pursuit, gained more wisdom than all who were before him, in fact he did understand great wisdom & knowledge. In other words it was not because of a lack of effort, no he set his heart to know wisdom, madness & folly on this matter. Yet still it was grasping for the wind! His conclusion even with all this practice & searching for the answer to “what makes life worth living” was twofold:

- a. Vs. 17b UNEXPLAINABLE: “*Grasping for the wind*”. Some things, Solomon concludes, no matter how much you try to make sense out of them just can not be explained! Apart from God he could not find any way of explaining what made life worth living.
- b. Vs. 18 UNENDING: “*he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.*” The more he applied himself to understanding “what made life worth

living” the more the lack of answers “under the sun” bummed him out. He started to think it was better for him never to have started to seek out the answer to begin with! The more he knew the more he knew he didn’t know.

### III.) Vs. 1-11 Life in the fast lane

Vs. 1-2 Mirth is a word we don’t use much any more is it? Webster’s dictionary describes it as, “*Social merriment; hilarity; high excitement of pleasurable feelings in company; noisy gayety; jollity. Mirth differs from joy and cheerfulness, as always implying noise.*”

Now we begin to see what he plugged into to find the answer to “*what made life worth living*”. So often we here people say, “I’m just not happy!” That is what Solomon begins to seek by asking, “What makes me happy?” Solomon recognized that having a good time was obvious fun & one likes to do the things that brings pleasure & this will be seen in laughter. So he answered the question as to “what makes life worth living” with, “Those things that make me laugh, things that bring a smile to my face.” “*I’ll just do those things that I enjoy all the time.*” Solomon thought that the best way to spend your life is to spend <sup>use!</sup> it making yourself happy. Now I’m not saying that God loves a miserable Christian in fact Paul tells Timothy that “*God gives us richly all we need for our enjoyment.*” But Solomon said that this was empty. <sup>apart from God!</sup>

I mean we all like to laugh don’t we but have you ever stopped to realize how many of the world’s funny people commit suicide? It seems to me that those really funny people who we have laughed with & at have been the most miserable people on the earth based upon a look at their lives. Freddy Prinze, John Belushi, Lenny Bruce the list goes on & on.

The outcome Solomon says is twofold:

1. Laughter brings "Madness!": The word "madness" comes from the root word which means to "make a show". In other words Solomon is saying that it is only fun while it lasts.
2. Mirth, "What does it accomplish?" Next Solomon says that the pursuit of pleasure does not really accomplish anything lasting.

Vs. 3-10 Solomon is gives us three areas in which is pursued that brought happiness to him.

- a. Vs. 3 **PARTY**: "*I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine*": Solomon became the party animal. In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 4:22-23 we are told what Solomon required per day for his parties in the palace. "*The daily food requirements for Solomon's palace were 150 bushels of choice flour and 300 bushels of meal, ten oxen from the fattening pens, twenty pasture--fed cattle, one hundred sheep or goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks, and choice fowl.*" It has been estimated that this menu was enough to feed 10,000 people. Man was that ever a rip-roaring party. Now while being the poster boy for the party life he did so with the aim to see what might be good for mankind. In other words it was not just senseless hedonism it was partying with a purpose! } use!  
The outcome of such a lifestyle is again found in his summation, "*What does it accomplish?*" All it ended up doing was wasting resources! Perhaps that is → use! what famed drummer Ringo Star had in mind with the lyrics, "*No thank you please it only makes me sneeze, then it makes it hard to find the door!*" Man

when I think of the wasted time & resources I spent on the party life, oh to have the time & money back now!

- b. Vs. 4-6 **PROJECTS**: Since the party life was a waste, (pardon the pun) he decided to seek pleasure in accomplishing great things, houses, vineyards, gardens & waterpools. But notice that all that he built was for himself. Four times in these verses we see Solomon referring to why he built what he did it was all for himself! It took him 14 years to build his house the pools to water his forests & stalls to keep his horses are still visible today. Solomon was first an alcoholic then he became a workaholic. Pleasure was in accomplishing projects but even that was empty.

- c. Vs. 7-10 **POSSESSIONS**: Solomon became the first "Material Guy". He gathered servants to wait on him, he had servants to wait on his servants. This of course brought him fame, (verse 9) he was a jet setting playboy that had anything he wanted! But through out this he says that he never lost sight of why he was doing this which was to see if the pursuit of happiness brought true meaning to life. In fact he says in verse 10 that for a time he found enjoyment in having everything he ever wanted & everyone at his beckon call. 30,000 workers were drafted to work on his projects but in the end they resented him for it.

Vs. 11 In the end Solomon describes three ways in which this lifestyle of pleasure as the purpose for life is only temporary:

- a. "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled;": It was temporary in that all it did was feed self & then

self had to labor again to feed its self. It was a vicious cycle, **the more he spent the more he had to make to spend & thus he was never truly satisfied.**

- b. *“indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind”*: **It was never enough!**

Seeking pleasure was fine but once he had it what he had just enjoyed was no longer enough. Simply put Solomon found that enjoyment decreased unless the pleasure increased above what it was! *use*

- c. *“There was no profit under the sun”*: It was only for a moment as it only appeals to the self. Solomon discovered you could only escape life through happiness & pleasure temporarily.

Folks’ is this journey of Solomon speaking to you? Are you finding out that you have been running after things that are temporary instead of things that are eternal? Why not make a change & do what Paul told the Colo. to do in 3:1-2 *“seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”*

Ecclesiastes  
*"Life Only Under The Sun"*  
 II.) Chp. 1:12-2:26 What's life all about?  
 Eccl. 2:12-26  
 "Hating life but afraid to die"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 12-17 Is wisdom the way in life?

III.) Vs. 18-23 What about work?

IV.) Vs. 24-26 Enjoying life in the Son

I.) Intro.

Solomon you will recall was searching for the meaning of life, "*What makes life worth living?*" was his question. Of course his pursuit was "under the sun" or if you will apart from a relationship with God. So he naturally concluded that the best place to start in answering that question was by pursuing those things that made him happy, "The purpose of life is to enjoy it!" was his conclusion. The question then was "*What makes me smile & laugh?*" (2:1-2) Well interestingly enough Solomon found that this changes in our lives, as we grow older. In other words the things that make us happy now, seen in our smiling & laughter, will not be the same in 15 to 20 years, or perhaps even 5 years from now.

Solomon lists three stages of life that mankind goes through in trying to find enjoyment or purpose in life apart from a relationship with God. Now as I said these three stages many of you came up to me after the teaching & were wondering how I knew this about you. Some of you thought that one of your friends or relatives told on you. Let me assure you that did not take place, the reason this fits most of our lives is because we humans are always trying to find something to make life worth living until we are found by Jesus.

use!

use

Perhaps you have experienced this?

Image  
• with  
• what we do  
• what we have

who were with

1. Vs. 3 **PARTY**: What we consume. Usually this stage starts around the late teens & continues to the early 30's. By then we are quite literally "burned out" on this life style. "*Party here party there*" you know, but all that happens is that your resources to live this type of lifestyle become depleted. Not to mention that you start desiring lasting relationships with people, at least ones *use* that you can remember the next day.

2. Vs. 4-6 **PROJECTS**: What we do. As you get into the late 20's & on into your early 50's you start defining your happiness by what you do, what you accomplish, or in most cases, the lack of what you have accomplished. We even have terms like, "*moving up the corporate ladder*", & women have "*biological clocks*" to describe this. Sometimes it's tied to getting more education & degrees. Almost always we use numbers to gauge our success & compare them to others. By our 40's or 50's we find that happiness based upon this is a roller coaster at best, & the only number's we see are the hands on the clocks & there is never enough hours in our days, like the above we burn out. *use!*

3. Vs. 7-10 **POSSESSIONS**: What we have. From our late 40's on we start to find happiness & joy in things that we have gathered. Men go through that, "*mid life crises*" & as they see their wives as possessions like their cars, they often trade them in on new models. Although there is momentary joy in having something new this materialism needs to be constantly fed in order for them to remain happy. So just like the party stage all this does is deplete the *Scene*



resources making it impossible to find happiness in possessions, so we again burn out.

So no matter what stage you find yourself in the end result is that as far as maintaining lasting happiness you will just end up being a burn out!

## II.) Vs. 12-17 Is wisdom the way in life?

Vs. 12 Solomon has been seeking to answer the question as to "What life is all about" "*under the sun*", or apart from a relationship with God. So as we have already reviewed his conclusion was that life was about enjoyment, "*The pursuit of happiness is what life is all about!*" Man is this ever relevant, our country was founded upon the premise that according to Thomas Jefferson's "Declaration of Independence" all citizens have the unalienable right to "*life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness*". I mean what could be wrong with that? As glorious as that ideological statement is politically it has none the less has been disastrous practically for our nation. No where in Jefferson's document did he ever address what happens when one person's pursuit of happiness interferes with another person's pursuit? - use!  
Laws & Legislation has sought to untangle this MAZE

Solomon seems to anticipate what his readers may be thinking about his conclusion of the pursuit of happiness as being "empty". They would say what we would if someone told us that what we were into just doesn't work:

- a. Vs. 12-17 Lack of wisdom: "*The reason you did not find true long lasting happiness in "parties, projects or possessions" is that you just didn't go about it the right way!*" } use
- "*If you would have just went about seeking pleasure this way you would have discovered the true meaning of life!"*

b. Vs. 18-24 Lack of work: "No, you just didn't work hard enough in the pursuit of happiness." "You gave up too soon, man if you had just spent a little more effort you would have found the meaning of life." } use

So Solomon sums up his answer to those two objections of (lack of wisdom, lack of work) in verse 12 that "*parties, projects or possessions*" will not bring about happiness.

usa ✓ a. First, to a lack of wisdom he says here, "I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly". He is simply saying, "Hey, I checked things out from every view point even ones that I disagreed with."

b. Second, to a lack of work he says, "*what can the man do who succeeds the king? Only what he has already done.*" Here is where we get our modern phrase, "Been their done that!" No one had the resources or the time to pursue this like he did, so his effort in pursuing "*parties, projects or possessions*" as the means of happiness was beyond question.

usa ✓ Vs. 13-14 Solomon starts out speaking about the principals of wisdom against that of ignorance. Wisdom he concludes has a great advantage; there is no benefit in being a fool in life. Solomon you will recall "*partied with a purpose*". He was not some burned out stoner who just got high every chance he could, no he got wasted to see if there was any meaning in life by seeking pleasure this way. Now I'm not advocating this life style because the outcome is the same as Paul warned the Thessalonians to be not as "*those who sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober.*" I think anyone who has ever tried to find the meaning of life by pursuing the party life style has either seen those who say & do foolish things are they themselves } use

have said & did foolish things. So Solomon is saying that it is always better to approach things with wisdom.

To illustrate this he gives us a little proverb: "*The wise man's eyes are in his head, But the fool walks in darkness.*" Simply put Solomon concludes that with wisdom or with out wisdom you will be using your head:

- 522!
- a. With wisdom, you will be using your head like what your eyes do for you giving you vision to see the obstacles in front of you.
  - b. Being the fool, you will also be using your head, as you will be bumping into things continually.  
↳ find obstacles

Perhaps this what is what is behind the term the school of hard knock? It never ceases to amaze me how you can watch folks walk in darkness, they just seem to bump through life making the same mistakes in using good judgement.

522!

I spoke to a gal who had married a man who cheated on her prior to marriage & to no surprise he did so during their marriage. She divorced him & with in a few months moved in with another man who did the same, she told me she is now thinking about getting back together with the first guy. No wisdom just foolishness!

Vs. 14b-15 So with their being a clear advantage to walking in wisdom there are some things that even this won't give you an advantage, Solomon says. Simply put "*wisdom does not guarantee that the outcome will turn out the way you want it too.*" There are in this life things beyond our control that even though we apply all the wisdom from every angle we can not avoid the same outcome as besets the fool! Obviously this bums

Solomon out as he says, *"As it happens to the fool, It also happens to me, And why was I then more wise?"*

Have you ever had that experience? I mean you give people wise council in a situation & all, you see the danger of a particular situation & for whatever reason you get caught up in it when the same thing happens to you. All that learning & experience & bam *"you just strike out!"* I've been in situations telling myself, *"Now Dale just calm down mellow out bro, walk away don't open your mouth now!"* *"Oh, no don't do it man \_\_\_\_\_!"* *"Why was I then more wise?"* Wisdom is great but if you don't apply it or you can't control the out come the way you wanted then what good did it do you in the end asks Solomon?

see 6

Vs. 16 He points out two more disappointing things as it relates to wisdom:

a. "There is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, Since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come." People just don't seem to learn from others mistakes do they? Instead of learning from the generations that proceed them mankind just seems to repeat the same old mistakes. I think that is why we all have big foreheads from bumping into things. History is full of this & some wise guy once said; "Those who fail to learn from their mistakes are doomed to repeat them!" I can guarantee you that the guy that said that didn't learn from his mistakes either.

b. "And how does a wise man die? As the fool!" Not only do the succeeding generations not learn from the collective mistakes of our ancestors none of them in all of the wisdom of the ages has been able to counter act that which had plagued mankind since the first man, death! The smartest man & the

dumbest man are both going to die. Nancy told me of a study done that shows that the over weight person who eats the wrong foods has a 30% greater chance of getting cancer compared to only 5% that heredity plays in this. So wisdom would say, "Hey eat right you increase your odds of life", "*but the guy that did the study was hit & killed by a overweight Hostess Twinkie truck river as he was reaching for another "Ding Dong!"*"

} use!

Vs. 17 No wonder Solomon says, "*I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me.*" That's what the atheist Voltaire told his friend, "I hate life, yet I'm afraid to die!" As Solomon applied wisdom to see if "*parties, projects or possessions*" would bring about happiness in life he says it was just empty. He used his head in this pursuit & his experience was that only a increase in displeasure as it was a case of diminished returns for all the effort he put out to have fun. Have you ever said, "I'm going to have fun even if it kills me?" That's Solomon's response "All this fun is killing me!"

} use

} use!

III.) Vs. 18-23 What about work?

Vs. 18 Now Solomon moves on to how hard he worked at having fun. It sounds as if Solomon could of wrote that old Billy Joel song, "Only the Good Die Young". He says, that he worked hard at having fun to see if "*parties, projects or possessions*" would bring about happiness in his life but he realized that he would never quite finish the work & in the end he would just leave all of it to someone else. Again we are told that, "Youth is wasted on the young", that's the idea behind Solomon's words. So here are his complaints to working hard to have "parties, projects or possessions":

↖ even notice that alot of famous musicians wrote like solomon?

4

- a. Vs. 18 You just can't keep it: It all becomes unfinished business so other come in & get to spend all your hard work. There is an old Jewish proverb that goes, "*There are no pockets in burial clothes.*" Kind of like those rented tux's that have all the pockets sewed up.
- b. Vs. 19 You can't control the outcome: You work hard at "*parties, projects or possessions*" but you ultimately have no control of the outcome. A writer in "Wall Street Journal" wrote "*Money is a universal passport to everywhere but heaven, & a universal provider of everything except happiness!*" } use!
- c. Vs. 20-21 Working for anothers benefit: Solomon realized that he could not protect his wealth that he had worked so hard to get. He was going to leave it to someone who might just waste it. Ultimately he realized that in the end all that he had done & had was going to be someone else's. The Pharaohs tried to "send it ahead" but some grave robbers just dug them & their treasure up keeping their wealth & using their bodies for fuel! } use!  
Rebetan
- d. Vs. 22-23 Tired of the tread mill: Solomon had worked so hard that instead of enjoying the fruit of his hard work at "*parties, projects or possessions*" he had joyless days & sleepless nights. Money is just a medium of exchange it's useless unless it is spent! No wonder we see more & more of those bumper stickers on retired folks motor homes that say, "*I'm spending my children's inheritance!*" } use!  
استدس

In all of Solomon's hard work to enjoy life he says it was just emptiness. So is there any reason for life? Well hanging in there as we will finish on a bit of an up note.

#### IV.) Vs. 24-26 Enjoying life in the Son

use! Vs. 24 This is the first of Solomon's six conclusions in this book & each emphasize the importance of living life as coming from God's hand. Solomon is not saying, "Eat drink & by merry for tomorrow you die!" There is a difficulty in the translation of this verse as the words, "better & than" are not in the Hebrew. The literal translation is "There is nothing good in a man who eats, and has drunk, and has seen his soul good in his labor." Simply put Solomon is saying, "That there is nothing in mankind that makes it possible to find true happiness in what he consumes, what he does or what he has!" use!

Wow, is that ever a true statement. Solomon had been trying to insert things that make him happy to find the purpose of life & it left him bummed out because he thought that there was something wrong with what he continued to put in. Instead Solomon concludes that what is wrong with mankind is not to be found in what he puts into his life to make him happy instead it's to be found in himself. The world is not broken instead mankind is!

Vs. 25-26 So how can it get fixed? Well, says Solomon, joy is found in a relationship with God! Do you see this, "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". The man who seeks to please God will find that that all-illusive joy. Paul spoke of this secret to the Philippians when he says, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The whole Bible speaks of God's desire that we would find His joy in our lives. In fact the apostle John says that he wrote his letter

do the same thing but the man who has a relationship with God has joy =)

that "that our joy may be full." Further more he says, in 5:12 "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." The fact is that those who are seeking "parties, projects or possessions" to find enjoyment in life will end up seeing what they worked to gather & collect given to him who is good before God. Consider Murrieta Hot Springs the once famous wealth resort now a Calvary Chapel conference center. Life apart from seeking God is just grasping for the wind. So why not stop missing the mark & die to your old self & live for God. Then you will really start enjoying life.

### **Communion**

25.30's  
A place  
where  
the soul  
finds  
peace  
to play.



Ecclesiastes  
 “Life Only Under The Sun”  
 III.) Chp. 3:1-4:16 Life’s not fair!  
 Eccl. 3:1-8  
 “Having the time of your life (part a)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-8 A time for everything

I.) Intro.

Most all of us that are of 40 plus years are familiar with the first eight verses of chapter three do to the words being set to music by the old rock group the Byrds. In fact I have a friend named Peter Oliva who has played here at Calvary Chapel several times who use to tour with them as their base player. If you have ever heard that song then you are going to have a disadvantage in this section of scripture. The Byrds portrayed this, in a romantic way, as cycles of human life (*kind of like the Lion King’s Circle of Life*). Instead they are best understood as the first of Solomon’s six conclusions in which he says that, “What makes life worth living is only to be found in a relationship with God.” Thirty one times in ten verses Solomon uses the word “time” & 29 of those are in the first 8 verses. We often say things in reference to this like, “*There are times & seasons!*” or “*It’s a timing thing!*” We also speak in terms of these events as being mundane & repetitive in nature. Our kids look at the events of the day & come to you saying the all too familiar phrase “*I’m bored!*” Someone once said, “Life would be no problem if it didn’t happen daily!” Solomon is going to give us the key to enjoying life no matter what the time or season is in your life. I have found that the time or season of my life that I’m going through would be no problem if I only understood the “purpose” or reason for it. So in verses 9-15 Solomon is going to give us God’s reason for it as well as man’s reason for it.

— answered  
 Q: I what  
 he enjoyed  
 or loved it.  
 Happiness  
 isn't from  
 God.

— next  
 week!

## II.) Vs. 1-8 A time for everything

Vs. 1 This verse serves as a summation of what Solomon is going to have to say to us. He covers the two points that he wishes to make in light of finding the meaning of life, "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven." This is not merely a description of the events of life it is a description of why God sends them.

In these eight verses Solomon will take fourteen contrasts of life & affirm that no matter which season or time you may find yourself in God will make "everything beautiful in its time." (verse 11) Further more you will discover that these sets of contrasts fall into three divisions which I see fitting into the make up of humanity:

- **Body:** First four pairs in verses 2-3. contrasts the things that directly relate to our physical life.
- **Soul:** The second four pairs in verses 4-5 deal with those things that deal with our soul life, or if you what we think & feel in regards with our relationships with others.
- **Spirit:** The last six pairs in verses 6-8 deal our values & standards, which come from our spiritual nature.

Vs. 2-3 **Body:** So here we see what God wants us to know about our lives physically:

- a. **PERIMETERS:** "*A time to be born, And a time to die*": Our life has a definite beginning & a definite end, even if you are Ted Williams. Solomon is saying that none of us has control over our existence, it is something in our life that has happened apart from our input. Yet with that said our birth & our death are not human accidents they are divine appointments that no matter who we are we will have to keep. We often jokingly say, "*That so & so will be late for their own funeral.*" Folk's that is not the case for God is in control.

Oh, some may foolishly hasten their death but the truth is that when it is our time to go we will not be able to prevent it. The Psalmist says in 139:16 (NLT) "Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed." In the hands of God there is a great comfort in knowing that there are set boundaries as to our physical life, we had no worries about our birth wondering what day our time we would be born. So since our lives are hidden in Christ then we have nothing to fear from this boundary either. → use!

- b. **PROVISION**: "A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted": The Jews were an agrarian society & they need to learn how to work with in the frame of how God put the seasons. So much of our lives are wasted as we work against how God desires to provide for us. For instance He works through unmerited favor (*grace*). Well we struggle with this as we like to earn our provision by works. God is the one that controls the way in which He provides for us & we need to "go with the flow" other wise we will find ourselves trying to plant or harvest in a time which is not right. The labor, which He has given us, will always be fruitful when we are close enough to Him to know what season it is! The key to this is not watching the season to "plant or to pluck" but rather to keep you heart close to Him who controls the time. — use!

- c. **PROTECTION**: "A time to kill, And a time to heal": This most likely does not refer to war or self-defense as it does to death by way of sickness & plague. It takes seven years for our bodies to go through this process by which — good point

every cell dies & the older you become the more they stop being regenerated.

The human body is a miracle as each cell passes its information on the new cell before it dies. So we are in a constant state of God allowing parts of us to die while protection & regenerating other parts of us. Now I'm willing to bet that you just don't think about that much do you? You tend to see God watching over you only in terms of not being at the wrong place & time but that's <sup>not</sup> the case. We ought to be thankful not only at the times of healing in our lives but also at the times that death happens too. You see if those cells did not die new growth could not take place.

- d. **PERFECTING**: "A time to break down, And a time to build up": The word "break down" is a word that means to "breakout, disperse or grow" & the word "build up" means "obtain children, or repair". Do you see what Solomon is saying here in this contrast? He is describing that time in our lives where we break away from our parents & then there is a time when often become parent's ourselves. What I notice in the Hebrew definitions of these two words is that "breaking down or away" is associated with **growth** & that "building up" is associated with **repairing**. So in our lives we start out breaking away on our own & it's then that we really start to grow as adults. But it is not long after that as we start our families or are on our own that we go back & repair what we broke down when we left! Now in Christ there is a natural order to these events, we call maturity & they don't have to be as awful as they some times are. God allows us the freedom to make choices but with that freedom comes personal responsibility.

Vs. 4-5 **Soul**: So here we see what God wants us to know about our lives in the realm of what we think & feel & how that will effect how we relate to others.

a. **STABILITY**: "*A time to weep, And a time to laugh*": The word here for "weep" is a very general one the root of which means to weep but the cause is undetermined. Perhaps we would be best to explain this as just general heartache. The word "*laugh*" is again a general word which root means to laugh but would best be understood by saying lighthearted. Solomon is saying that emotionally no one is going to escape times in their lives where they have heartache nor times when they are lighthearted. However in these emotional pendulums the Lord will be there for us. The Psalmist asks the question in Ps. 139:7-8 "*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.*"

b. **STILLNESS**: "*A time to mourn, And a time to dance*": Here the picture is very relational. There will be times in our lives when our human relationships will cause us great grief as well as times when we will perform the Snoopy dance of joy. All of us remember the teenage years as times when this could happen 20 seconds apart, but when Jesus is the love of your life, when it is He who give your life meaning & purpose you will find stillness for your souls emotionally.

c. **STANDPOINT**: "*A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones*": Israel is a land full of stones now these were either useless or useful depending on what you were doing. They were a burden when you were

trying to plant a field but a great blessing as you were building the house or the fence around the field. The picture is kind of like the saying, "When life turns out to be a lemon make lemonade!" In other words Solomon is saying

→ use

that those stones that seem to be in your way emotional at times are the very things God will use to build you a secure place to live. You see it's all a matter of your standpoint or perspective. There will be times in our lives where emotionally we are just dog tired of chucking stones out of our way, then later we will find that those same stones that we were so frustrated at we <sup>won't</sup> ~~won't~~ back in our homes. We didn't want them in our fields but we want them in our homes.

fast use

→ use

- d. **SUPPORT:** "*A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing*": Just like the above this contrast deal with our emotional relationships with others. The Jewish people are a very demonstrative people who show their greetings by embracing & kissing each other. Perhaps we would say it this way today, "*There is a time to say hello & a time to say goodbye!*" There will a consistency of this in our relationships with each other. Over the 14 years here at Calvary Chapel we have gone through this a lot of times as you have as well. Pastor Chuck call this, "*refrain from embracing*" the law of blessed subtraction. Here is his point Jesus will never leave you or forsake you no matter what emotional turmoil you go through even if it's your fault.

~ I'm chris  
I've found  
that I learned  
a lesson it  
was more than  
those that  
I RePrised  
from embracing

Vs. 6-8 **Spirit:** In these last six we see what God wants us to know about our lives in the realm of our spiritual lives the inner decisions, commitment to Him & our values.

- a. **TRUTH:** *"A time to gain, And a time to lose"*: The word "get" is a word in the Hebrew that means "to search out by worship & prayer". The word "lose" specifically relates to the idea of "losing oneself". Perhaps the modern way of putting this is "*That there is a time to search & a time to give it up for lost.*" } *see!*
- On the spiritual realm Solomon is saying that there are times in our lives where it's time to seek the Lord to find out what is truth & follow it. But there is also a time in our lives to quit playing with your relationship & get serious. Deut. 4:29 says that if "*you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*"
- b. **WAY:** *"A time to keep, And a time to throw away"*: The word "keep" is a word that means to guard or protect. These are the values & standards that we must not waver from. It is these Biblical standards that keep us on the right path. But says Solomon there is a time to clean house, have garage sale of all the wrong way you have been living & throw them away. } *see!*
- c. **LIFE:** *"A time to tear, And a time to sew"*: What a descriptive word tear & sew are. It is never a pleasant thing to rip out wrong attitudes & actions in our lives it often takes a lifetime. Then the Lord begins to sew His robes of righteousness upon us. Most of the time we feel like a "patchwork quilt" I love the fact in my life that He has never torn away a bad attitude or action without sewing on a piece of Himself! } *see!*
- d. **WORD:** *"A time to keep silence, And a time to speak"*: Look at the order here, learning how to keep ones mouth shut is a much more difficult task then learning how to speak. The Lord would have us to know that He gave us two

ears & only one mouth for a reason. We Christians need to learn to speak only that which is edifying to others. Jesus wasted not words, He spoke those things which led folks to the knowledge of Him.

- e. **LOVE**: *“A time to love, And a time to hate”*: There are things that we ought to love & things that we ought to hate in our spiritual lives. We ought to love the things that He loves & hate the things that He hates. Specifically we ought to hate the things that He hates in our own lives!
- f. **REST**: *“A time of war, And a time of peace”*: Perhaps we could say that we *“Need to learn to pick our battles!”* We ought to never make peace with our flesh that is a spiritual fight that we will maintain until we are given our glorified bodies. But in so fighting this battle we are to rest in His strength during the fight as this is the only way to win!

Now we are going to close now with this section as we have looked at the times & seasons of life & what God would have you know about them. And what is it that He would want you to know? That He will make “everything beautiful in its time.” In your physical life He wants us to see that He alone holds:

- **PERIMETERS** of our lives.
- **PROVISION** for our lives.
- **PROTECTION** for our lives.
- **PERFECTING** for our lives.

In the realm of what we think & feel & how that will effect how we relate to others, He wants us to know that:

- **STABILITY** for our lives.



- **STILLNESS** for our lives.
- **STANDPOINT** for our lives.
- **SUPPORT** for our lives.

Finally, in the realm of our spiritual lives (the inner decisions, commitment to Him & our values), we see that what God wants us to know that He alone is the:

- **TRUTH** for our lives.
- **WAY** for our lives.
- **LIFE** for us.
- **WORD** for our lives.
- **LOVE** for our lives.
- **REST** for our lives.

Ecclesiastes  
*“Life Only Under The Son”*  
 III.) Chp. 3:1-4:16 Life’s not fair!  
 Eccl. 3:9-15  
 “Having the time of your life (part a)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 9-15 A purpose for everything

I.) Intro.

Solomon, you will recall, had asked the question in 1:3; *“What makes life worth living?”*

Then he came up with what I suppose most people if they really thought about it would,

*“Those things that I enjoy are what makes life worth living!”* So in the second chapter he

*JS* outlines three things in his life that brought enjoyment or happiness. While examining them I found that they fit three chronological stages in our lives:

- The PARTY stage
- The PROJECT stage
- The POSSESSION stage

The conclusion though for Solomon in the later part of chapter two, as well as those of us

who have *“been there done that”*, is that none of those things bring lasting enjoyment. In

the final examination none of those three stages of life brought enjoyment instead they

just brought us emptiness! However Solomon, as well as many of us have, discovered

that JOY or FULFILLMENT in life *is only to be found in a relationship with God.*”

(2:24-26)

Then in the first eight verses of chapter three Solomon lists for us 14 sets of contrasting *“times”* in our lives & how a relationship with God brings us joy no matter what time of life you find yourself in. He will further confirm this in verse 11 as he says

God will make "everything beautiful in its time". Now I grouped these 14 contrasts into three groups that relate to the make up of mankind, (*body, soul & spirit*). So Solomon testifies that having a relationship with God in your life would bring you fulfillment in every part of our make up:

- In your physical life: PERIMETERS, PROVISION, PROTECTION & PERFECTING for our lives.
- In our emotional life: STABILITY, STILLNESS, STANDPOINT, (perspective) & SUPPORT for our lives.
- In our spiritual life: THE TRUTH, THE WAY, THE LIFE, THE WORD, HIS LOVE, & HIS REST for our lives.

Now this week Solomon goes further to offer us the "purpose" or reason for these seasons or times in our lives.

Our most frustrating time in our Christian lives comes when we just don't understand the purpose as to the time in our lives. I find that I can go through anything when I see the purpose behind it. But what's the problem with this? Well most of the time we don't see the purpose for what we're going through until after we have gone through it if at all! What if we could have the purpose ahead of time? **It would not necessarily lessen the struggle & heartache we would go through but it would give us a perspective that would calm our hearts as we went through it.** That is just what I see in these next seven verses.

- Vs. 10-11 First Solomon gives us the purpose of life from God's perspective.

In other words you will always see God about doing these three things in this sin cursed world.

- Vs. 12-15 Solomon then turns to what our purpose ought to be in light of this. So I again see three things that we can do because of the first three.

## II.) Vs. 9-15 A purpose for everything

Vs. 9 You will notice that Solomon repeats his question which he first asked in 1:3, "What profit.." The word means, "gain or lasting enjoyment". It appears six times in Ecclesiastes & this is the third time we have seen it already. You see Solomon is anticipating what many of us have said when we are busy doing things, "Is all this work really worth it in the end?" You see it's great seeing God in the "times" of your life but it does not help in knowing the purpose of why your going through it to begin with, hence Solomon's & our frustration. - god's pot, ut use!

I hope you are getting this all as Solomon has grasped our great dilemma by the horns & is wrestling with it for us. Let me see if I can state it another way, "Yes, God has a time for everything & Yes He is even there with us during those times but I still don't

like the TIME!" The 70's rock group "Chicago" made this same point in a song as they sang, "does any body really know what time it is; does any body really care, no more time!" Solomon is still trying to find profit, "gain or lasting enjoyment" & says that even though God is there in the times of his life once you lose that moment where you see Him your right back into a hole of despair. I don't know about you all, but I can relate to this.

"God may well in deed have a wonderful plan for my life, but lets be honest at times It's just not my plan!" So here is where we battle God is it not? We foolishly think that, "If I could just have my way in this "time" of my life then I would have lasting enjoyment!" So we go off & do this or that, purchase that thing, or date & perhaps marry this person. Looking back at those times now did you achieve lasting enjoyment? No?

see point

You mean having it "your way" did not bring you everything you thought it would? Here is what bums me out concerning myself, you think that after a few experiences having it my way I would learn my lesson, but NOOOOO!

Vs. 10 It is right on the heels of Solomon's confession of still not liking the time that he says, "God holds the secrets for the purpose of everything we are going through!" In Deut. 29:29 Moses said, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." .” Moses said, "Hey, don't worry about what you don't know just follow what God's word has to say!" Then the prophet Daniel said that God, "reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him." Daniel steps forward & say's that, "God will let you in on the hidden things in life!" The experiences that we have in the "times" of our lives are not some accident they are instead part of God's design & plan for our lives & further more they are His gift to us. Simply put what appears to be negative, a curse & an obstacle in our lives is instead, positive, a blessing & a stepping stone. Do you realize that God designs every event or "time" of your life especially for you? Not helping? Will I think verse 11 will give you God's perfect plan for your life. What we are going to see based upon Solomon's words is that every "time" of your life fits into one or all three of His purposes for you! Though these are general I think if you note them when you are struggling with the "time" of your life & it not being your plan you can pull these out & remind yourself just what His plans for this time are. At very least what your going through won't be uncertain or a mystery!

in this phrase!

use

use

*christian*  
↓

Vs. 11 I came across this poem many years ago & the author unlocks the same truths that Solomon does in verse 11 only in a slightly different order. So I'm going to read the poem & use the author's conclusions as it helps put in modern words Solomon's three points.

### Dye Struck Daffodils

Dye struck daffodils,  
among fence post by the lane.  
Patterns in the portrait,  
hidden by the hue.  
And the presence of your Spirit,  
in the children of your name.  
Are the reflections of Your character that is too;

**Beautify the common,**  
**Make plain the hidden,**  
**And to save the unworthy!**

1. Vs. 11a **Beautify the common:** *"He has made everything beautiful in its time."* Just like those old fence posts placed out by the street go unnoticed weathering year after year God places His flowers by them to make them beautiful. Not getting it? Folk's we are the common, we are the fence posts by the lane of life & God's whole purpose as it concerns us & the "times" of our lives is to make us more beautiful! Now you can give yourself the answer when you question what purpose is this "time" in your life. Look at Solomon's words carefully "He has made everything beautiful". Those two words "has" & "everything" takes my breath away. The word "has" tells me that as far as God is concerned it has already happened, it's past tense. So? Well in other words the "time" in our life that we can't see the purpose for is already going to be a blessing to us, the out come is predetermined it's going to be a beautiful thing! Second, the word "everything", not something's or most

things, but everything is going to be made beautiful. What this say's is that

uel } the outcome (being made beautiful) is not conditioned upon the "time" or experience that we are going through. The only issue, & the one that often troubles us are to be found in the words "*in its time*". James put it this way in his letter, "*count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*" I spent some years as a rock hound & there is a wise old saying that goes like this, "Some rocks just take a longer to time to polish & make beautiful." } use

2. Vs. 11b Save the unworthy: "*Also He has put eternity in their hearts.*" This is where the poem is out of order but it's still the same truth. Mankind has an itch that only a relationship with God will scratch. We are the only creation of God that has the capacity to worship. C.S. Lewis wrote, "God has provided many wonderful resorts for us along our life's journey but He makes sure that we won't mistake any of them as our home!" The "*times*" of our lives are always going to get us to realize that only in eternity will our hearts find lasting joy. So often will be trying to seek purpose & meaning in our lives apart from a relationship with Him & then we will go through a difficult time where we realize that we have attached our joy to temporal things or achievements instead of eternal things. In a nut shell it is God who has so shaped our hearts that contentment can only be found in a relationship with.
3. Vs. 11c Make plain the hidden: "*except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*" We all live in a world where we will





1. Vs. 12 **Enjoy everything God has given you:** *"I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives."* Paul wrote to the Philippians *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"* Perhaps we could use the term *"Go for it in God!"* The fact that you know this time has a God given purpose ought to cause us to do what Paul encouraged the Ephesians to do. In 5:19-20 he says, *"be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* My phrase is *"It's not where you're going that's important it's Who you're going with!"* ~~It~~ <sup>Who</sup> wants you have discovered that you're going with Him then you can rejoice & do good.
2. Vs. 13 **Live in the grace of God:** *"every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor; it is the gift of God."* Notice that Solomon says that the best of what we can do here is to *"enjoy the good of all his labor"*. You see Solomon has tried to produce things that he could enjoy & found that they were empty. The words *eat and drink and enjoy* re very descriptive as they describe a glorious banquet in which one gorges himself. Simply put Solomon is saying that ~~there~~ <sup>life is</sup> a party in a relationship with God so enjoy! Again the purpose of the time in your life is not a mystery or an accident so enjoy the grace He has given you. In Rom. Paul says that we ought to *"walk in newness of life."*
3. Vs. 14-15 **Trust only in Him:** Why is this true? Well look at Solomon's

Def points:

— Springs  
in your  
step

a. Vs. 14 What God starts He will finish & it can not be changed: Perhaps we would say it this way “*He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*” Remember what I said earlier that God is going to make “*everything beautiful in its time.*” Perhaps we ought to quit looking at our watches & through out our Palm Pockets when it comes to His work in our lives. The fact is we can not speed up His work in us but we can sure slow it down. You can’t add to it & nothing can be taken from it so we can just worship Him & not worry about it!

b. Vs. 15 We will be judged on our response to His work in eternity: I think this is one of the most interesting verses in scripture as it appears to say that everything has already transpired & that we are right not watching how we are doing. Think about it! Perhaps Solomon is saying that if you don’t learn the lesson the first time you are just going to have to go through it again. One of the translations reads “God brings back what has already passed away.” The only right response I can have in my life to His purpose is to trust & obey.

So there you have the purpose for the times of our lives & our responses:

- He Beautify the common So we can Enjoy everything God has given you
- He Save the unworthy So we can Live in the grace of God
- He Make plain the hidden So we can Trust only in Him

Ecclesiastes  
*“Life Only Under The Son”*  
 III.) Chp. 3:1-4:16 Life’s not fair!  
 Eccl. 3:16-4:3  
 “Is this Your plan? (part a)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 16-22 Law & order

III.) Vs. 1-3 Unequal opportunities

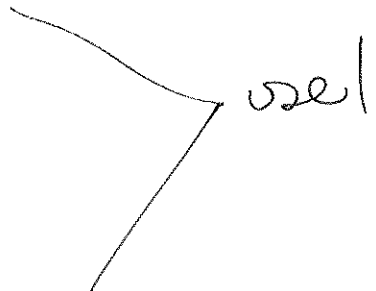
I.) Intro.

Last week Solomon dealt with the purpose or plan for the times of our lives & what our responses ought to be.

- Beautify the common So we can Enjoy everything God has given you
- Save the unworthy So we can Live in the grace of God
- Make plain the hidden So we can Trust only in Him

Now to me, (*& to many of you base upon your comments about last weeks teaching*), knowing generally God’s plan for my life does help enjoy life in God, live in His abundant grace while I trust only in Him. Solomon now turns to four things that seem to interfere with God “*beautifying the common, saving the unworthy & making plain the hidden.*” I’m going to give you all four now even though we shall only look at two of them today:

1. 3:16-22 INJUSTICE
2. 4:1-3 OPPRESSION
3. 4:6-12 AMBITION
4. 4:13-16 IGNORANCE



Right at the offset you will notice that none of these four things has to do with God instead they have to do with man. Solomon is not saying that God is unjust, oppressive, ambitious or ignorant in executing His plan, instead he is saying that it seems at times our behavior towards each other derails God's plan. Perhaps we have heard it put to us this way, "How can God be in control when there is so much evil & wickedness prospering at the expense of the innocent & oppressed?" Simply put its not the abstract circumstances that cause us to doubt God's plan's in our lives as much as the interference we have in those plans from our fellow man! Do you know what I mean? When the events of your life are being altered because some person is doing that which is unjust or their act is oppressing you. This is what Solomon takes up over the next chapter & a half.

## II.) Vs. 16-22 Law & order

Vs. 16 Even though Solomon finished verse 15 by saying "God requires an account of what is past", he wonders "Why God takes so long in righting the wrongs done to us especially when they seem to disrupt His plan?" Now look at those words, "Moreover I saw under the sun", & what does that tell you? Well it reminds you that Solomon's perspective is apart from a relationship with God.

Next Solomon states his case against the injustice aiming at the judicial system, which is in place to make sure that, the one with no voice has a voice. Someone has well defined politics as, "The conduct of public life for private advantage"; we could often say the same thing about our court system. The one with the highest priced lawyers wins his case, so justice becomes for sale & the courtroom is for the privileged. Solomon makes a play on words as he says literally, "Instead of right I got wronged, instead equity I got iniquity!"

What makes matters worse was this was a system of law that was ordered by God to ensure right & equity in human affairs, to protect the weak from those who would rip them off. "If the "pin" that was in place to protect the sheep from the wolves is now guarded by the wolves where shall the sheep live?" } -ose!

Vs. 17 Notice how Solomon starts this, "I said in my heart!" He says that he really put some thought into this dilemma, "Are we to just accept these things as from the hand of God?" This kind of injustice really sticks in our craw doesn't it? So Solomon reminds himself & us of three things concerning justice. <sup>or the lack of it!</sup>

1

a. Vs. 17 THE GAME AIN'T OVER: The question is, "Why does God allow injustice?" Solomon includes two important things about injustice:

1. Ultimately His justice will prevail. "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked". Injustice is limited in its scope but God's justice is not! The hidden motives of folks will come out & that which is spoken in secret will be shouted from the housetops. Not to worry "there shall be a time for every purpose".
2. God uses injustice for our benefit. "there is a time ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> for every purpose and for every work." This is the second time this chapter we read, "there is a time there for every purpose" but this time Solomon adds the words, "and for every work." The word "work" means activity or action. So here is what Solomon is saying, God is working His purposes of Beautify the common, saving the unworthy, & making plain the hidden even through the deeds of unjust men. You doubt it? Consider how God used Satan's rebellion & pride for our

redemption! God allows injustice for our benefit at times, so far from it not being apart of His plan it can often be part of it.

2.

- b. Vs. 18 **YOU'RE NOT ANY BETTER**: God uses the injustice we face to reveal our true hearts, says Solomon. The word "test" is to sift wheat, which is where you separate the chaff from the wheat. You see God allows injustice in our lives to show us what we often look like ourselves when we behave towards others unjustly. Four times in scripture we read that, "There is none righteous, no, not one", so when we go through injustice we see our own behavior in a different light. Is it not amazing that our sin always looks worse on someone else? Solomon now compares the unjust man with that of beasts. In other words injustice will bring out an animalistic quality in mankind. So he considers the plight of the animal & the man who behaves unjustly:

1. Vs. 19a **YOU'RE A RAT**: If you act like an animal then an animal

you  
act  
like  
a  
rat

- you will become: Now this speaks to me about evolution. Sociology & psychology use the study of animals to determine mankind's behavior. Often they choose a rat to relate to us. You know what, when mankind seeks to relate & identify himself with the creation instead of the creator he begins to act like it.

2. Vs. 19b **ROAD KILL**: Solomon observes that the animals die dumb

or  
learn  
from  
their  
injustice

- not able to improve their lot, so too the person who continues treating his fellow man unjustly. One day they will be crossing the road behaving like they always have & bam, road kill!

3. Vs. 20 **WORM FOOD**: Finally Solomon observes that the person who dies having lived a life treating his fellow man unjustly becomes "worm food". In other words he lived like an animal so he died like an animal. *use!*
4. Vs. 21 **ALL DOGS DON'T GO TO HEAVEN**: This is really more of a statement than a question. From a human standpoint a dead dog & a dead person look like the same thing has happened to them. But to man there awaits judgement for his injustice, his spirit will appear before the throne of God & answer for the way he treated his fellow man. *just use!*

**3.** c. Vs. 22 **YOU WANT JUSTICE OR MERCY?**: This is Solomon's final point concerning injustice, do you want justice or mercy? Jesus said this in Matt. 7:2 "*For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*" He say's, "Hey, circumstances in life, injustice done to us will bring us pain & heartache but joy in the midst of it is still a choice." It always amazes me, concerning myself, how **I want others to receive justice for behavior that I plead mercy for!**

The prophet Micah said it this way, "*He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*" Treat your fellow man as you would want to be treated, plead mercy & not justice & live a life of humility recognizing that you deserve justice but have received mercy! *use!*

### III.) Vs. 1-3 Unequal opportunities

Vs. 1 Now Solomon turns to the second of the four things that seem to interfere with God's purpose, oppression. Webster's defines the word as the "*The act of oppressing the imposition of unreasonable burdens or services with cruelty & severity.*" Here was Solomon the wisest & most powerful leader of the world at a time of peace & he could not stop people from oppressing others. He observes the plight of the oppressed & sees two things that drive him crazy.

- a. No Hope: "*Look the tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter*":

Twice we are told that those "under the sun" who have burdens & services placed upon them with cruelty & severity have no comforter. The only thing from Solomon's perspective produced by this oppression is tears & even those don't benefit them. Oppression always preys upon the helpless, weak & sick of society. There is something about fallen humanity that seems to always take the side of power & strength against that of weakness. So, the steady stream of tears does nothing to call someone to comfort or help them. We again begin to mimic the animal kingdom of "*survival of the fittest!*"

- b. Public is on wrong side: "*On the side of their oppressors there is power, But they have no comforter*": There are always more oppressed than those who have the power to oppress, but the public is just glad it's not them that is getting a bad deal. Might is right is the banner of the oppressor & to the one being oppressed no one cares until it happens to them.

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Herods  
main's Injustice  
to deal with  
oppressors



Vs. 2-3 This is such a grievous thing that Solomon concludes that two things concerning those who are being oppressed:

- a. Vs. 2 Better to be dead than alive facing *unreasonable burdens or services with cruelty & severity* daily without hope or comfort.
- b. Vs. 3 Better still is the person who never was born who never saw how twisted mankind has become in its behavior towards the weak & helpless.

How horrible is it that those that have the power to help are most often those that are doing the oppressing?

*super how  
good!*

You can see how “under the sun” apart from a relationship with Jesus INJUSTICE & OPPRESSION seem to be able to derail God purpose for us. But the truth is, Christian we have One who is greater than the mightiest man. We have one in whom conqurred even death & He is our Comforter, He will execute His justice on our behalf. So we need not “sorrow as others who have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13b). Dear saints of God hear the words

of Psalm 56:8-11 for you; “You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, Then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God is for me. In God (I will praise His word), In the LORD (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

*see!*

Ecclesiastes  
 “Life Only Under The Son”  
 III.) Chp. 3:1-4:16 Life’s not fair!  
 Eccl. 4:4-16  
 “Is this Your plan? (part b)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 4-12 Winning the rat race

III.) Vs. 13-16 The stupidity of popularity

I.) Intro.

We started out last week looking at two of the four things that seem to interfere with God’s plan for our lives which generally will always be seen in His:

- *beautifying the common*
- *saving the unworthy*
- *making plain the hidden*

Injustice & oppression seem to mess God’s work in our lives don’t they? What I

discovered in my own life is that though I often am concerned out others injustice’s or  
oppression towards me & its effects in messing up God’s plans for me it’s my injustice &  
oppression of others is what will keep me from God’s plans. In other words we have  
 much more to fear from ourselves then we ever do from others. This week we look at the

last two human activities that can seem to get in way of God’s plans for us.

- AMBITION 4:4-12
- IGNORANCE 4:13-16 *popularity*

It is as if Solomon went to our work place & examined the types of people that worked there & how their behavior appears to effect God’s plans for us. Now we are going to see

Solomon categorize four different types of workers with their strengths & weaknesses.

The purpose is twofold:

1. So that we can see that these kinds of people in our lives can still not thwart what God has planned for us.
2. So that we will see what the outcome of living like one of these four types is like.

The four types are:

- The ambitious person
- The lazy person
- The balanced person
- The popular person

Now it is not uncommon that a person may go through these different characteristics all in the course of their lives kind of like what we saw with the progression of a person who is trying to find enjoyment in life apart from God goes from parties, to programs, then finally to possessions.

## II.) Vs. 4-12 Winning the rat race

Vs. 4 Though Solomon does not say it most often we will experience injustices & oppression at the work place don't we? These actions usually occur to us or we do them to other in the course of our jobs. So we come home from work frazzled not because of the "work" but rather because of the people we had to deal with while we were at work. Remember Solomon's conclusion in 3:13 "every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor; it is the gift of God." The truth is that it is very hard to "enjoy the good of our labor" let alone see it as "God's gift" when we those we work with hassle us,

context vs 4  
work place

though  
5. Injustice  
• Oppression  
which come about from  
the three of the four.

“How can this experience be part of God’s plan?” Well Solomon is going to pull us back from our experience so that we can see the whole picture not just what we are immediately going through. See here are the first three of the four types, the last we shall look at in verses 13-16:

1. **Vs. 4 Ambitious person**: The world says that this is the guy to be. He or she is the person you want to follow up the ladder to success. In fact the world says that following this person will bring **contentment**. Look at what positive qualities Solomon says about them:

a. **HANDS**: “*for all toil*”. The idea behind the word “toil” is “**wearisome work**”.

Simply put this person is a **hard worker** their hands are always busy at work, if there is a task that needs to get done or over time to be had they’re doing it. Now notice that Solomon has nothing negative to say about being hardworking.

Solomon had this to say about the hard worker in Prov. 22:29 “*Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.*”

b. **HEAD**: “*every skillful work*”. We often say of this person, “*They have a head for business!*” (Or what ever) What is meant is that they have not only worked hard while at work they worked hard so they would be good at what they do. They went to school, apprenticed, or learned their craft well because now they are successful at what they do. We have all worked with folks who work hard but are not necessarily skilled or talented at what they do. This is not the case for the “ambitious person” their heads & hands are on the same path, success.

c. HEART: "envied by his neighbor." It is not apparent what is the cause for this jealousy. The commentators on this verse are split as to the reason for the envy. Some say, "Well that's the way of the flesh when a person is successful at what they do, others find fault with them!" While some say, "Well it's because the ambitions person is not doing this for the job's sake but rather to rub it in the noses of those they work with." I suppose that there is a truth to this as well when you think about it. Most people who are ambitious are fueled in their drive to "contentment" by the two C's: *use!*

- Covetousness
- Competition

Thus the motivation of their heart is not to be competent in their jobs but rather to compete with their fellow workers for positions & titles. The purpose of the hands & the head was not to produce a great product or to help people but rather was to get one up on the person they are working next too. Either way the out come of the ambitious person is not "contentment" but rather "discontentment. All that happens is that eventually the ambitious person wakes up to the fact that there is, as he will say in verse 8, "no end to all his labors & his eye satisfied with riches." *- use!*

So the ambitious person has spent all their time being productive at the expense of leisure time! Simply put they have not time to enjoy the fruit of their labor because all they have is labor & the joy of getting ahead of their fellow work has been at the expense of friendships! *- good point use!*

2. Vs. 5 Inactive person: Here is the other extreme, the person who has no ambition, they are idle & lazy who leaves the work for someone else to do. Sometimes the

ambitious person becomes the inactive person as they get tired of the "rat race" of life so they do what Timothy Leary suggested years ago, "Tune in, turn on & drop out". Some quit their jobs & move to the hills while others go on government aid or look to society to support their lifestyles.

a. HANDS: "*folds his hands*". They just don't do much of anything not even for their families. Often time use will see them asking for assistance hour after hour holding a sign. Love Inc. reported recently on one fellow who was able to get various churches in Merced to give him \$5000.00 in one month. Imagine what this guy could do if he was willing to work?

b. HEAD: "*consumes his own flesh*." This type of lifestyle shows that he does not think much at all as it eats at what they have as well as what they are! Eventually living this way will catch up to you & it will destroy you. Look at what Solomon said about this fellow in Prov. 6:10-11 "*A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep; So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.*"

c. HEART: "*own flesh*". His heart is of the flesh it's of the world. This person is not going to have very many friends as well especially at the work place as they leave all the work for others to do. Folk's it's very hard to get a person out of this lazy attitude isn't it? I mean the hard work & 9 to 5 hours for this person is something they would just rather not do. It breaks your heart to so folk's who just don't want to make some changes in their lives.

The inactive person has all leisure time & no productive time & this ends up destroying him in the end as well!

3. Vs. 6 Balanced person: Here we see the person who in neither inactive nor ambitious instead they are at rest in their work. They are providing for their families without pull<sup>pas</sup> down those that they work with. This shows that the balance person does not run "from" the responsibilities of life like the inactive person but neither do they run "after" the responsibilities either. I heard this saying years ago & it has stuck, "*There is no righteousness in riches & no purity in poverty!*"

- The ambitious man thinks: Hard work & getting ahead will bring peace.
- The inactive man thinks: Doing nothing will bring him peace.
- The balanced man knows: That it is only a relationship with the Lord that brings peace!

Vs. 7-8 Solomon now tells us what will become of both ambitious man & the inactive man. They will become the lonely man! If you are all consumed with finding "contentment" in your work the cost will be your personal life. They gathered wealth & possessions but have no one to share them with. All their life they either never had time for their family or had no time to have a family. Further more the way they have lived their siblings don't want to hang around them as well. So like old Ebenezer Scrooge they have every thing they ever wanted but they are now work alcoholics & there is never enough money for them to have. They eventually become like the lazy person as they > use never stop to asks themselves, "Why they continue to live the way they are!" What's the point of living ambitious or inactive? So what is the cost of living this way? Well you will live & dye alone!

Vs. 9-12 The balanced will not have as much:

- Possessions or money as the ambitious person

- Free time as the inactive man
- But he will have family & friends!

good point - use

Solomon is going to give us four advantages of living the balanced life as it deals with having family & friends to share your life with. You see when we make decisions to live one of these three ways we don't often count the cost of pursuing your way of life, so now we can see the advantages of living a balanced life in the Lord.

- Vs. 9 WORK: This the two for one deal! Two can accomplish more work in a quicker amount of time with less effort & more reward. My wife & I were commenting on this recently when we were looking at our two young adults starting out on their adult adventure. We had it easier then they did not because our folk's helped us out because they did not, but because we had each other. Two incomes with out much expenses we shared the work both at home & on the job. > use
- Vs. 10 WALK: Solomon's view is that of being on the journey of life. You see roads in Israel were full of rocks & holes so it was easy to fall & become injured. It's kind of like they say today, "*Never go hiking alone!*" Ever noticed how nice it is to go for a walk with a close friend? I mean the time flies as you encourage each other. If one of you is bummed out the other one can encourage. But as Solomon says, if your wiped out walking alone in life who's going to come by & pick you up? > use
- Vs. 11 WARMTH: Israel could get real cold in wintertime & there were no heaters so the warmth of another body could keep you alive. I think this speaks of companionship & closeness. There are a great many people today of



there own making dying of loneliness! When you finally slow down enough to rest & there is no one there to share your life with it can become very cold — use  
can't it?

- d. Vs. 12 **WRESTLE**: This is the tag team approach in wrestling as perhaps one person can over take you by together with the Lord you are stronger. There is always strength in numbers. Solomon says that being alone may cost you your safety.

Clearly there is poverty with both the ambitious as well as the inactivity, you will miss out on relationships with people that you will treasure in this life as well as the life to come! Now you may be thinking, "Hey, I'm married I have lots of people I know, this does not apply to me!" But be careful now Solomon wrote this while he had over 1000 wives & concubines & yet it appears that at times he felt very much alone. The loneliest people you will ever find are to be found at crowded single bars! Proverbs 18:24 says "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

### III.) Vs. 13-16 The stupidity of popularity

Vs. 13 This is the third time in this section that Solomon has used the word "better"!

- Vs. 6 Better is the person who is balanced in the way he lives
- Vs. 9 Better is the person who has family & friends in life
- Vs. 13 Better is the person who understands their position in life is temporary & their one after they are dead eternal!

Vs. 13-14 Solomon now points to how foolish it is to get caught up in trying to have friends or be know by people this too will have disastrous results.

4. Vs. 13-16 **The popular person**: You see after hearing of all the advantages of living a balanced life as compared to that of ambitious or inactive person Solomon says that just trying to be every bodies friend is not the answer as well. He gives us several reasons for this:

a. Vs. 13 **Not open to truth**: When you're the popular person then people are afraid to tell you the truths about yourself. You may be the King at work or at home but you won't be taught any more, you ceased being open to learn from others. Kind of the "know it all" person. I personally pray I never stop learning & growing, to me that's the glorious part of being a Christian. You see the poor wise youth is hungry to grow & as believers in Jesus we ought to never stop growing in His grace & knowledge.

b. Vs. 14-15 **Always another new kid on the block**: The worst part about being the best thing since sliced bread is that it is only a short while before the bread that was just sliced becomes stale! Popularity as far as it goes does not last long but true friendships do. Solomon's point is that a lot of people ride the popular person for their own advantages but it doesn't last long. The man I apprenticed use to have a saying when I would get all puffed up because of the praise of the customer over the piece of jewelry I just created. He'd say, "*Lewis, just remember your only as good as your last job!*" In other words if your going to ride the back of popularity it's no big thing to get on its back but it's a whole other thing staying up there for any length of time!

c. Vs. 16 **Sooner or later there will always be a new number one**: Even if you have a great run at being at top someone will eventually replace you & then your

going to be forgotten. You don't think so? Try naming the last five best actor & actress award winners. Or name the last three NBA MVP's! Too hard? Now try naming three friends who over your life helped you through difficult times. Give me five people that you enjoy hanging out with. A lot easier isn't it?

True  
Friendship  
Better  
than  
Popularity

So based upon that test who do you value more? Then who are you trying to be like?

Christian's I'm speaking to you now! You see it is not the ambitious, inactive or popular person that can spoil God's plans in our lives. No, it is rather when we try to follow their path instead of being more like Jesus!

"A place where  
Everybody  
Knows my  
name"

Ecclesiastes  
"Life Only Under The Son"  
IV.) Chp. 5:1-6:12 No satisfaction!  
Eccl. 5:1-9  
"Watch your step"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-7 Walking in right worship

III.) Vs. 8-9 Right religion

I.) Intro.

Over the past several weeks Solomon has discussed with us God's plans for us, & things that seem to derail them in our lives, namely oppression & injustice. Solomon then took us to the all too familiar place of our jobs where we were introduced to our co-workers of Alice Ambitious, Larry Lazy & Penny Popularity. It is through them that most of our injustices & oppressions occur or do they? The truth is that we often find that it is not injustice & oppression from others that is keeping us from God's plans rather it is our unjust & oppressive behavior. There is only one person we ought to be like at work, "Bobby Balance"! But where can we go to become more like Bobby Balance? Where can you go when you're suffering from back pain? Back pain? Yeh, the kind of back pain that's caused from "back stabbing & back biting". Well based upon the first 9 verses of this chapter Solomon takes us to Church for the answers. Several church's have understood that people are looking for answers to these questions & have cleverly placed these phrases on their signs:

- Exercise daily! Walk with the Lord!
- Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here!
- If you don't like the way you were born, try being born again!

used

used

used

Now as good as those signs are many people attend Church regularly & get nothing out of it. It is to those people who often feel that way that Solomon has some answers to why they are not getting anything out of Church. Though we here at Calvary Chapel didn't plan it this way, we too have some signs as you enter our sanctuary. Unwittingly it has Solomon's answer to what we need to do as we approach the Lord at Church. Perhaps you read them this morning on your way in? The first sign just says "Calvary Chapel Merced" but the little red & white sign underneath issues you the warning, "Watch your step!" You put them together & you get Solomon's exhortation as one translation puts it, "Watch your step when you go to the house of God". Our signs read appropriately, "Calvary Chapel Merced Watch Your Step!"

use!

use

II.) Vs. 1-7 Walking in right worship

Vs. 1 Solomon was no doubt considering the big beautiful temple that he had constructed when he wrote this exhortation. He saw the devoted worshipers come & go, praising the Lord, praying, making sacrifices & vows of commitment & yet many of them left the temple the same way they came in. Now we know as Stephen said before the Sanhedrin "the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands". No, now it is as Paul said to the Corinthian's we "are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them And walk among them." Yet the exhortation has even more to say to us now, as it deals not with just once a week attendance as it deals with our hearts before Him every day.

use!

Solomon's point? Well it's simple perhaps you <sup>they were</sup> not getting anything out of Church because you <sup>they were</sup> not prepared too! There is a right way to enter into His presence & Solomon wastes no time in telling us three things to remember as we approach God:

- a. Remember who you are "Walk prudently when you go": As I already said the words "Walk prudently" literally mean, "watch your step". Clearly Solomon's idea is that of self-examination but I think it also carries an idea of having a heart of expectation. If you will the cost of admission into the presence of God is an examined & expectant heart! I also like the idea of the words "when you go". It is not "if" you go, or when "someone else" goes, nor is it when "God comes to me". You may be thinking I'm going a little to deep here but that phrase tells me three things about my self-examination & heart of expectation:

- consistently 1. "When": This speaks of consistency, my heart needs to be consistent as I approach the Lord. Perhaps you're not getting anything out of Church because you're not consistently approaching Him?
- Personally 2. "You": This word reminds me that I need to make sure that my heart is there personally. Far too much of our approach to God is the way we drive to & from work, "rote" or autopilot. Perhaps you are not getting anything out of Church because you have fallen into the trap of thinking that church attendance is like plant growth some sort of "photosynthesis" where just being in direct sun light will cause you to grow.
- Sacrificially 3. "Go": Finally this word reveals that we are to do so sacrificially. Approaching God is going to cost you something, your going to have to Go! Your heart in self-examination & expectation is what needs to

use!

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be moved. The waters of your heart are what need to be stirred if you're going to experience the miracle of the presence of God!

b. **Remember where you are** "the house of God": Also as I've said already God does not dwell in a house made by hands, no we are the temples of God. So this tells me that we need **to approach God reverently**. In other words the

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attitude of our heart is the way we would approach any important meeting, you'd be on TIME! For too much of our approach to God is far to casual. In fact Church's that are haphazard & disordered are labeled as being under God's grace. Being casual folks has to do with what we ware & nothing to do with the way we approach the Lord. Being under grace doesn't mean that we are late or indifferent in our worship. If I were to go to your house I would not put my feet up on your coffee table even if I saw you do it. Why? Because it's not my house it's yours. Perhaps you're not getting much out of Church because you are not remembering whose house it is, whose rules your to obey?

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c. **Remember why you're there** "draw near to hear": Do you see that? There's a **purpose for coming into His presence it's to hear**. The word <sup>hear</sup> has <sup>dwell</sup> ~~dwell~~ meaning "attentively & intelligently". The word picture is great, what do you do when you can't hear someone but your really interested in what they say? Well you get closer to them as to hear them better & if you really want to remember what they said well you take notes. Like a thirsty man with a wet sponge you keep twisting it as to get every drop of water & when you can't get any more water you start sucking on the sponge. Perhaps your not getting

anything out of Church because your not there to hear "attentively & intelligently" you're there for the wrong reasons. Is Church just a time for hot music & the "talk" a late night monologue? No wonder folks say they get nothing out of their Church experience. "*Went to Church & a variety show broke out!*" I had one pastor boast to me that one of the people that had started coming filled out a card that asked the reason why he was coming was that; "*The Church service was just so darn entertaining & fun!*" Can you imagine going to a hospital in a life or death emergency where the service of that hospital was geared around being *entertaining & fun*? Talk about dying laughing!

Vs. 1b Look at how Solomon puts it here, "*draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.*" There are two types of folks described in this section:

- a. "*Draw near to hear*"; This is the person that is coming to be changed & recognizes that this will take place as you have come with an examined & expectant heart, approached Him reverently & ready to hear what He has to say to you.
- b. "*Give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.*": What Solomon is saying has to do with the O.T. sacrificial system of atonement. As God spoke through the prophet Isaiah in 1:11-16 that scarifies apart from a clean heart is worthless. Simply put this person does not try to hear from God & become changed instead they are just coming to put their quarter in, do their duty so they can park a little longer on the street of life!



In other words atonement without a change of heart is worthless as far as God is concerned it's just a further evil! In Luke 18:10-14 Jesus spoke a parable to those who thought they were right with God saying, "A Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men; extortions, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner! I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.'" <sup>Now</sup> ~~Now~~ which one of these do you suppose will get nothing out of Church? I kind of see this as school & Solomon is our teacher saying, "Hey, fellow students Class is for learning & I know you are here to learn when you bring your paper & pencils. Since class is for learning & not socializing there will be no talking in class."

Vs. 2-3 Here Solomon takes up our communication with God known as prayer. One version put verse 2 this way, "Don't talk before you think or make promises to God without thinking them through". That's pretty accurate as far as the Hebrew goes. John Bunyan the author of "Pilgrims Progress" put it this way, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart!" A lot of times our prayer sound like infomercials where we are trying to convince God He needs to buy our product. Therefore it is good for us to remember that He is in heaven as Jesus told His disciples "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." We can let our words be few or as one commentator put it we need to "weigh our words, feel deeply, think much but speak little."

To illustrate his point Solomon gives us a little proverb comparing the activity of a persons dreams to that of the activity of a fools prayer life. The similarities?

- Both dreams & a fools prayers come from over work. Dreams from the over work of our bodies & minds, prayers of the fool from an over worked heart.
- Both of them are unreliable & ineffective in reality!

So the conclusion is if you want to get more out of your prayer life then take your time & start by remembering who God is for most of the time we ask for what we already have in Jesus!

Vs. 4-7 From our prayer life Solomon moves to discipleship or our devotional life. The word "vow" means to make a promise to God. Vows are voluntary no one ca make you promise something. If they are making you do it then it is not a vow or promise it's a bribe! The picture Solomon gives us is that of growth in our relationship with God. And he says "*Hey, if your going to get serious about your relationship with God, no bodies making you do it so don't play games with God.*" Solomon lists for us <sup>Two</sup> ~~to~~ great reasons we don't get anything out of Church:

1. The word Defer here means to procrastinate. Folk's Solomon has just kicked over the number one reason why folks don't get anything out of Church or their relationship with God "procrastination"! I'm sure you have gone through this in your own life some serious thing happens in your life & you make a promise to God if He gets you through it you will get serious with Him. So what happens? Well He kept up His end of the bargain but you have put off your end of the deal. Hear what the Lord has to say about that, "*He has no pleasure in fools.*" Now I found something interesting in this Hebrew phrase,

you see the word "fool" is literally "fat" with an "f" & not a "ph". Yeh I know what phat stands for "*pretty hot & tempting*". Here me out Solomon says as far as God is concerned with our lives spiritually speaking there is "No fun in fat!" If we are not growing spiritually then we are becoming fat & He is not into spiritually fat Christian's. So what can you do? Literally it says, "*that which you vowed--complete*". If you have promised to lose some of that spiritual fat then start on a spiritual diet & exercise program, cut out those things of the flesh & the world & start pumping the Word & walk with Him.

2. Vs. 5-7 "*Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.*" Here then is the second great reason folks don't get anything out of Church hypocrisy. It's better to be just fat then a big fat liar! Why? Well because then the excess weight is effecting your heart & not just the rest of your body. Solomon tells us what gets us in trouble here doesn't he? It's our mouth which speak that which is in our heart, then to compound the problem Solomon says we make excuses for why we have not done what we said we would do. "*I'm not spiritually fat I'm just big boned.*" "*Or I'm not spiritually fat I just have a slow metabolism.*" God will destroy all your excuses which nothing more then the works of your hands. The bottom line Solomon says in verse 7, "*Get out of your dream world & quit making excuses & start growing!*"

### III.) Vs. 8-9 Right religion

Vs. 8-9 At first glance these two verses may not appear related to not getting anything out of Church. But remember Solomon was just dealing with two of the great reasons people use for not getting anything out of Church, procrastination & hypocrisy. Well there is

still yet another excuse people use all the time for not getting anything out of Church. I know you have heard it “*There are two many hypocrites in the Church!*” Solomon says points the finger at two others who are bigger *hypocrites* then what you will find in the Church:

- a. “*You see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province.*” That’s right all that fusing that someone ought to do something about this & not do anything makes us a “*hypocrite*”. Right religion James said does not just squawk about *oppression of the poor* & the *perversion of justice* it does something about it personally.
- b. “*For high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.*” You got it the second great hypocrite is the government, everybody’s got their hand in for the hand out & those in need get nothing. Kickback’s, & hand slaps vote for me you know! People trusting the government to solve their problems as if there is no hypocrisy in the government.

Vs. 9 Solomon concludes with a proverb, “*Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field.*” One translation puts it this way, “*Even a king depends on the harvest.*” In other words only in a relationship with God will you not find hypocrisy, the profit of the land is for all from King to farm worker & it’s God who gives the increase. So now we have no more excuses lets get spiritually healthy!

Ecclesiastes  
 “Life Only Under The Son”  
 IV.) Chp. 5:1-6:12 No satisfaction!  
 Eccl. 5:10-20  
 “What’s in your wallet?”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 10-17 Four things money can’t buy

III.) Vs. 18–20 God given riches

I.) Intro.

Solomon has been taking us on a journey to try & find out if there is any lasting meaning in life apart from a relationship with God. His conclusion in chapter 2:24-26 was that <sup>9:</sup> vs 26 only in a relationship with God does life find meaning. Then in chapter three he spoke to us about seeing God in the times of our lives as well as seeing that He always has plans or reasons for what He takes us through. Next he took us down the road of two things that seem to contradict God’s plans in our lives INJUSTICE & OPPRESSION which is most often experienced in the work place. As we got to chapter 5 we started looking at the first of two places people go to try to find answers to oppression & injustice in their lives.

1. CHURCH: In the first 9 verses Solomon spoke to us about why people don’t find answers at Church. I mean he nailed us didn’t he? In a nutshell Solomon said that people don’t find the answers to the problems of injustice & oppression because they have “*heart problems*”! That’s right they have an:

- Unexamined Heart
- Indifferent Heart
- Unprepared Heart

use!

And because of these heart conditions they missed out on the answers not because the Church didn't have the answers but rather because they fell into the pits of:

- Procrastination
- Pretending

use

2. CASH: In the final 11 verses Solomon is going to take us to the other place we turn to find answers to oppression & injustice in our lives our WALLETS! We are going to discover four things that money can't buy, as well as find out what true wealth is.

Try to buy the way out of them

use!

## II.) Vs. 10-17 Four things money can't buy

Vs. 10 Solomon left us in verse 9 in the comfort of knowing that it is God who provides whether it is for the wealthy or the worker. He now takes us to the other extreme as some try to find answers in prosperity. Most people have said at times, "*I have no problems that having my pockets full of cash wouldn't fix!*" People treat money as if it were a god worshipping it making sacrifices to get it. I have found that a person can never just love money they must love MORE money soon their lives are consumed by getting & guarding what they have. Solomon is going to point out four things that money can't buy:

used

use!

1. Vs. 10 Satisfaction: Remember who it is that is writing these words, Solomon was the wealthiest man in the world so surely he was qualified to render his opinion on this. The word "love" here implies intimacy that normally is reserved for people it is the same word used to describe Abraham's affection for his son Isaac. Here though Solomon uses the word in connection with money & then proclaims that it will literally "never fill". Solomon is proclaiming the truth that "If your intimacy is on money then your heart will

use!

use!

go hungry!" People are under the illusion that if they had more money they would be full & enjoy life but the sad fact of the matter is that we never seem to have enough to be satisfied. So we sing the seven dwarfs song, "I owe, I owe so it's off to work I go". Solomon uses an interesting word for abundance as it is literally a word that means "noise or rumbling" in other words they have so much money that it makes noise & is gaining more of its self. I was thinking about the absurd amount of money that athletes get for putting a ball through a metal cylinder. Lets say that Shack makes 20 million a year in salary at his body weight of 350 pounds that's \$57,142.00 per pound! The interest on that amount of money could support several families a year. We need to be careful here though for it is ~~not~~ the silver or money that is evil rather it is the "love" of it. Just because a person is wealthy does not make them evil rather it is when their wealth is their idol. Folks' it's not the money that causes the problem it is the heart of the person. As I've said before "There is no righteousness in riches nor purity in poverty!"

2. Vs. 11 Solutions: Solomon you will recall experienced this first hand according to 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 4:22-23. We are told that the, "daily food requirements for Solomon's palace were 150 bushels (donkey loads) of choice flour and 300 bushels (donkey loads) of meal, ten oxen from the fattening pens, twenty pasture--fed cattle, one hundred sheep or goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks, and choice fowl." People think, "If I just had enough money all my problems would go away!" Money is not a magic cure for every problem a person has & Solomon is going to tell us two reasons why:

a. Increase of money = increase of problems: Solomon knew full well that as “*goods increased so did those that consumed them.*” I was watching a show the other day about pop music entourages & how the success of the musician is measured by how many free loaders he’s got in his “posy”. These so called buddies just hang onto the star like a leech reaping all the fruit of the star. Perhaps you have heard of the guy who caught the 600<sup>th</sup> home run of Barry Bonds the ball they estimate could be worth a million. Well evidently he told his two best friends that if he caught the ball he’d split the value with them. The problem is he changed his minds & now his best friends are suing him. That baseball didn’t solve his problems it created new ones.

Well

b. The increase is short lived: The best a guy can say concerning his wealth is “*It’s all mine!*” This verse led John Wesley to say, “*Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can!*” I have found that the more I seem to make there is something that all ways seems to come along & take it away. In fact when I get a little extra cash I like to hide it in my wallet & count how many days goes by before it leaves my wallet. I have yet to have the same amount I started with for more than a few weeks. So I can only say, “It’s all mine!” for a very short time. In other words, “The cash I have set aside for rainy day always seems to get spent before there is a cloud in the sky!” They have got to stop putting pictures of eagles on our dollar bills because they keep flying away!

Well



3. Vs. 12 Serenity: Solomon says that the laborer sleeps better than the rich man. In other words money can't buy peace of mind! The words "laboring man" is the word used for bound-servant, which is a servant by choice. The point of Solomon is that the servant sleeps well for two reasons:
- Because the labor has made him tired physically.
  - Because what he has to live on is not his concern.

Yet the rich man is not blessed with this kind of peace of body & mind because of the lack of activity physically he's not tired & he stays up worrying about his wealth. One person put it this way; "*It's good to have the things money can buy provided you don't lose the things money can't buy!*" In our country there is an absurdity about our prosperity. Our wealth has led us to us

to be far more sedentary the outcome is that we have become a society of overweight people. Our government has caught on to this problem & is encouraging folks to regular exercise. So folks all over our nation, like me, pay memberships to go work out to lose the bulge in our bellies caused by our prosperity. I'm handing over my money in an effort to undo what money has done. The antidote? Simply what other societies including our own 150 years ago knew: "Nothing like hard work, with long hours for little pay to keep you in good shape!"

4. Vs. 13-15 Security: Money can't provide lasting security. Solomon says, that this a "evil sickness". People depend upon money for security but in the end he says, "*No matter how much they have put away to secure their future it can't overcome four things*":

a. Vs. 13 "*Kept for their own hurt.*" Now Solomon does not tell us what hurt he had in mind but I can think of three things that will rob you of the security you think you have set aside in money the first two are self inflicted:

- use
1. Money spent on things that hasten the loss of funds as well as you're on demise.
  2. Money not spent on things that would prolong health & long life.
  3. Taxes! You save your money & the government comes along & takes it.

b. Vs. 14a "*riches perish through misfortune*": The word "*misfortune*" is literally "bad business" in other words you save or invest your money to establish better security & the investment doesn't make money it loses all that you had saved.

use

c. Vs. 14b "*When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand*": Now this one I know personally. You save your money to establish a little security & your children come to you with nothing in their hand. So what do you do? Well I tell them to go & get a job & my wife writes a check!

d. Vs. 15 "*As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return*": Now if you have stored up enough money to feel secure & have survived yourself, the government, bad business investments & your children there is one thing that your money can never secure "your life!" Save as much as you want & the only thing you may be able to secure is the way you live but money can never secure that you won't die!

use

Vs. 16-17 As Solomon observed the fact that money can't buy:

- Satisfaction
- Solutions
- Serenity
- Security

He again uses the word "evil sickness" to describe his feelings about this. He then says, "Just exactly as he came, so shall he go." In other words when you & I were born into this world we brought nothing with us we were striped bare & when we leave we will leave striped bare of all the things we thought money could buy none of those things will be traveling with us when we leave. So from the perspective of living life apart from God there is no eternal reward for all that a person grasped for in this life. As bad as that is Solomon says there is one thing worse apart from a relationship with & that is living this life in complete poverty seen as:

- Darkness
- Sorrow
- Sickness:
- Anger: The word here is literally splinters, as it describes a person's life that is shattered.

### III.) Vs. 18-20 God given riches

Vs. 18-20 Solomon does not leave us with just the negative he moves us to see things that are "good & fitting". The literal translation is "a good thing which is beautiful" Now what do you suppose is the key to that which is beautiful in life? Well Notice four times in these three verses Solomon mentions God three of which he says "God gives" & the

fourth he says God answers! Do you see where I'm going with this? Man looks to get money for answers but the answers are found in a relationship with God who freely gives.

> we

- a. Vs. 18 **Labor**: Which enables you to eat, drink & have a sense of accomplishment through out your life. Solomon says that we ought to enjoy labor it's His gift to us as He gave Adam to work & care for the garden He placed him in.
- b. Vs. 19 **Blessings**: Solomon uses two different words here concerning the blessings, riches which are temporary & wealth which is treasure or savings. So whether you're living from paycheck to paycheck or you have some savings it is God who has given it to you. More importantly it is He who has given you the power over what he has provided for you. In other words we should not be possessed by our possessions or the lack of them! Why? Because His blessings are His gift to us!
- c. Vs. 20 **Joy**: Life will fly by as we see that God has given us all things to enjoy Him more. Everyday will be Christmas or our birthday when we begin to live in a moment by moment relationship with Him. We will love life no matter what our station is because we will see that it is not where your going that matters it's Who your going with & we are going with God!

You can sum up these three verses with the words:

- Enjoy
- Rejoice
- Joy of his heart

And the reason why is also found in the repeated words "God has given!"

\* Communion \*

Ecclesiastes  
**"Life Only Under The Son"**  
 IV.) Chp. 5:1-6:12 No satisfaction!  
 Eccl. 6:1-12  
 "An attitude of gratitude (part one)"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-9 It's just not working!

a. Vs. 1-2 Something to have

b. Vs. 3-6 Someone to love

I.) Intro.

5:18-20

In the last chapter Solomon ended with what is good & fitting "enjoying what God has given". What we have in the sixth chapter of Ecclesiastes is God's manufactures warranty on life the way He designed it to be lived. Solomon lists four essential things that people (Good & P.H.W.) see! look forward to in order to enjoy life & in each case having them does not produce the desired result, JOY. Then right after the manufacture warranty on life Solomon takes to another part of the owner's manual usually called "Problems & troubleshooting". Here he gives us five reasons life isn't working the way you thought it would.

Most of us probably have never set down to read the warranties of the products that we have purchased; in fact few of us ever bother to send the warranty card in. It seems we don't think much about these things until that which we have purchased to make life more enjoyable breaks down or does not perform as advertised. Most manufactures print in bold type what they will not warranty if the product is not performing to our expectations here is what they say; "*Products which have been subject to abuse, accident, alteration, modification, tampering, negligence, misuse, faulty installation, lack of reasonable care, or if repaired or serviced by anyone other than an*

see

authorized service facility will not be under warranty.” Have you ever read the section usually titled “Problems & troubleshooting”? You will almost always find them either right before or right after the warranty. And what is the first thing they always ask you? “Is the power cord plugged in?” Then they ask you, “Are you operating it the way you are suppose to?”

yes use!

## II.) Vs. 1-9 It's just not working!

3 part  
Vs. 1 A British writer named Joseph Addison of the late 1600's wrote that there were three great essentials to happiness in this life that everybody needed:

- Someone to love
- Something to do
- Something to hope for

use

wrote over 2500 years earlier

Solomon however, who wrote 935 before Christ, gives us four in the first 9 verses. Three of them are the same as Addison's but Solomon starts with:

- Something to have

(good 3 things)

So to give an overview of this section Solomon is going to give us four essential things that people look forward to in order to enjoy life then he is going to tell us that those things in & of themselves don't guarantee that you will have joy. It's at this time that we usually call the manufacture & say, “It's just not working!”

1. Vs. 2 FINANCES: “Something to have”: Here is the frustration; a person can have all the money in the world & still not be happy, look at the baseball strike. Possession & enjoyment do not necessarily go together. Many things can happen that can alter a person's ability to enjoy what they have. Solomon lists two for us:

a. The word "power" means to rule or have dominion over something. So Solomon says that God has given them enough wealth to have what ever they want yet they are unable to rule over it or have dominion over it. They have become possessed by their possessions. Some times things can happen that take away our ability to enjoy it like the death of a loved one while we are on vacation. Other times we never enjoy what God has given us because things never reach the level of expectation we had for them. So instead of enjoying the moment we are upset over what we thought it should be.

b. What's worse yet Solomon says, is to see a person enjoy something that you got rid of because you couldn't enjoy it. Have you ever watched little kids with toys? You will see a child not play with a toy for months until another little kid comes over & starts playing with the toy they could of carried less about. I think this is what's behind the phrase, "keeping up with the Jones". People are always talking about the person trying to keep up but what about the Jones? I mean they got to keep getting something new when they see their neighbor's enjoying what they have! Solomon's point is this:

a. Enjoying the goods without the Giver is idolatry

b. Enjoyment with out God is just cheap entertainment & it won't last

Enjoyment does not come from an increase of possessions. No according to chapter two verses 24-26a Solomon says, "I realized that this pleasure is from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? God gives

wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him. There's no need to adjust your picture, there's nothing wrong with the set! Finances, "Something to have", is just not designed to bring a person joy apart from a relationship with God. No matter how much fine-tuning or tweaking of your life you do to try & make "Something to have" bring you lasting joy it's not going to change the picture. Finances were never designed to bring you lasting joy! You know what brought this home to me? It was when I was on a five-week mission trip into the poorest parts of Mexico. We had bags of balloons to blow up & make animals & the children would just get so excited over these cheap balloons animals. They had an attitude of gratitude & were so thankful to have what I would not even pick up if I saw it on the ground. *The had nothing & were filled with joyous tears & had everything & had little joy.*

2. Vs. 3-6 FAMILY: "Someone to love": Now Solomon knew something about having a large family. We are told 2 Chron. 11:21 that his son Rehoboam who *as children* had only 18 wives & 60 concubines had 28 sons & 60 daughters. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11:3 tells us that Solomon had, "*seven hundred wives & three hundred concubines*". You want to talk about trying to remember your children's ages & birth dates? To illustrate his point Solomon plugs into the equation of "someone to love" two things:

- a. Enough people to love & be loved: Solomon says 100 children, that's a big family. In other words someone could say well "I only had two children & we aren't very close any more." Solomon wants to make very sure here that the reason why "someone to love" will not bring lasting joy is not because of lack of opportunities. Perhaps you have

*use*



fond memories of your family at certain times & are thinking that you wish you could go back to that time again. Well with a 100 children there would always be someone in that special age. So the problem with looking to your family apart from a relationship with God to bring you lasting joy is that it was not designed to do so.

- b. Enough time to enjoy them: In verse 3 Solomon says that his days & years were many, then in verse 6 he says that even if the guy lived 2000 years it would not bring you lasting joy. In other words the

use! problem of not finding lasting joy in "someone to love" is not because you don't have enough time to enjoy them. No it's again because family was never to be a substitute for a relationship with God.

You see it's not the amount of time or the number of children that will bring lasting joy. Why? Because there is only one love that will fulfill our need to be loved. And as good as our relationships with our families are they can never fulfill the longing of our hearts for the Love of God, they weren't designed too. Yet you see folks all the time having their children on the thrones of their hearts. As great as having a close family is it is still a poor substitute for a relationship with God. Solomon speaks hypothetically of a guy who had a large family, a long life with plenty of resources & yet his soul was "not satisfied with goodness". I mean is this not what we all want, a big family, a healthy body & lot of money? Yet Solomon says that apart from a relationship with God (satisfied with goodness) he has no lasting joy.

use

Solomon then gives four ways that a person who is trying to find lasting joy in "someone to love" apart from God is worse off than a stillborn child:

a. Vs. 3 **No burial**: Just because you have a large family, a long life, with lots of money doesn't guarantee that your children will show you the affection you want. They may just hang around begging for money hoping you will die so they can collect the inheritance. "*Hey the old dude is dead let's collect the money!*" And they go off & don't even bother to bury him. Yet with a stillborn child the parents will mourn the loss of that child.

b. Vs. 4 **No history**: The stillborn child <sup>is</sup> has history or memories of love lost. The child ~~has~~ <sup>will</sup> never know what should have been if you will. But with a person who was trying to find lasting joy in "someone to love" they know about love lost & heart ache of affections that are not return. The old saying that goes, "Better to have loved & lost than to never have loved at all" has never lost says Solomon!

c. Vs. 5 **No Trouble**: The stillborn child has not known good or evil, neither have they ever felt or experienced anything so they have never gone through the distress of family relationships gone bad. Solomon is saying that a guy who has sought lasting joy in "someone to love" & found instead heartache & failure is worse off than a stillborn child that has never gone through any troubling relationships at all. I've done some funerals over the years & seen first hand the "trouble" & heartache loved ones have experienced over not finding lasting joy in

"someone to love" often whole lives have been altered because affection was not given to that person! Dad never loved me, Mom never hugged me so they went after drugs, been married several times or have had children that they turned around & treated just as they were treated.

- d. Vs. 6 No reward: 2000 years of existence is not enough time to get over the heartache that has been caused by trying to find lasting joy in "someone to love". Again the person who said, "Time heals all wounds" has never tasted of the disappointment of an adult who never received love from a parent. The stillborn child may have no earthly reward but neither do they have any debts to pay!

Pastor what are you trying to say today? Is there something wrong with:

- Enjoying "what you have?"
- Enjoying "someone to love?"

No, of course not! The problem is not in enjoying "something to have" or "someone to love", no the problem is in making those two things what your life is all about. Simply put God did not design us to be fulfilled with lasting joy with either "something to have, someone to love" He created us as Solomon already said to find "pleasure from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him." Next week we will take up part two of this & look at trying to find lasting joy in Something to do & Something to hope for, as well as five reasons life isn't working the way you thought it would.

Ecclesiastes  
*“Life Only Under The Son”*  
 IV.) Chp. 5:1-6:12 No satisfaction!  
 Eccl. 6:7-12  
 “An attitude of gratitude (part two)”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-9 It's just not working!

- a. Vs. 7-8 Something to do
- b. Vs. 9 Something to hope for

III.) Vs. 10-12 Hedge clippers for sheet metal?

I.) Intro.

In chapter 5: 18 Solomon said that it was “*good & fitting to enjoy the days of our lives that God has given us*”. Last week Solomon listed two of the four essential things that people see as “*good & fitting*” in order to enjoy life yet in those two he describes scenarios in which the person did not have lasting joy.

- Vs. 2 FINANCES: “*Something to have*”: Nothing wrong with enjoying God given riches Solomon says. Paul told Timothy that, “*godliness is not a means of gain but godliness with contentment is great gain.*” People will be miserable if they make “*something to have*” the source of lasting joy in their lives.
- Vs. 3-6 FAMILY: “*Someone to love*”: Nothing wrong with enjoying our families. Why being a part of a loving family is one of the great benefits of life. But as great as a loving family is they are a very poor substitute for a relationship with God. Solomon compares the benefits of a stillborn child against the heartache of family life gone bad & he says it would be better to be the stillborn child. The truth is even if you love your children or your parents there are times when they will rip your heart out &

stomp on it. Having “*someone to love*” as the source of lasting joy in your life won’t always meet your need.

So is there something wrong with enjoying “what you have?” & “someone to love?”

No, the problem is in making those two things what your life is all about. God did not design us to be fulfilled with lasting joy with either “*something to have, someone to love*”

He created us as Solomon said in 5:18-20 to find “*pleasure from the hand of God. For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him.*”

## II.) Vs. 1-9 It’s just not working!

Solomon now gives us the last two essential that folks look to find lasting joy in life:

- Something to do
- Something to hope for

1. Vs. 7-8 **FIELD** “Something to do”: The word “*mouth*” is general & in fact usually implies speech & not the instrument we used to eat our food with.

What this suggests to me is that “*Something to do*” is more than just providing for their necessities of our lives. I believe that our chosen career fields has a lot to do with comes out of our mouths as well as what we put into them.

Genesis 2:15 God created Adam then placed him into the garden to tend it.

My point is that God created man with an inherent need for “*something to do*”. We tend to be the most satisfied when we are doing something. Yet with that said Solomon again sets up a scenario in which though a man is feeding their heart as well as their stomach there is still no lasting joy. The word “*appetite*” literally means the substance of a being or as in the NKJ our

“soul”. Do you see what Solomon is saying? Even though the work you do is meeting your physical needs & even your emotional needs it must not ever try to meet your spiritual needs. Solomon is describing the idolatry of worshipping what we do. Folks how do we know if this is us? Well how do you do when you’re away from work? Do you carry your jobs back home & continue with a little “shop talk”? Are you working on your jobs when you’re at home? Well then Solomon says your going to find yourself empty & unsatisfied. Solomon ties together for us physical appetite with that of trying to feed our spiritual needs upon “something to do” & says that even though you may stay off the hunger pains temporarily they always seem to come back. Jesus spoke of this same thing when He told those seeking signs that met their physical needs that He was the *“bread of life, & those that came to Him shall never hunger, and those that believe in Him shall never thirst.”* To illustrate his point Solomon asks us two questions & both cases the answer is NONE: (NLT)

- a. EDUCATION: “Do wise people really have any advantage over fools?” The person that knows better verses the one that does not know any better? If any thing the educated guy seems to be in more danger of trying to find lasting joy in “something to do” then does the simpleton. The wise guy has more opportunities to try to find lasting enjoyment from something he does. I mean you’re not going to find to many guys out their bragging about digging ditches it’s just not going

to be the place where they find lasting joy. In other words the wise man struggles more with this than does the ordinary laborer.

- b. IMPROVEMENT: "Do poor people gain anything by being wise and knowing how to act in front of others?" Neither does the poor man have any advantage of trying to better himself. Here is a guy who is trying to get out of the rut of something to do only to find himself in a greater rut as his identity becomes seated in what he does.

So what are you saying pastor should we all just remain simple & not try to improve in finding enjoyment in what we do? No, it's great to be at a job where you enjoy what you do but just realize that your career field is never going to bring you lasting joy. Why? Because God never designed it to do so & no matter of trying to find a job that you enjoy doing will ever fully satisfy the longing of your heart.

2. Vs. 9 FUTURE "something to hope for": Solomon finally comes to what for many of us is the hardest to come to grips with, letting go of our dreams as the means to find lasting joy. We are all so prone to think & dream of our future.

Often times it is living with "something to hope for" that sustains us when we have not found lasting joy in "something to have, someone to love or something to do". In other words we tell ourselves, when we are bummed out & not enjoying life, that there is always tomorrow! So people are living for tomorrow instead of loving life today! This is Solomon's way of saying what a Greek philosopher would say latter "He is a fool who lets slip a bird in the hand for a bird in the bush!" In other words it's always better enjoy what God has given you now then to fantasize about your future. The NLT puts it this

way; "Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless; it is like chasing the wind." You see what the problem is? If we are always going after "something

to hope for" to fulfill the need for lasting joy we were always going to come up empty handed. I'm reminded of the way that martyred missionary said,

"He is no fool who gives up what he can't keep for what he can never lose!"

Instead Solomon sees folks giving up on what they can never lose for that which they can never keep! Oh how important is are the words of Hebrews

12:1-2 "let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,"

So pastor is it wrong to have dreams? No, of course not! But let me ask you about your dreams, are they about something to have, someone to love or something to do in order for you to have lasting joy? Because if they are they you're going to find out that if they come true then they will be nightmares & not pleasant dreams. We are all familiar the Lord's promises to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah (29:11) "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Great hope for the future but very view are familiar with the Lord says to Israel right afterward, "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity." God's promise of blessing was not so that they would find lasting enjoyment in hope for the future but rather that they would seek Him now!

III.) Vs. 10-12 Hedge clippers for sheet metal?



Now we move to what happens when those four things (something to have, someone to love or something to do & something to hope for) don't make life more enjoyable. Well we turn to the manufacture to complain don't we? If you have ever called the manufacture to try to find out why it's not working the way you thought it would then you will understand the words of Solomon as he gives us five reasons life isn't working the way you thought it would.

1. Vs. 10a God holds the Patton on life: "*Whatever one is, he has been named already*"; Or as the NLT puts it "*Everything has already been decided, it was known long ago.*" You see God has a Patton on the way He made life to be lived & any attempted change of this will leave life unlivable! You see people often object saying, "*How come when I do this that don't happen?*" Simply put Solomon says God's the manufacture & he designed life a certain way. People are always trying to tweak life around so they can find lasting joy apart from having a relationship with Him & life has not be designed that way. You just can't turn on you garbage disposal look down at your sink & watch T.V.! "*But that's what I want!*" You can want that, complain that it doesn't happen & even try to make it work & still life won't produce lasting joy by having a T.V. in your garbage disposal. About six months ago my son was working on something & I found my hedge trimmers being used for tin snips! Was he able to cut tin with them? Why yes sort of but I no longer have hedge trimmers. Why? Well hedge trimmers were never designed to cut tin. I could have called to complain to the hedge trimmer manufacturer but they would have just laughed at me.

2. Vs. 10b For best results use as suggested: *"For it is known that he is man; And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he."* To use my analogy, *"If you want to watch T.V. don't buy a garbage disposal!"* God made us He knows what makes us work right & what will cause us to have lasting joy. Have you ever tried to put a puzzle together only to find out that you have two different puzzles mixed up? Now you can try to force the pieces together all you want you may be even able to get a few of them to fit but the picture is never going to make any sense. Solomon also says, *"Hey why are you fighting the One that made you?"* First off your going to lose, second if you could win you still are going to lose because you would not be able to change the way you are made.

3. Vs. 11 Warranty void if product altered: *"Since there are many things that increase vanity, How is man the better?"* There is no need to tinker with your garbage disposal it still won't get a T.V. signal. We are always trying to change the way God made us & the results have been disastrous, were not any better for all our tinkering. You see life comes with a warranty, a promise of blessings if you live it the way God designed. But if you try to live life apart from a relationship with him but that warranty will be void if you try to live life by trying to find lasting joy in something to have, someone to love or something to do or something to hope for.

4. Vs. 12 How many worlds have you created? Still not happy with the answers coming from God Solomon concludes with two Job like questions that we ought to ask ourselves when we are not getting the results we want out of life being lived apart from Him.

- a. *“For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow?” Do you know what God knows? Asks Solomon. It’s like the story I heard between to top scientist who challenged God to a contest to show God that they were now as smart as He is. So they said, *“God we can make a man just like you did. You see the petry jar we just cloned a man.”* So God asks, *“Where did you get the cells?”* “Ok I know God, we can do it from dirt it will just take longer.” So God asks, *“Where you going to get the dirt?”* You want to control life, well when you become God you can!*
- b. *“Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?”: Do you see what God sees? We don’t see the beginning from the end we have no idea what will happen to us tomorrow let alone what will happen to us five years from now. So we are all trying to change the way we want to live life & all we do is miss lasting joy in Him. God has a lot more experience at running the universe then we do & from the first time Adam & Eve tried to do it their way we’ve been in a miss every sense. In other words no life has ever been not enjoyed when lived as He has intended.*

Why not try living for Him instead of trying to find lasting joy from something to have, someone to love or something to do or something to hope for He knows just how to get the maximum experience out of your life. } 020

Ecclesiastes  
***“Life Only Under The Sun”***  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 7:1-10  
**“The Better Things in Life”**

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-7 A true heart

III.) Vs. 8-10 A patient spirit

I.) Intro.

Solomon had left off with the words *“For who knows what is good for man in life?”* In so doing he had given us four things that people look to as that which makes life “good & fitting” (5:18), those things that we think we must have to have lasting joy in our lives.

You remember Solomon listed:

- Something to have *Finances*
- Someone to love *Family*
- Something to do *Field*
- Something to hope for *Future*

Yet in each of these, as wonderful & joyous at times that they are, none of them are going to produce lasting joy in our lives. Solomon then told us why, from God’s perspective, these things won’t do what we want them to do. He took us to the owner’s manual to hear from Life’s Manufacturer on what would render life’s blessings unenjoyable:

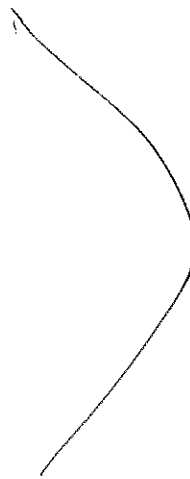
1. God holds the Patton on life
2. For best results use as suggested
3. Warranty void if product altered
4. How many worlds have you created?

good  
 bad

- a. Do you know what God knows?
- b. Do you see what God sees?

It is in dealing with these last four things that Solomon takes us to life's paradoxes. In reading these 10 verses over several times this week it finally dawned on me what these seemingly unrelated proverbs had in common, all of the things Solomon mentions brings us to "What is really true about ourselves!" You see Solomon is going to contrast a life of:

- Precious ointment - *A good name*
- Day of birth - *Day of death*
- House of feasting - *House of mourning*
- Laughter - *Sorrow*
- A Song - *A rebuke*
- Beginning something new - *End of a thing*
- Proud heart - *Patient in spirit*



7 things  
 that we see as  
 "Good & fitting"  
 against 7 things that  
 we don't see as good  
 & fitting

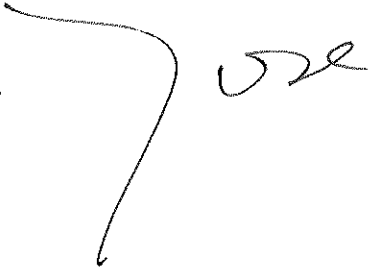
Now I think each of us would naturally chose the first things on these seven contrasts as what is "*Good for man in life*". Yet Solomon is going to show that God really does know what is best for us in life as He deals with us in reality & not fantasy! → use

## II.) Vs. 1-7 A true heart

Eight times in these ten verses Solomon uses the word "better". Having already dealt with what we think is better for man in life, "something to have, someone to love or something to do or something to hope for", Solomon is going to show us what is truly better for us in life:

- a. Vs. 1-7 Four times in these verses Solomon uses the words "heart".

- Vs. 2 "Take it to heart"
- Vs. 3 "Heart is made better"
- Vs. 4 "Heart of the wise"
- Vs. 7 "Destroys the heart"



Simply put Solomon concludes that what is good for man in life is to see

use

ourselves as we really are in our hearts.

This we ought to pray & thank God for the events, people & things that reveal our hearts to us.

b. Vs. 8-10 Three times in these verses Solomon uses the word "spirit".

- Vs. 8a *Patient in spirit*
- Vs. 8b *Better then the proud in spirit*
- Vs. 9 *The calm in spirit instead of the angry in their spirit*

Solomon says, that what is good for man in life are those things that cause me to become what God wants me to be.

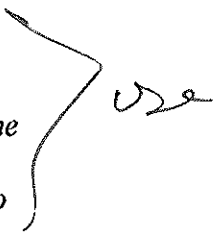
So we again ought to thank & praise God for the things that cause us to be yielded to the Holy Spirit's power of the Holy Spirit.

Vs. 1 This is an interesting phrase in the Hebrew as the Solomon uses a play on words to

get his point across. The word for name is "shem" & it deals with a person's character or reputation as one would find on a memorial that would honor him. The words "better & precious" are the same Hebrew word "tobe". Finally the word for "ointment" in the

Hebrew is "Shemen" & it comes from the same root word as name & means "a fragrant ointment". So Solomon says, "Precious is a person with character more then costly

perfume." Now if you will recall in 2 Cor. Paul writes, "we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life." In Solomon's day there was not hot running water & all so bathing was a luxury



Solves AS A SIMILAR to 2-7

that did not take place all that often. That meant that people in that hot region left a scent where ever they went. There were three main groups that you could identify by smell:

*A* a. Worshippers: The priests who according to Exodus 30:22-33 were to make a anointing oil out of certain spices & they were to continually anoint the tabernacle, the ark & all that was as well as the priests. However God tells Moses two things that should not take place with this fragrance:

- use* 1. It must never be poured upon anyone that was not a worshiper. - *unique fragrance*
- 2. It must never be duplicated or copied. - *no hypocrisy*

*The cost of the perfume was great Jesus perceived it for us.*

b. Wealthy: If a person had enough wealth they would buy costly perfume made of olive oil, cinnamon & spikenard as well as other spices. This fragrance was to mask the body odor that people had. Now this fragrant oil was so costly & valuable it was often used as currency. Thus Mary's sacrifice of costly perfume over the feet of Jesus is scene as an act of great worship.

*→ can be purchased*

c. Wicked: Then there was the smell that most of the people had just your usual body odor that smelled of stinky flesh.

*use* So here is what Solomon is saying the only lasting fragrance is that which comes from a worshippers heart. The fragrance that comes from costly perfume is just something that we purchase to mask our flesh! Folk's you can't purchase a precious name you can only live earn it by the way you live. Someone well said that every person has three names:

- The one that their parents gave them
- The one that they call themselves
- The one that others know them by

*use!*

To further illustrate this Solomon says that every person has two days in which their lives will be mentioned:

- Birth record
- Obituary

Now as far as the true value of a person's character it will be known better in their obituary then their birth. In other words "*What is good for man*" will be seen at the end of his life not the beginning. So what's Solomon saying? Well, he is telling us that what is good for man is that which lasts not just a cheap fragrance that covers up your stench. *used!*

Names in the Bible always had to do with a persons identity, & a lot of folks are just trying to cover up their stench with, "something to have, someone to love or something to do or something to hope for". Now personally I'm looking forward to that "new name" that Jesus is going to give me, a brand new identity by which we will be know through out eternity. *used!*

So how do you go about making sure that your name is going to be the fragrance of Christ, worshipers instead of those just masking a stench? Well that is where Solomon takes <sup>us</sup> in these verses that deal with events in our lives that cause us to examine our hearts.

**What is good for man in life is to see ourselves as we really are in our hearts.**

Vs. 2 **Mortality**: Solomon tells us as far as causing a person to examine what's in their heart it's better for you to realize your own mortality then to hang out with those that party. When someone dies it forces us to take stock of our own lives doesn't it? We can easily get all caught up in "something to have, someone to love or something to do or something to hope for" & forget our own mortality. Life is temporal folks we're just passing through & the time to take stock of your life is why you are living because it will



be to late to change your heart once your dead. So Solomon says, "If you want ~~to~~ fragrant name then take a good hard look at your heart!" Now notice what he says about going into the house of morning "The living will take it to heart!" The NLT puts it this way; "It is better to spend your time at funerals than at festivals. For you are going to die, and you should think about it while there is still time." use

Vs. 3-4 **Morals:** Solomon concludes that it is better for a person to have a conscience of what is right & wrong in their lives then to laugh away bad behavior. Why? Well when you are personally grieved by your behavior the repentant heart can be made better. In other words Solomon says in verse 4 it would be better to hang around those that cause you to examine your heart then those who cause you to ignore sin. Man, this ought to speak to every Church that does not teach the word of God. We are doing no good if all we do is make people feel better about themselves without a desire to change their heart. use

The heart of the wise prefers the house of instruction over the house of entertainment. use!

Vs. 5-7 **Music:** Solomon says that it is better to listen to the music that makes you think about where your heart is then ones that just stir your emotions. In other words it would be better to listen to the blues then bubble gum. In verse six he tells us again by using a play on words, the crackling of thrones is just kenneling that starts fast burns <sup>fast</sup> hot but doesn't last & never cooks what's in the pot, thus it won't feed the soul. Oh we make like the tune better of the song of fools but as far as getting us to examine our hearts we are better of hearing a song that corrects our hearts. What's sad is that by staying in this state we lose our reason like a bribe upon our hearts. In other words we end up just fooling ourselves. use

In each of the above three things Solomon is showing us that as far as what is really good for us God knows what is best & what is best in our lives are those things that cause us to really see ourselves as we really are in our hearts. It is interesting though these are the very things that we always try to avoid.

### III.) Vs. 8-10 A patient spirit

What is good for man in life are those things that cause me to become what God wants me to be. Now that he has examined his heart Solomon moves to our spirit & says that what is good is those things that cause us to become more like the Lord.

Vs. 8 **Patience:** Solomon says beware of short cuts as it relates to your spiritual growth. Our spiritual journey is a marathon & not a sprint so we need to prepare for the long haul instead of the shortcut. God is always preparing a heart that is patient instead of one that is proud. How does that relate? Well if things came too quick we would become proud of our abilities but failure brings us to the end of ourselves & we learn to wait upon the Lord to work in our lives.

Vs. 9 The only thing that happens fast when we rush the Lords work is our temper. Frustration builds in those who have no patience. Isn't great how the Lord is breaking us & getting us to the end of ourselves? God always works best in the humble heart the one that's broken & contrite. Oh dear Christian this is what is good for man as through them we become more like Him!

Vs. 10 Finally Solomon says that we have forgotten how bad the "good old days" were. Someone once said that the "good old days" are made from a bad memory & a good imagination. The fact is yesterday is past & can not be changed; tomorrow may not come, so make the most of today! As far as becoming more like Christ we ought not to be

paralyzed by yesterday or hypnotized by tomorrow instead we ought to allow Jesus to do  
His work in us today.

Ecclesiastes  
*"Life Only Under The Son"*  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 7:11-18  
 "I just don't understand me (part a)"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 11-18 Wisdom to accept

- a. Vs. 11-12 Four benefits of wisdom in our lives
- b. Vs. 13-18 Four reasons why the heart won't respond to wisdom

I.) Intro.

Solomon outlined for us the things that are best for us in contrast to what we often think is best for us: What we think is best are;

- Something to have *Finances*
- Someone to love *Family*
- Something to do *Field*
- Something to hope for *Future*

Instead Solomon said the best things in life are two fold:

- Things that cause us to see ourselves as we really are in our hearts.
- Things that cause us to become what God wants us to be.

For several years now each morning I see this same guy. He is not the kind of guy you like to see to start your day, if you know what I mean. First off he is really into himself, flat out arrogant, further more he is rude, quick tempered, judgmental & these are his better qualities. To make matters worse he quotes the Bible, prays & is even involved in his Church. I have gotten so disgusted with this guy that I've decided that I just can't stand to

Use

look at him, so every day now the moment I see him I quickly turn & walk away to show him what I think of him. The bummer is that this seems to have had no effect on him as the next day I see him again & he is just the same. In fact I started to notice that no matter where I go I seem to run into him. I've talked to my wife about him & she told me to just cover the mirror! Oh the human heart!

Jeremiah the prophet speaking on behalf of the Lord said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Then Paul told his young protégé, Timothy "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." It is safe to say that we all have a heart problem but the challenge to us redeemed sinners is what to do about it. In the book of James the ½ brother of Jesus tells us one danger that befalls many of us Christians concerning our fleshly heart, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was." You see we look into the mirror of the word observe our true image & leave forgetting the kind of person we are.

This is Solomon's point in this section as we see 9 times the words wisdom & wise appear. Perhaps we could best understand Solomon's point in the famous prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr written in 1934. Though I don't agree with Reinhold's theology his prayer fits Solomon's words:

"Serenity Prayer"

*God, grant me the serenity to accept what can not change,*

*The courage to change what can be changed,*

*And the wisdom to know the difference.*

*to that life*

In verses 11-18 we have Solomon's version of what can not be changed in this body of ours:

The fact that we are sinners, yes with redeemed hearts but with an old nature that will not be reformed instead it must die.

*struggle w/ the flesh or old nature.*

Finally in verses 19-29 Solomon will talk to us about the courage to change what can be changed & the wisdom to know the difference: Though we still struggle with our old nature we can, as Paul tells the Corinthian's, be changed. As we "*behold, as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*"

## II.) Vs. 11-18 Wisdom to accept

Vs. 11-12 In these two verses Solomon speaks about wisdom & it's benefits as it relates to things that cause us to examine our hearts. Now notice Solomon puts four qualifications upon wisdom as it relates to examining our hearts. In other words seeing our heart, as it really is only valuable based upon these four things:

*> use*

- a. Vs. 11a "*Wisdom is good with an inheritance*". **If we desire to be changed.**

The word "*inheritance*" deals with something that you have that you treasure as an heirloom. In other words wisdom will only do you good if you treasure being more like Jesus than you do being like the world. Simply seeing your self as you really are in your heart won't be any benefit to you unless you allow the Lord to do something about it. It is interesting to me that in Ephesians Paul speaks of our inheritance in Christ. It seems to me that just seeing ourselves as we are apart from how Jesus sees us does us no good.

*> use*

b. Vs. 11b "*And profitable to those who see the sun*" If we want to see the truth. Perhaps today we would say concerning wisdom & seeing ourselves, as we really are "*that it is only as good as those who want to see the light!*" In other words if you really want to see the truth about yourself then it will grant you a great advantage to growth.

c. Vs. 12a "*Wisdom is a defense as money is a defense*" If we want to spare ourselves a lot of problems. The word here for "defense" is from the root word that means *shade or covering*. In other words, wisdom about who you really are can cover you from getting further burned. Folk's if we know certain things about our flesh ahead of time then we can safely navigate our lives through those things that cause us to stumble.

d. Vs. 12b "*Excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it*" If we really want to start living! Literally this reads, "*The gain of awareness skillfully revives living!*" Wisdom in seeing your heart as it really is can lead a person to start really living life as God has attended us too.

Do you get the picture? It's kind of like Solomon is giving us a little infomercial of the product of wisdom as it relates to examining our hearts as he says, "*Do you desire to be changed? Do you want to see the truth? Applying wisdom to your heart will spare you a lot of problems & life will become truly enjoyable!*" "*100% money back guarantee, some restrictions may apply!*"

Vs. 13-14 Solomon had compared wisdom to wealth in the above verses but there is one area that you can not compare wisdom & wealth, the area of accessibility. You see only a few people have wealth but wisdom God has seen fit to put in the hands of all that grasp

for it. Today we call it “*common sense*”, but if it is so “common” why don’t we see more of it? Notice how Solomon starts this with the phrase; “*Consider the work of God*”, what does this say to us? Well it reveals that such wisdom & work is God’s not ours. In other words knowledge about a problem is still going to require an action to change it.

Solomon is going to tell us four warnings as to why wisdom about our heart does not

change our heart:

*they all deal with what we do with the wisdom about our heart.*

- a. Vs. 13b “*Who can make straight what He has made crooked?*”: Resistance to

God’s method. Literally these words are “straiten that which is bent”. You see Solomon’s point? A lot of time we resist the work of God trying to straiten out what he has bent for our benefit. The truth of the matter is that what He bends usually bends us out of shape! Which is a good thing as it changes us from our old image to the image of His Son.

- b. Vs. 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.*” Rejection of God’s plan. It amazes me

how we tend to see prosperity as being from God but not adversity. Literally

this reads “God also has set the one over against the other”. So Solomon

reminds us that both are from the Lord & He uses both to shape us for the

future. Oh how true, so often we say, “*I just can’t see what good can come of*

*this!*” One poet wrote of this saying; “*How God ruthlessly perfects whom He*

*royally elects. How He hammers them & hurts them with mighty blows,*

*converting them into trial shapes of clay which only God understands. While*

*their tortured heart is crying, He lifts beseeching hands.*”



Vs. 15 To illustrate how we can miss read God's wisdom in working on our hearts he takes us to what Billy Joel wrote & sang about years ago, "*Only the good die young!*" A righteous man, one, who lives right, doesn't live long & yet a person who lives wrong lives long. Though this seems to be true it is so only from an earthly perspective because perhaps a righteous person's earthly life may end his true life is just beginning.

- c. Vs. 16 Refusal to see our pride This verse has been greatly misunderstood as to its meaning. It appears to say, "*Being religious is alright as long as it doesn't interfere with our fun!*" In Hebrew it reads different, you see the word "overly" literally means, "make yourself". So it should read "Don't make yourself out to be righteous neither make yourself out to be wise." To show you what he means by this Solomon gives you the outcome of such behavior in the form of the question, "*Why should you destroy yourself?*" Simply put the out come of the above behavior is self inflecting destruction, or if you will, our pride destroys us. The words "*destroy yourself*" are actually one word whose root means to "stun or grow numb". In other words, "*pride numbs the heart in its ability to see its self.*" Wisdom may reveal where your heart really is but if you are making yourself out to by righteous or wise it will numb its effect on you. Paul wrote to the Roman's in chapter 12:3 & said, "*everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*"

- d. Vs. 17 Unresponsive to our sin Solomon now switches to the other side of our heart & says, "*Don't make yourself out to be wicked or foolish*". Why would anyone want to do that? Well Solomon is speaking to heart problems &

is saying don't be indifferent to sin in your heart. In fact the word foolish is actually a word that means "silly". An unresponsive or indifferent heart that down plays the seriousness of dealing with sin will, "*die before its time!*", Solomon says. Pride kills the heart slowly & indifference kills it fast but in both cases the affliction is deadly!

use!

Vs. 18 So far Solomon has given us the benefits of looking at our hearts in wisdom:

- If we desire to be changed
- If we want to see the truth
- If we want to spare ourselves a lot of problems
- If we really want to start living

use!

Then Solomon warned as to why our hearts won't respond to wisdom's look at our hearts:

- Resistance to God's method
- Rejection of God's plan
- Refusal to see our pride
- Unresponsive to our sin

use!

Finally Solomon says, "*It is good that you grasp this*". In other words he says "take possession" of these two truths:

1. "Grasp this": There are great benefits of looking at your heart. Jesus put it this way in John 8:32, "*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"
2. "Do not remove your hand from the other": There are great dangers as well if we refuse to allow the Lord to work in our hearts.

use!

To make sure that we get his point Solomon says, "*he who fears God will escape them all.*" The apostle John said it this way, "*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*"

\* Communion

Ecclesiastes  
 "Life Only Under The Son"  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 7:19-29  
 "I just don't understand me (part b)"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 19-29 Wisdom to change

I.) Intro.

Last week Solomon laid out for us the benefits that self-examination can grant us in -used!  
regards to spiritual growth. He tapped into what Paul described in his personal testimony  
 to the Romans (7:15) "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do,  
that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do." In verse 23 Paul called this a "warring  
against the law of his mind, which brought him into captivity to the law of sin which was  
in his members." Then in Paul's letter to the Galatians, (5:17), he wrote "the flesh lusts  
against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another,  
so that you do not do the things that you wish." There is a clearly a battle for supremacy  
in the life of the believer that requires a choice as to whether or not we will walk  
according the flesh or according the Spirit. We can not put ourselves on some sort of  
automatic pilot in this Christian life. The Spirit of God working through the Word of God  
 is of great benefit but only if, as Solomon showed us:

- we desire to be changed
- want to see the truth
- want to spare ourselves a lot of problems
- want to start living

good job!

used

use

But just because we see our flesh & recognize that we have some big battles against our old nature doesn't make growth automatic. Why? Well Solomon showed us last week we:

- Resist God's method
- Reject God's plan
- Refuse to see our pride
- Unresponsive to our sin

use!

So this week Solomon is going to put us in the same category "sinner's" & then he is going to show us why we need to heed the work of the spirit of God. You see Solomon is going to take us to areas in our lives that we tend to over look yet if we don't deal with these areas they will our ruin:

- a. Tongues: "Secrets" This deals with those little secretes of what we say about others. Gossip & back biting. We would not be aware of this evil if we had not heard of what others have said of us.
- b. Eyes: "Seductions" This deals with flirtations & attractions we have for the opposite sex & how these can escalate into slavery. Of this Solomon knew full well as he kept on succumbing to the batting of the eyes of foreign women.

fact point. Mary I was his know how what was said about him & what he has said about others!  
1000 700 wives 700 concubines

use  
He is cute!

We could think of ourselves, as "good" people were it not for this areas. The tongue & the eye are small organs yet they can cause a great deal of damage in our lives when we are controlled by our passions.

use

### II.) Vs. 19-29 Wisdom to change

Vs. 19 Solomon is going to deal with the attitude that says, "I'm not that bad" or "I'm not as bad as so & so". "Don't you know every body does that, it's ok to look in the window as long as you don't touch the merchandise."

use

The longer we look the more we want to touch!

So He starts with a proverb, "Wisdom strengthens the wise More than ten rulers of the city." What's his point? Simply put Solomon says that those that are open to <sup>looking at their hearts</sup> ~~it~~ will become even stronger in the Lord through examining their own hearts. You see the wise person (the one who wants to see themselves as they really are in their hearts & wants to become what God wants them to be) will not stop in their pursuit. The fact is wisdom only strengthens the wise, it does nothing for the person who is not wise! Further more just because you have been wise in areas of your life in the past does not mean that you will automatically continue to be so, it's a day by day thing. } Use Proverbs

Now notice the words, "More than ten rulers of the city". Solomon does this comparison & shows us that being continually open to the Lord about our heart is more valuable than ten rulers of a city. Why? Well this shows me, in an indirect way, that our greatest area of battle is not from outside the city walls but rather inside our own hearts! } use  
 Vs. 20 To make sure we don't miss his subtle truth Solomon states it plainly, "For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin." Now we must make sure that we don't add the words, "except me!" Paul said something very similar to the Roman's in 3:23 "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". Then the prophet Isaiah said it this way in 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way".

In verse 16 Solomon warned against thinking of yourself as righteous a prideful heart is always a deterrent to spiritual growth. Here he gives the truth concerning ourselves we are sinners. The apostle John put it this way in 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But listen too what John tells us in the next verse "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our

sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The word "confess" is a word that means "to speak the same as another". In other words if we say the same thing about our sins as Jesus does then He will forgive us & cleanse us.

Truly  
The  
Benefit  
is I'd  
be honest  
to speak the  
same about  
as Jesus  
does

Vs. 21-22 Seeing that we are all sinners Solomon speaks to us about some dangers we fall into: Secrets

A. Taking to heart everything people say about: Now the first thing that comes to mind here is that you might actually hear nice things about yourself & start to think that you are the exception to the rule & are the one just man upon the earth. The problem is not in our ears but rather it's in our hearts. We all like to hear of the nice things people think of us but the trouble is that it often goes to our head which leads us to be blinded about our heart. The word "everything" is a word that means the "totality" of something. The second part of this verse is to be found in the words, "Lest you hear your servant cursing you." The first thing I notice is that we would hear our servant saying something. The word "servant" is the Hebrew word for servant by choice. Yeh so? Well we would be more apt hear flattering things from someone we hire someone in who we are in authority over. Then the word "curse" means to be slight or to make light of. In other words what you think you're hearing is not really what they are saying! They're making a joke & it's on you.

use  
vs. 20

use  
C

use!  
SARCASM

B. Talking about other from your heart: How do we know the above is true? Well because we know that we have done the same to others. Folk's this is a daily occurrence is it not? James said that, "And the tongue is a flame of fire. It is full of wickedness that can ruin your whole life. It can turn the entire

course of your life into a blazing flame of destruction, for it is set on fire by  
hell itself.

brock bitters  
is gospel

Vs. 23-25 Now remember the context of this passage, Solomon is dealing with the  
wisdom of examining ones life. He says, "All of what I've been talking about I put to the  
test in my own life!" In other words Solomon really wanted to grow & not continue to  
make the same mistakes in his flesh but instead he says, "it was far from me!" This  
reminds us again of Paul's words in Roman's 7 "For what I am doing, I do not  
understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do." "I  
know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me,  
but how to perform what is good I do not find." Paul continues with his struggle by  
saying (NLT) "I love God's Word with all my heart." Finally Paul says, "Oh, what a  
miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank  
God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord." Now Solomon is not there yet he is just  
in that personal discovery part. In fact it appears by his words that this battle with the  
flesh is driving him crazy.

use!

The fact is most of us never get to this stage of sin hating because we just ignore  
or are ignorant of our behavior. We often cry out saying "No one understands me!" The  
truth is most of the time I don't understand me! I mean why do I do stupid things when I  
know that it just going to bring me down? Solomon was trying to find the secret to what  
makes us tick, wrestling with the bent of our flesh towards self-destruction. Ever eat too  
much stuffing your face until you felt as though you were going to burst only to suffer all  
night with heartburn & wonder why you ate so much. How about this one guys ever tell  
your wives you were going to be home at a specific time & look at your watch & see that

gosh use!  
until  
we see  
I + the  
others

use



you need to leave but stay anyway? Or you ladies ever go to the store & buy that thing after telling your husband you weren't going to spend anything you were just window-shopping? WHY DID WE DO THAT? Consider these scriptures:

- a. Gen. 4:7 God said to Cain before he killed his brother Able "*sin lies at the door And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.*"
- b. Luke 22:31-32 "*Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail.*"

Flesh  
&  
IT'S EASY  
LURE AT  
THE HANDS  
OF SATAN  
TOWARDS SH

The word flesh appears 110 time in the epistles & 25 times in the book of Romans alone.

Solomon knew the failure all to well but he did not know how to have victory.

Vs. 26-28 From handling our tongue Solomon now moves what for him proved to be his

undoing his eyes, seduction. You see the problem with Solomon was that he had an eye for beauty & his eye controlled his heart. In 1 Kings 11:3-4 we are told that "he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God."

eye!

use

Now think of this, Solomon was one of the wisest men that ever lived & yet he was a slave to his sexual appetite. Solomon bit on the same bait every time. To him he was very easily seduced by women look at how he describes their seductions:

a. "Heart is snares and nets": The words snare & net are two different words a snare is that by which you catch an animal live & a net literally means "shutting in" it was a death trap.

so he was caught alive to kill better though he could handle it.

b. "Whose hands are fetters": Literally, "Whose hands are hand cuffs!"

Rephrase

You can take the youngest girl & they know how to turn a guy around. Women are natural at getting men where they want them. Solomon was prone to flirtations, amazing

Ball & Chain

Samsol

how a small little lady can render the strongest man weak & helpless by the way she walks by him. Today young girls seem to be learning this more & more, as you go to the mall & watch this seduction game going on. These young gals are catching starving fish in a barrel with nothing more than a blink of their eyes. Solomon recognized that he was so easily seduced & it was more bitter than death to him.

What was the only way he could handle being taken in by a woman: "He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her." Get my eyes off the ladies & onto the Lord, was Solomon's answer. But the problem was harder than that. Now it would appear that Solomon is some sort male chauvinist pig but remember the context is what he struggles with concerning women & that is lust. He says, "Man I've pondered this looking at my problem with lusting after women over & over & come to the conclusion that the problem is me!" You see in verse 28 he says that he can only find 1 man out of a thousand that understand this weakness but among women he could not find any that could understand his battle against lust. Why? Well because he could never get that close to a gal before his flesh took over. Solomon never could get to know the lady before he knew the lady.

Vs. 29 The trouble with our flesh is not God's fault it's not the way He designed us we were not conscious of such things prior to the fall. Man was not driven by his drives he was driven by what he worshiped & after the fall he became trapped by his passions. So there is this constant battle going on in our members the flesh is always trying to find a new way out to go after it's lusts. This is why Paul said this about our old nature in Romans 6:11-14 (NLT), "So you should consider yourselves dead to sin and able to live for the glory of God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not

*give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God. Sin is no longer your master, for you are no longer subject to the law, which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you are free by God's grace."*

god's  
grace

Ecclesiastes  
*“Life Only Under The Son”*  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 8:1-9  
 “Applying my heart to every work”

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1 A face lift

III.) Vs. 2-9 Why should I listen to you?

I.) Intro.

Solomon left us in verse 29 with the words about our battles with our flesh. According to this verse we read, “*God made man upright*” but our old fallen nature has “*sought out many schemes.*” Our flesh is going to continue to battle the heart that God has made upright thus all the more we need the wisdom of the Word of God by the spirit of God. used,

We seem to have the theology down as to how to be saved but how we are set apart in this life is still a mystery to many of us. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:30 Paul writes concerning believers that we are “in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God; and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” Notice that wisdom, righteousness & sanctification are all things that we need to understand are ours now in Christ. Further more both Paul & Peter refer to being set apart as a work of the Spirit. Thus Solomon’s words in 8:9 give us our part the battle, “*I have applied my heart to every work*”. used

Someone once noted that there are three things God can not do:

- Lie
- Learn
- Change

Now think of this in light of our need to apply the truth that He provides us about our flesh.

- a. He is going to always tell you the truth because He can not lie.
- b. His information is absolutely correct because He can not learn.
- c. His word is trustworthy because He can not change.

good

Folk's that only leaves one problem APPLICATION! To address this problem Solomon is going to give us a fourfold snapshot of what applying His truths in our lives will make us look like. Then finally Solomon he going to take us back to our contract with God when we asked Him to take control of our lives to refresh our memories as to why we need to apply God's word.

## II.) Vs. 1 A face lift

Vs. 1 I'm personally not all that into "before" pictures but I do like the "after" pictures.

But you know why they do those after pictures? To motivate you to apply what ever they are trying to sell you so that you will realize that what's "after" is much more attractive then what is "before". I mean why stay the way you look spiritually when you can allow the Lord to change you to look more like Jesus?

> use

- a. Unique "Who is like a wise man?" One of the great absurdities of life is individuality, people try so hard at trying to be one of a kinds & in so doing all they do is imitate someone else. Yet we are told in 1 Cor. 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation". Hair & clothing styles all start out as something new & "unique" only to become common place. Even the more bizarre styles have formed groups that seek to imitate them. I mean several years ago those who wanted to be really different started wearing black & piercing lips & eyebrows. Man did they ever stand out as "unique" now there are so many of folks dressing like this that they are called "Gothic's". The

> use

same was true in my generation, as we wanted to look & act different than our parents so we got bell-bottom pants, grew our hair long & then instead of being different we were all the same. Here is where I'm going with this, only as we allow the Lord to make us more like His Son do we truly become one of a kind. We all ought to be "new creatures in Christ", this is further brought out in Paul's words to the Ephesians (2:10) "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." The word "workmanship" is where we get our English word poem & it means literally "works of art". Brother's & sister's do you realize that you are Christ's "one of a kind master piece's"? Solomon asks, "Who is like a person that is becoming more like their creator?" The answer is no one! I love the truth of this for us as only in Jesus will their be less of what is common & ordinary rotting flesh & more of the one only sweet fragrance of Christ. Is that not a great motivation to apply wisdom? Remember back in 7:16 Solomon warned against thinking of oneself as wise now he admonishes that the "wisdom of Christ" will make us what we want all along to be "Unique".

- b. Understanding "And who knows the interpretation of a thing?": Literally this reads "solution of words". Solomon tells us that as we apply God's word to our lives we will gain understanding, but understanding of who? Well that's easy based upon the text the greatest mystery we have is "Why we do the things we do!" People are again always trying to "find themselves" so they go off some where & contemplate the sound of one hand clapping. Or they hang

our with some old guy that gives them a mantra to say over & over. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, (NLT) "*Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now.*" The knowledge of self is the most illusive knowledge there is but it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most valuable next to the knowledge of Christ. How many times have we said to ourselves, "*If I only knew what I know now?*" Folks as we apply the word of God in our lives we will truly find ourselves as we lose our old self's.

- c. Unmasked "*A man's wisdom makes his face shine*": Did you notice that it is something inner that changes the outer? Applying God's word in our lives changes every thing especially our countenance. How great is it as John wrote that "*our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ & that our joy will be complete.*" You ever stop to think about a things that shine? When you polish something really well you can see a reflection in it right? Well if we are the ones being polished to make our faces shine whose reflection do you suppose people will see? Well consider what Paul said in 2 Cor 3:18 (NLT) "*all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.*" Wow what a powerful truth this is! The word of God "unmasks us" as James put in 1:25 "if you keep looking steadily into God's perfect law--the law

use { that sets you free--and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."

d. Unpolluted "And the sternness of his face is changed" : It is interesting that some render this verse to say that the hardness of a person's face is changed while other say that it means that the strength of a persons face is doubled.

Could it be that both are correct? Applying the word of God in our lives

use { causes our hardness to disappear while at the same time allowing the Lord's character to be seen. Again we are told in James 3:17 "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Is that not what people say when they see the work of the Spirit of God through the Word of God changes the child of God? "What's happened to you your not so hard & harsh, you've changed & mellowed!" use }

So here's the bottom line Christian's allowing God to work on you will cause you to become:

- Unique
- Understanding
- Unmasked
- Unpolluted

### III.) Vs. 2-9 Why should I listen to you?

As I look at this section I realize that Solomon responds to what so often we do when someone is trying to get us to apply truth. You know that look that we get? It's the "Why



should I listen to you" look! So Solomon is going to give us three reasons why we ought to listen to him & apply the word of God to our lives.

Vs. 2 Several things strike me as I look at this verse:

a. "I counsel": The word "counsel" is not in the Hebrew it was put in to make since of this section as it reads just "I". In other words it literally reads "I, guard the King's word!" So? Well to read it the way it literally is written is to catch anguish over not having done so in his own life. Solomon had wrote in 7:29 about the schemes of the flesh & then in 8:1 about the benefits of applying the word of God, now he begins to give you reasons to respond & perhaps the first is otherwise you will end up like me!

b. "The king's commandment": I find it interesting here that here Solomon uses a "second person" wording. You see Solomon was the King yet through out Ecclesiastes he refers to himself as "the preacher". So? Well I think Solomon does this as he relates what he has to say about applying the Word of God to that of approaching a king in his court. It seems many of the Jewish writers saw this verse as referring to the King of Kings or the King as being God.

In other words it seems as though Solomon is saying, "Don't end up like me by not listening to God's Word!" Then in these verse he will give you reasons why we need to hear & obey the Word in our lives:

a. Vs. 2 "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God." **Obey** the Word of God because you promised you would! That's pretty simple is it not? When we became Christian's we promised we would trust & obey. In fact John tells us in 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:4-6 that if we say, "I know him," but do not do what he commands we are a liar, and the truth is not in us. But if anyone

*obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."*

Not obeying the Word of God is not an option for the true Christian it's what we promised we would do. So many folk's treat their relationship with God as some sort of insurance plan that has been paid once & we just put it into the safe deposit box & forget about it until we need it. > use

- b. Vs. 3-4 **He is the King & you're not**: I don't know how else to sum up these two verses then to say that "He is God & you're not!" We need to obey the word of God & apply it to our lives simply because it is God's Word! In fact Solomon lists three things we should do in light of the fact that it's God's word. > use

1. **Be faithful**: "*Do not be hasty to go from his presence.*" Literally don't hide yourself from Him. When the Lord is speaking to you make sure you stay there & listen. All too often the Lord may be speaking to issues in our lives that we would prefer to get up & walk away from. We forget He is the King of King's & the Lord of Lord's so we best be faithful & stay to hear what He has to say to us! > great

2. **Be humble**: "*Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him.*" That which is best is what the Kings say's not what we think. Notice how Solomon puts what we take our stand on in contrast to that which pleases the King. What we want is "an evil thing" compared to that which "pleases him." In other words humble out & do that which pleases the King instead of that which feeds the flesh! > use!

3. **Be teachable:** *“Where the word of a king is, there is power.”* Solomon follows this up with the words that clarify what he means, *“who may say to him, What are you doing?”* Hebrews 4:12 reminds us that *“the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* So what is the only logical choice that we can have concerning the word of God in our lives, remaining teachable to it. How tragic it is that Paul says in 2 Tim. 4:3-4 that *“the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth.”*

use!

c. Vs. 5a *“He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful.”* Finally, Solomon gives us the third reason we need to obey God’s word in our lives. It’s to our own benefit! What a great reason all by it’s self! As we apply the word in our lives we are going to avoid all the self inflicted misery that we put upon ourselves because we don’t obey it. From this Solomon gives how applying God’s word to our lives will help, *“a wise man’s heart discerns both time and judgment.”* Solomon says that the word of God in our lives gives us two important things that we don’t get any other way:

1. **Time:** When. In other words God’s word can serve as a great warning beacon in our lives. This can be for that which is good as well as those things that can bring us harm.

2. **Judgement:** What. Further more Solomon says that God's word can keep us from a great deal of things that would bring judgment upon us.

Vs. 6 Solomon further gives insight by what he means in this verse by saying that God's word is not limited by our situation no matter how trouble we have gotten ourselves into. In other words it's never too late to start obeying the word of God even though you haven't & your life is a mess! "*for every matter there is a when & a what!*" Amazing how things begin to turn around when we start applying God's word.

Vs. 7-8 Solomon continues on in these verses to say that the "*when's*" & the "*what's*" are beyond our controls.

- We don't know "*what will happen*"
- We don't know "*when it will occur*"

He further elaborates by saying that man has no power to rule over his life or power to control his death. Further more there is no way to put of living or dying no matter how cunning or powerful a person might be the powerful & the poor die alike. So the only thing that makes since is what Solomon tells us in the next verse.

Vs. 9a "*All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun.*" In other words as long as I'm still breathing what's best for me is to apply God's word to every area of my life! Great counsel don't you think?

Ecclesiastes  
*"Life Only Under The Son"*  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 8:9b-17  
 "Between two worlds"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 9b-14 What good is application?

III.) Vs. 15-17 Love is better than life

I.) Intro.

Solomon has dealt with the importance of applying God's truth to our lives. In the first verse of chapter 8 he even gave us a snapshot of what applying scripture to our lives would cause us to look like:

- Unique
- Understanding
- Unmasked
- Unpolluted

Further more Solomon told us why we should do so:

- We said we would
- He's God & we're not
- It's to our own benefit

Now as good as all of this is Solomon now anticipates two questions for the person who wants to make changes in their life but sees that in the world being a on fire believer does not always benefit you. Perhaps you have experienced the same frustration that Solomon speaks about? We Christian's, who really want to grow in our relationship with the Lord, hear the Word of God & are convicted by it as we see our sinful attitudes & actions. So we repent & allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives to change us. Great praise God!

"What about Billy?"  
 Peter had it  
 In 21:20-21  
 "But Lord what about this man?"

Until we run into some person who claims to be a believer goes to Church yet is living as if there is no God & getting rewarded for it! Man is that ever frustrating! For me as a pastor my frustration is not only personal it's professional. I mean here at Calvary Chapel we teach the scriptures verse by verse explaining them so that God's people will have every opportunity to hear & apply the Word of God. Yet it seems that many Christians would rather go to Churches that don't teach the word of God & instead teach pop psychology. My prayer of frustration usually sounds like this, "*Man, Lord here we are honoring You & Your Word & we are getting hammered for it & those that don't are building larger buildings to house all the folks that are coming!*" You can tell that I've dealt with this once or twice! That leads me to the first of Solomon's anticipated questions:

- "What good does a changed life get me?" To which Solomon will address then answer.

Then he will ask the second important question based upon his answer to the first:

- "How do I deal with living on fire for the Lord in-between two worlds?" To which Solomon will give us three things to help us.

## II.) Vs. 9b-14 What good is application?

Vs. 9-11 Now remember Solomon has just said that he committed himself to apply the Word of God by the Spirit of God. *In other words as long as I'm still breathing what's best for me is to apply God's word to every area of my life!* Further more he had told us that applying God's wisdom will enable us to understand the "*when & what*" (**time & judgement**) in our lives (verse 5b). So Solomon gives us a hypothetical situation from the audience that deals with a person who has not applied God's truth to their lives. Can

8:9b.

you hear the question? "What good does a changed life living surrendered to God get me?" "Why look at the people who have not applied the wisdom of the Word to their lives!" used!

Pay attention here as Solomon gives us three separate scenario's that seem to indicate that living an on fire life won't get us anything. But before we look at these three situations notice that there is something similar about each of them. Solomon says:

- Vs. 9b "*a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.*"
- Vs. 10 "*I saw the wicked buried*".
- Vs. 11 "*the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily*".

What's the common denominator? Well, in each of these three verses the perspective is clearly HUMAN. These are all observations that clearly look only from man's perspective, without ever considering every angle. When I was a goldsmith the master goldsmith taught me a trick about three-dimensional art; to get a true perspective you needed to view the jewelry from every angle & not just one! So right off the bat we know that the perspective about the issue comes from not seeing it from HEAVENS perspective.

### Humanly:

1. Vs. 9b **The bad win:** "*There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.*" The word "*time*" in Hebrew is also rendered "*when*" & the word's "*rules over*" used! comes from the root word that means to "*dominate*". Perhaps Solomon's words could be rendered "*It's just a matter of time before a person in authority dominates someone to their hurt.*" used! Instead of feeding the flock they fleece it! When they should rule over folks for the benefit of all they instead use their advantage to their own gain.

Perhaps you have seen the words of chapter 9:11 printed some where as it reads 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."* Someone has long ago  
 added after this the phrase **"BUT THAT'S THE WAY TO BET!"** Why? Because it usually seems that those in power are their to get what they can out of it. Recently I saw an excerpt that listed the worse 250 or so jobs in America surprisingly they listed the worse job as the President of the US, baloney! Why do so many crave this position if it's so bad? Because they want to rule over others for their own gain, which will hurt others. So Solomon uses the hypothetical point out that those with unchanged hearts are the one that so often seem to get ahead & use their positions to oppress.

2. Vs. 10 **The dead are praised**: Solomon seems to again anticipate our thought processes by answering his own objections, *"Yeh, maybe they oppress others now but they will get it in the end!"* But again from a human perspective often the morally wrong are praised at their deaths as being wonderful examples or righteous rulers but the very people they oppressed. It is almost common place to hear wicked rulers praised by the people they have treated so poorly. I watched in amazement as Russian people lined up all over Red Square at a change to go in & pay homage to Lenin who had ordered the murder of so many of their country men. People seem to be like computers that erased their memory files. The people lived their lives oppressing others & finally the "wicked witch" is gone & people stand up praise what a wonderful ruler they were. Are they nuts? I like what the prophet Jeremiah said concerning King "Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: "They shall not lament



for him, Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my sister!' They shall not lament for him, Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!' He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem." Instead what often happens is that these despots are remembered only in glowing terms & all their evil is forgotten. One Jewish commentary replaces the word forgotten with the word praised. Again often we see monuments raised in effigy to some dead dictator who treated their subjects as dirt. A wife & her son set at the funeral of her husband who was a horribly abusive man often beating them both. She listened at the eulogy as all these wonderful things were being said of this man she had been married too. Finally she leaned over to her teenage son & said, "Son you had better go over & see if that's your father!" Solomon's point is that even at their death people forget & even praise the unchanged wickedness in people, all the while those who live growing more & more in love with the Lord are forgotten altogether.

3. Vs. 11 **Judgment is delayed**: Finally, Solomon listed the third of his scenarios that seem to fly in the face of applying wisdom in our lives, the area of nothing happening to those who choose not to apply God's word in their lives. We often say things like, "What's it going to take to before so & get the picture that they need Jesus?" Often the delay of this seems to promote an attitude of invincibility. This attitude then invades more & more of society to where wickedness becomes the norm. Can you hear what's behind this statement? "When does the good team get to win?" God's patience in dealing with the unrepentant seems to promote a greater bent towards sin & what's worse encourages others towards sinful behavior as well.

So Solomon uses these scenarios as reasons not to apply the Word of God to our lives:

- SW
- The bad win, here we are applying the Word of God in our lives & those that don't get ahead & take their power out on us!
  - The dead are praised, even at the end of their lives those who choose not to apply God's truths to their lives are remembered for what they weren't instead of what they were
  - Judgment is delayed, things never seem to happen to those who choose not to apply God's word to get them to turn their lives over to Him & instead they just get worse & influence others to become like they are!

SW { Vs. 12-14 "Ok you just convinced me not to apply God's word in my life, there's no benefit to it!" Hold on there, this was all just from the "human" perspective. Again let's take a look at these three verses altogether to get the perspective:

- Vs. 12 "who fear before Him"
- Vs. 13 "it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him"
- Vs. 14 "There is a vanity which occurs on earth"

SW Clearly the common denominator as far as perspective in these three verses is from God's or "heavens" perspective. So Solomon answers the above three arguments applying God's word by given us heavens view on each scenario.

### Heavenly:

1. Vs. 12 The righteous are rewarded: "What does or does not happen to them from a human perspective doesn't change what will happen to you!" The sinner can be resolved to continually habitually practice sin & do so through out a long life, yet that has no baring on how much you will be blessed by living a life that seeks to apply God's Word. Do you see what Solomon is saying? His point is that it is foolish not to

apply the Word of God on your life based upon the missed perception that others aren't & nothing is happening to them! Simply put to argue against applying God Word's in our life based upon what is or isn't happening to others is faulty logic. → use

Why? Because the issue is not what's going on with other it's what's going on with us! In the words, "*I surely know*", Solomon makes sure that we understand that this is good goal!

a promise based upon experience. The word "*good*" in this promise is the word rendered else where as "*beautiful*". What is it that will be beautiful? Well according

to what we already read in Eccl. 3:11 "*He has made everything beautiful in its time,*

*He has put eternity in their hearts*", it's us! In other words what someone else looks like doesn't have any effect on what you look like. Further more clearly Solomon has used

a heavenly perspective, as it is our changed lives that are beautiful before the Lord

that matters. Folk's the truth is we are going to all appear before the Lord & we know that it will be well for those that seek to continually apply His Word.

2. Vs. 13 What matters is what God says: Literally this reads that "*the wicked won't have long days in the shade!*" At the death of those who choose not to apply the Word may be praised by men but what matters is not what those that choose to have selective memories may say but rather what God has to say. In other it's going to get hot for them. And what does Solomon tells us that God will say? Well it says, "*it will not be well with the wicked*". Further more with the view from the heavens existence in eternity is a lot longer then that of a persons stay on the earth. We get all caught up in what other say about us but what the believer longs to hear are the Words of Jesus when He tells us "*Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*" use

3. Vs. 14 **It's only temporary**: If judgement is delayed it is only so here upon the earth.

There is no doubt that at times the righteous get what the wicked deserve & the wicked get what the righteous deserve but that is again only so upon the earth. 2 Peter 3:9 reminds us that *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* There are I suppose those that use His patience as an excuse to remain in sin but here what Peter went on to say; *"the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,"*

So Solomon has answered the objections that could be raised about the benefits of being on fire for the Lord. Sure:

- The bad win - **The righteous are rewarded**
- The dead are praised - **What matters is what God says**
- Judgment is delayed - **It's only temporary**

### III.) Vs. 15-17 Love is better then life

Ok so your convinced that it's better to live applying the Word of God in your life but *"How do you deal with living between earth & eternity?" "How do we handle the difference between the "human" perspective & the "heavenly" perspective?"* Well in the closing three verses Solomon is going to give us three things to focus on.

1. Vs. 15 Cease the day: Now this verse seems to some to advocate a hedonistic "who cares" attitude. Yet the Jewish commentators saw this as rather enjoying the law of the Lord. It is not the advocating of a pleasure oriented life style but rather in light of the context it is that the best way to counter the injustice of those that don't want to apply the Word in their lives is just enjoy the Lord, cease the day! The truth of the matter is "today all you have is today!" Think about this for a moment, God has blessed you with today so be content with that which He has given you to & enjoy Him. Paul told Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:6-8 "*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*" I've heard it put this way, "*The best way to handle this life & those that don't want the truth of the Word of God in their lives is out live them!*" I think that's great advice don't you?

2. Vs. 16 The answer is not in your head: Solomon says that he did not sleep day or night in his quest to understand nature & causes of the difference between earth & eternity. He could see the problem, notice that he had heavens perspective (wisdom) as well as the "*business that is done on earth*" but that brought him no relief. Folks, as a pastor I see this kind of stuff all the time & it drives me nuts. People who don't want to make the changes in their lives & it's to their own destruction. So what are you saying pastor? Well I've learned that all I can do is "*speak the truth in love*" people still have freedom of choice & it's not always about having the right answer. Every person has choices that they make just like I do & if their choice is to not apply the wisdom of the Word of God then the most important thing I can do is pray that God will do what ever is necessary to get them to see the error of their ways!

3. Vs. 17 It's God Word by His power: The only One that fix a broken heart or a busted up world is the Lord. I have to remind myself of this quite often it is the "work of God, a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it." Deut. 32:3-4 tells us that we should "Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He." Psalm 10:5 tells us that "His ways are always prospering" & in Hab. 3:6 we are told that "His ways are everlasting."

Is it not great that we don't have to have it all figured out? No we can rest in the presence of the Lord & apply His truth & continue to grow in His grace & knowledge!

Ecclesiastes  
 "Life Only Under The Son"  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 9:1-10  
 "The Simpler things in life"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-6 Stuff happens

III.) Vs. 7-10 Search for significance

I.) Intro.

In chapter 8:9b-11 Solomon gave us three separate scenario's that seem to indicate that living an on fire life won't get us anything. Yet it was clear that the perspective was human & not heaven. He then answered his own hypothetical objections with answers from heaven's perspective. Finally he gave us some basic instruction on how to live an on fire life in a fallen world.

- Cease the day & let God handle the rest, was his counsel.

Yet with that said how are we to determine whether or not we are living up to what God would have us to live? I mean is there some sort of indicator that pops out that lets us know that we are on course? Sort of like my Bible software program on my computer when I'm doing a verse search & I've not typed in the right words it dings. I kind of think it dings as a way of mocking me!

In this chapter Solomon takes us to what we all at times fall into, "trying to determine God's love or blessings based upon circumstances". Prosperity & adversity are not always accurate indicators of God's approval or disapproval. Instead Solomon will give us five things to live life by that are better indicators than circumstances.

## II.) Vs. 1-6 Stuff happens

I had this strange dream the other night all dealing with ministry. It seems that I was asked to do a funeral, (don't worry it wasn't anyone I knew) on my way there I was picking someone else so they could attend. We seemed to get there all right but there were a series of fences that we had to climb over then a sprinkler came on & got our suits wet. I mean the closer we got the further it seemed we were. I could see all the people standing outside at the graveside waiting for me to get there but I was not getting any closer. Then I woke up. As I was driving to church it dawned on me "This is ministry"!

What? Let me explain! Ministry is a constant journey where you are trying to prepare people, picking them up along the way, to bring them to an event that most would rather not ever face, "death". The fences & sprinklers? Well those are obstacles that we can over come in Christ & our love for one another that would keep us from our appointed time. Or it all could have been just bad Chinese food? What does this have to do with the text? Nothing I just wanted to tell you my weird dream! No Actually it is where Solomon is taking us. *Life Reveal as well as prepares us about our death.*

Vs. 1 Here in this verse Solomon carries over the thought of the last three verses in chapter eight, namely that the on fire believers life is well protected in the hand of God.

The phrase "hand of God" appears 15 times in scripture & is a symbol of his power & authority. Wow what a great verse of comfort! Solomon makes two statements

concerning "the hand of God".  
that

*we in his hand*

- a. "The righteous and the wise": We immediately think of Jesus' words in John 10:27-30 where he says; "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither



shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

انهم ايضا في ايدى يده.

- b. "And their works": Not only are we told here that we are in His hand it says our "works" are as well. The word "works" in this context refers to all our affairs of life & the events that relate to them, as being appointed, ordered, & directed by the hand of God, all for our good.

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Well it's about time finally some good news a warm & fuzzy message that can make me

feel better about life as a Christian. In the word's of the esteemed college football

Nick Jackson

announcer "Woo Nelly". Look at the rest of Solomon's words in verse 1 "People know

neither love nor hatred by anything they see before them." Now these words don't render

the truths above ineffectual but they do tell us that we can not look at prosperity or

adversity as accurate indicators of us or our works being in the hand of God! Simply put

you can't say, "Man I must be doing real good spiritually right not because every thing is

going my way!" Nor can you say, "Man I must have done something wrong spiritually

because life stinks!"

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Now here me out on this because it's something that we all do. "We try to judge

whether we are the objects of God's love or displeasure based upon arbitrary events in

our lives." Look at what Solomon is telling us here in this verse:

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1. "People know neither": First Solomon says that neither love nor hate is

accurate. It's not like a broken thermometer that well tell you only that it's hot

or that it's cold, no neither!

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2. "*Love nor hatred*": These are the biblical way of saying "acceptance" & "rejection". So you can't know whether you are accepted or rejected based upon life's circumstances.
3. "*By anything they see before them*": Notice that it says "anything" they see before them. Again Solomon points out that it doesn't matter what they see as acceptance or rejection it can't be used as a bases of understanding our position before the Lord.

Vs. 2 Here in this verse Solomon is going to tell us why circumstances are poor indicators of God's acceptance or rejection of us:

- "*All things come alike to all*": The Hebrew reads "all alike to all". The word "alike" is an interesting one as it means the "who, what, when, where & how" happens the same. Since the fall of man the outward things in this life, all people share alike; which proves that they can know neither acceptance nor rejection. Jesus said in Matt. 5:45 "*He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain <sup>sun</sup> on the just and on the unjust.*" In other words the control group & the experimental both have the same events going into them so we can not accurately determine that only those who are right with God have only good things happen to them. Thus, "One event happens to":

- a. **Righteous** "*The righteous and the wicked*": The first control group is dealing with a persons outward behavior, their "right & wrong" yet the same event will happen to both a person who is morally right as well as one that is morally wrong. Thus the conclusion is that the events of a persons life do not necessarily indicate the acceptance or rejection of a persons moral standard. This is what he had said in

8:14 *"the wicked get what the righteous should have gotten & the righteous get what the wicked should have gotten."*

b. **Respectable** *"To the good, the clean, and the unclean"*: The second group is to

*see* those who practice purity personally & those who don't. Now this is not an outward thing but rather an inward thing. You can't look at the events happening to a person's life as an indicator to see if they are holy or have some hidden sin.

*see* Job had his so call friends accuse him of some hidden sin. Jesus dealt with this same idea in John 9:2-3 when His disciples asked Him, *"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"* Jesus answered, *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."*

c. **Religious** *"To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice"*: To the person

who actively worships God & the one that doesn't. I've heard people say when bad things happen to them, "You need to get right with God!" Now it's true that they need to get right with God but that does not mean that you can determine that if they get right with God that nothing bad is going to happen to them ever again.

d. **Relationally** *"As is the good, so is the sinner"*: The one that seeks to please God & the one that "misses the mark" with God.

e. **Reverent** *"He who takes an oath as he who fears an oath"*: To the Jews they found taking an oath to be a bad thing though they did it. James tells us in 5:12 to "not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your *"Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment."*

In every one of those contrasting control groups Solomon says that a person can not determine their acceptance or rejection based only upon outward favorable circumstances.

Vs. 3 Solomon says that it is an extremely frustrating thing (evil) in this life that you can't determine God's acceptance or rejection based upon outward event-s in our lives.

He goes on to say here that some have used this as an excuses to continue to not apply the word of God in their lives. This is what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:4 that some look at this & said, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." Finally Solomon brings all to the same end "death". Now he is looking at death from just a human point of view. It seems as though those who choose not live full out for God get worse because their seems to be no difference in the events of their lives when compared to those who do live full out for God.

Vs. 4 I love this, Solomon says to those that are "joined" to all the living there is hope!

Literally it reads, "To all who are in fellowship with all that is alive there is confidence."

The believer knows that this is not all that there is he may be "living like a dog but it's far better then a dead lion!" Especially if you are the Delisle's or the Porters' dog's!

Vs. 5 Ok then what does all these things in life do for us? Well according to Solomon then are all preparing us for death? You see death & the events that happen in life are always asking us the same question, "What am I living for?"

- "The living know that they will die": This world is not where it's at for them there is something more that awaits them. They are prepared to die. Why? Well because they

realize that God's acceptance of them is found upon His word & not upon trying to read & understand the circumstances of there lives.

- Vs. 5-6 "*The dead know nothing & they have no more reward*": Those that don't know the Lord as well as those who are dead physically still are trying to live life reading the events of their lives like the astrological signs & tea leaves. They lived for this life, yet they were not prepared to die. Those things that they loved, hated & envied die with them. Hebrews 9:27 says, "*it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*". Woody Allen once said, "*I'm not afraid to die; I just don't want to be there when it happens!*" But he will be, the question is has he prepared to do so. The fact is you can tell the most about the way a person lived by the way they die!

Solomon's point is that "*The issue in this world is not how you are living now but rather it's where you are going to be living in the future!*"

### III.) Vs. 7-10 Search for significance

Vs. 7-10 Ok if situations & circumstances are not are not good indicators of God's acceptance or rejection then what is? Well Solomon lists five practical things here

1. Vs. 7a **Joy**: Notice that the joy is found in the simple things in life & not what we would normally think of as "good things". Bread is a symbol of life & wine of joy, partake of life in Christ with joy & enjoy every part of it. Take it all in. Why? Because of the work that God had done in your heart

2. Vs. 7b **Faith**: Here we see why we can have such joy in life God has already accepted us in His beloved. Now wait a minute it say's works! Yeh I know but what is the work of God? Well Jesus said in John 6:29 "*This is the work of*

*see*  
God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” Is that not great? I mean there is no need to read the events of your life to determine if you are going to be accepted or rejected by God why? Because Ephesians 1:6 tells us that “*He has made us accepted in the Beloved.*”

3. Vs. 8 **Purity & power**: Garments in scripture symbolize practical righteousness & oil represents the Holy Spirit. “*Live a pure Holy life in the power of the spirit*”, that is always a clearer sign that you are accepted in the Lord. In 1 John 2:6 the apostle John wrote “*He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.*” Well how did Jesus walk on this earth? In purity & power!

4. Vs. 9 **Faithful**: It is interesting to me that Solomon brings in the marriage & say’s that if you are living right on with the Lord you will be treating each other right. Again John says in 4:20 if anyone says, “*I love God,*” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” It does not get any better than to live life enjoying the spouse God has given you. You can tell a person who has a great relationship with the Lord by the way they treat their spouse!

5. Vs. 10 **Consistent**: Solomon says, what ever God has given you to do in this life then do it as unto the Lord & keep doing it until you are no longer able.

Folk’s this is a much greater way of determining where you are at in the Lord then outward circumstances:

- **Joy**
- **Faith**
- **Purity & power**
- **Faithful**
- **Consistent**

Ecclesiastes  
 "Life Only Under The Son"  
 V.) Chp. 7:1-9:18 Wisdom and the world!  
 Eccl. 9:11-18  
 "Predictably unpredictable"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 11-12 Gifts no guarantee

III.) Vs. 13-18 Truth does not insure triumph

I.) Intro.

Last week Solomon took us too the truth that situations & circumstances are not good indicators of where a person is spiritually. Why? Because "everything occurs alike to all". Then Solomon gave us five inward things that were good spiritual health indicators.

- Joy
- Faith
- Purity & power
- Faithful
- Consistent

All of this leads us to this section where again Solomon is going to let us know that even having these five things does not come with any guarantees. As far as every day life is concerned it is predictably unpredictable. Life seems to be grading on a curve & I'm living on a different standard. There is an old German proverb that goes like this, "We grow too soon oldt, & too late schmart!" Today we would say "If I only knew then what I know now!" Solomon's point is that even in the application of the Word of God in which the fruit of "joy, faith, purity, power, faithfulness & consistency" are clearly seen in your life does not mean that you will be able to avoid all the hurts & problems of life. Now I do think that by living in obedience to the Word of God you will be able to avoid a

lot of the self inflicted ones. However the problem is that we become overly cautious & tend to live only in the arena of our strengths thinking that this will some how keep us from adversity. In other words we have traded in the superstition of favorable circumstances for the fruit of the Spirit as a guarantee for life.

## II.) Vs. 11-12 Gifts no guarantee

Vs. 11 Notice how Solomon starts this, "I returned and saw under the sun". He goes back to that thought of "all things happening alike to all" & plugging into this verse 10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" still comes to the conclusion that this does not guarantee out comes. Solomon takes the five spiritual indicators of verses 7-10 & puts them along side what might be their physical counter parts.

- a. "The race is not to the swift": Joy filled life. You will recall in verse 7a that Solomon spoke of joy in the simple everyday things of life (bread & wine). How does that fit a race? Well think of it this way, is not life like a race? Paul told his young protégé Timothy that he had "finished the race" Literally this reads in the Hebrew "The run is not to the light". Now perhaps you might have noticed I'm not very light. Now if Willard & a couple of you thinner types lined up on the track next to me for a 50-yard race you would be thinking, "I may not win this thing but I'm sure I'll beat Dale!" Why? Because you think the "race is to the light" but Solomon says (pardon the pun) "Not so fast!" Have you ever noticed how fast time flies when you are having fun & enjoying the moment? Man, you can be right on enjoying life in the Lord way out ahead & still not end up where you thought you would be. Have you ever tried to think of where you thought you would be in a year then



have a great year full of the fruit of joy & still realize that you were not where you thought you'd be? The race is not to the swift? A life lived in fullness of joy does not guarantee that you will end up where you thought you would.

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b. "Nor the battle to the strong": A life filled with faith. Literally this is the

see

"war is not to the warrior". What does this have to do with faith? Well who is it that is best equipped to do battle? Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-11 "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Why it's the

see

person of faith. But look at what Solomon says here the "war is not to the warrior", trusting the Lord & "being strong in the power of His might" does not guarantee that the battle your in will turn out the way you want.

see  
see

c. "Nor bread to the wise": Life lived in purity & power. Bread is a symbol of

see

life so it seems as though Solomon is saying life does not always go to those who are living it in purity & power. Clearly it is wise to live life in purity & power but it does not guarantee life will happen according to our plans.

see

Sometimes we think of we are just living full our obedient life that our wish for life will go just as we want. Yet many times that is not the case as we all can attest.

d. "Nor riches to men of understanding": A life characterized by faithfulness.

What has that to do with wealth especially in light of verse 9 where Solomon equates faithfulness with living joyfully with the spouse that you Love? Well we are told in Prov 31:10 "a virtuous wife her worth is far above rubies." In fact several times in Proverb's wisdom, wealth & a wife are all pictured

together. Peter tells us to "dwell with our wives with understanding". A faithful life as seen in two people dwelling together in unity still will not guarantee that life will turn out the way you plan or thought. I was saying this to Donna the other day that right now we are really enjoying our lives together perhaps more than at any other time. I truly feel wealthy because of this but that has not spilled over to every other area of my life. Instead it has allowed me to be thankful for the one area of my life that is where I like it.

- e. "Nor favor to men of skill": A consistent life. Here the idea in the Hebrew is that of a person who puts their abilities to consistent use. One version puts it this way "skilled people don't necessarily receive special treatment". I mean we can live consistently & we don't get any special treatment do we? This week I've had to deal with folk's who have for lack of better words misrepresented their original offers. We did not get special treatment because we were a Church no we were lied too just like every body else would have been.

Now Solomon tells us two reasons why the fruits of a life lived applying the word of God does not guarantee the out come: "But time and chance happen to them all."

1. "Time": The Hebrew word is else where rendered as providence which Webster's dictionary defines as God's care & guidance. The fact is that the Lord controls the "timing" of our lives. It is He that guides as best for us. People often speak of their lives in terms of being "in the right place at the right time". It is interesting to me that Solomon reverses this & says that God makes sure that we are at the right time before we are at the right place.

Here's where I'm going with this, "The timing of the event deals with where we are personally & the even with that which changes us." I love the fact that God is preparing me before He places me in situations. Now I don't always appreciate this when it's happening as I get a little impatient wondering why things don't turn out the way I wanted them too.

2. "And chance": This refers to the occurrence or event being under God's control. So not only <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ where we are at personally in God's hand but so to the event. Again we may not like this because we like to captain our own ship, thank you very much!

Vs. 12 Here Solomon is going to illustrate why it's better to be under His divine hand than one in which even a life characterized by obedience doesn't dictate the out come. We would all at times like to simplify life to just a mathematical equation. You know live this way & this will always be the out come. But God is not just interested in your destination; He is interested in you! Thus, "man also does not know his time". Why? Because believe it or not we would not always chose that which would make us more like Jesus? I know that might be a revelation to you but the truth is we would often chose things that get us ult, "caught" in the things of this world. To illustrate this Solomon gives us two examples in the animal world.

- a. "Like fish taken in a cruel net"
- b. "Like birds caught in a snare"

These two animals share something in common, freedom. There seems to be no strings upon these two a types of animals. I mean they are free to go & do what ever they want. We even say, "free as a bird". The same is true with fish they just hang out & go where

they want when they want. Yet with that freedom they are not always able to determine that which will ensnare them! Here's my point we would all like to have certain guarantees in this life but the truth is it is much better for us that God is directing our steps. We are all familiar with Proverbs 3:6 "In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." Solomon is counting on the "Lord directing his paths". Here is what Paul says in 2 Thess 3:5 "may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ." Could it be that the Lord is using the non-guarantee's of life to direct our hearts into "the love of God and the patience of Christ"? Oh how thankful I am that the Lord is constantly sparing me from being "suddenly snared by an evil time".

### III.) Vs. 13-18 Truth does not insure triumph

Vs. 13 You will at once notice the similarities between this verse & verse 1. Solomon is going to give us another thing we need to recognize as not being automatic, TRUTH DOES NOT INSURE TRIUMPH any more then gifts are a guarantee of life turning out the way you planed.

Vs. 14-16 There are many who attempt to find out just where this "little city" was & what happened but Solomon does not give us the details he is only interested in this as it relates to an illustration. It's like the parables that Jesus used "stories cast along truth to illustrate". So what do we have here?

- a. Vs. 14a "a little city with few men in it": Simply put it has no natural resources to defend it's self.
- b. Vs. 14b "a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares around": A powerful enemy with fast resources.

That's the setting of the story hopelessness & desperation on the part of this little city.

So? Well think of this, be in that little city as this powerful King is attacking & there's no way of escape. What would you do? Well I'd be open to anything, any idea to save my skin. > geon

Vs. 15 The word "*found*" is literally "*to come forth*". Upon the scene comes this insignificant man with an idea to spare the city with its citizens. Now although the English version says, "he by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no one remembered that same poor man." The Hebrew can be rendered "he could have delivered the city yet no one would listen to the poor man." Ouch! Just because I read the Bible ~~is~~ the truth doesn't mean that I will triumph does it?

Vs. 16 What was the problem? Well Solomon tells you a universal truth: "Wisdom is better than strength." How many times have we said, "we out smarted" someone who was of superior strength? The story is told of "Archimedes" who defended Syracuse, the port city of Sicily, against the Roman army. He did so for a long time until he was betrayed by his own soldier who was standing over him asking question about the drawings & figures Archimedes had drawn in the sand. Without looking up Archimedes said, "Get away your ruining my plans" so the soldier cut off his head. The point of the story? Archimedes needed to get his head out of the sand & apply some of his own truth to his life. use

Thus Solomon says even though brain is better then brawn people still refuse to listen. Why? The problem is in the packaging, because the truth spoken was not packaged well those even in desperation refused to listen. The bottom line is truth doesn't insure triumph because we reject the way it's packaged. Simply put we shoot the messenger! Oh sun

what victory we could of enjoyed in our lives if instead of rejecting truth because the way it came wrapped we would of opened it & applied it to our lives!

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Take  
the  
point

Vs. 17-18 Finally Solomon takes us two more reasons truth does not insure triumph:

- a. *"Words of the wise, spoken quietly, should be heard Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools."* The word here rendered "quietly" literally means decently! A

lot of the time we seem to equate passion with truth. In other words the louder a person shouts the more we think they are telling us the truth. People often employ this technique don't they, *"When truth is not on your side out shout them?"* Again it's the way in which truth is delivered seems to determine how people received. People are way too much into how the message is delivered instead of "what" is being delivered.

- b. *"Wisdom is better than weapons of war; But one sinner destroys much good."*

Finally Solomon speaks on the fact that truth is often rejected not on its own

merits but rather on the merits of those that deliver it. I've heard for years people reject the truths of Christianity based upon the hypocrisy of Christians.

Now that's just plane dumb. So you would not go to a doctor to receive

treatment because some of them have colds? Come on now truth is truth whether we apply it or not!

So gifts don't guarantee good things always happening in life & truth doesn't insure triumphs always coming our way. But that is not the reason we seek to live applying the word of God to our lives. No, the reason is that we desire to be more like Him, everything else is just icing on the cake!

Common

Ecclesiastes  
*"Life Only Under The Son"*  
 VI.) Chp. 10:1-12:8 Cures for the curse!  
 Eccl. 10:1-11  
 "What's that smell?"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-7 Dead Fly # 5

III.) Vs. 8-11 Don't be a stinker

I.) Intro.

Solomon has been telling us that the application of wisdom won't guarantee the out come in life neither will truth insure triumphs. So just what good will the application of truth into our lives get us? Well you will smell better for one. What? You see 9 times in the first 15 verses of this chapter we read the words "fool, folly & foolish". Put that together with Solomon's proverb about the dead fly in the perfumer's giving off a foul odor & it reminds us that it doesn't take much foolish behavior to stink up your life. It seems to me that people give off an odor based upon their behavior. In other words they will cause you to either think of them as either being sweet or as stinkers! Christian's it's the application of the Word of God in your life that will cause you to either have the:

- *"The fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing."* (2 Cor. 2:15)
- *"Man decays like a rotten thing, Like a garment that is moth-eaten."* (Job 13:28)

It never ceases to amaze me how fast I can go from the fragrance of Christ to that a rotten thing. The problem as we shall see has to do not with what we put on it has to do with put out of our heart.

II.) Vs. 1-7 Dead Fly # 5

Vs. 1 We need to remember that chapter divisions & verse numbers were added later to help with referencing. So this little proverb fits with the thought that Solomon was saying in 9:18 "Wisdom is better than weapons of war; But one sinner destroys much good." The problem I find true in my life is that it is far too easy to cause a stink then it is to leave the fragrance of Christ. I mean every person that meets my wife will always comment on how "sweet" she is, but it is rare that I get those comments. I've come to the conclusion that I have a hard time keeping "dead flies from the perfumer's fragrance". In simple terms I'm a natural "stinker", my cologne is "Dead Fly # 5" far too often. The old adage goes "There is never a second time to give a first impression!" It could well be said in reverse order as well "There is never a first time to give a second impression!" We use to have a saying in the jewelry business that went like this "You're only as good as your last job!" The tragedy is that this is true in our character as well. We are all too familiar with dealing with some professing believer who has either:

- Separated the sacred from the secular
- Mixed the world's philosophies with the Word of God

Now here is what I find interesting:

- a. Eccl. 7:1 "A good name is better than precious ointment." Solomon already had spoke to us about the fact that a nature that is known as being "Good" is better then just smelling good. This week I called on a few references about a guy that we may be doing business with & it was great to hear how well this fellow was spoken of. It made me wonder how people would speak of me?
- b. In Matthew 12:24 the religious leaders accused Jesus of casting out "demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." Beelzebub was the Philistine god of the flies &

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good use



later changed the god of manure in reference to satan. So? Well isn't it a bit interesting here that what taints the fragrance of Christ is that of the lord of the flies in conjunction with our dead flesh? } *ure*

Here's my point, "perhaps we have a good picture of what causes us to act foolish & taint our reputation!" The rest of the analogy goes on to suggest that it only takes a little silly behavior to destroy a persons valuable reputation. Is that not true? Recently we had a little incident with a person who attends our fellowship. It seems that he pulled in front of another car as he was coming into the parking lot. The person was so irate that he came in after him to chew our guy out. He left quickly as he saw Ranger Jim. But what's cool is that he became convicted about his behavior & waited to apologize all day. Now though his initial action was not good his apology after ward spoke volumes about his true heart. } *ure*

Vs. 2 Here is where we see that the problem of the scent that you are giving off comes from, the heart. In Mathew 12:34-36 Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment." You could put it this way, "A wise mans heart him aright & a fools heart leads him astray!" } *ure*

What is interesting is that the right hand is associated with the place of power & honor, while the left hand was seen as a place weakness & rejection. Many aren't aware that the word "sinister" literally means, "left handed". The person who doesn't apply wisdom in their lives has a hard time keeping flies out of their perfume, if you know what I mean. } *ure*

They seem to gravitate towards trouble. So the "lord of the flies" comes in dive bombing our fragrance of Christ & we are to busy using our hands to pointing out ours "dead

flies". A wise mans heart is watching over his own heart. We use to have Mark 9:50 posted on our bath room mirror for our two kids as they were always pointing out each others "dead flies" "Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it?"

*use* / Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another."

Vs. 3-7 Solomon now looks at those that rule over us but more then that I think he gives us two types of people that get into trouble with "dead flies".

- a. Vs. 3-4a Prickly people: "Even when a fool walks along the way, He lacks wisdom, And he shows everyone that he is a fool. If the spirit of the ruler rises against you." Now I stop with the first part of verse 4 as I think it clarifies the type of person that Solomon describes. He is the type we call Ebenezer Scrooge, Nabal was this kind of guy. He is the guy that was married to Abigail who later became David's wife. David was away & his men were hungry so they approached Nabal to purchase some food & refused. The Bible describes him as harsh & evil in his dealings. Now everybody knows the way this fellow walks in life. I mean he didn't treat people well, was sharp with them & all. In the Case of old Nabal he turned David's men away & David went & armed his men to kill him. Nabal went & got drunk & Abigail pleaded with David & his men to spare the old buzzard. They did but in the morning when she went to tell him what almost happened to him he dropped dead.

*use* / Look at the way Solomon councils us to deal with people who are "prickly": "Do not leave your post; For conciliation pacifies great offenses." Wisdom is always better then running away, says Solomon. The prickly person is prone to doing harsh things so don't resign your post & go off in a huff. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath,"

But a harsh word stirs up anger. Further more in Proverbs 25:15 we read “Through → use  
patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone. Now as I read  
 this council I’ve got to say that this is a hard then for me to do. But the truth is when you  
 behave this way towards those that are “prickly” you won’t get any “dead flies” in your  
 fragrance.

- b. Vs. 5-7 Spineless people: Here we are given the opposite type of people that  
 get into trouble with dead flies. They seem to have no back bone as they put  
 the wrong folks in places of authority. We see this lots of times where folks  
 are put into positions because they are friends with the person in charge. He  
 may be a great leader but he associates with those that aren’t are takes counsel  
 with that aren’t. Solomon would not know this at the time he wrote  
 Ecclesiastes but his son Rehoboam would be this kind of spineless leader.  
 After Solomon had dies his advisers came to Rehoboam & advised him to  
lighten the tax load that Solomon had imposed upon the people. But  
 Rehoboam went & sought out council from “young men who had grown up → use  
with” who told him to make even tougher saying that Rehoboam’s “finger  
shall be thicker than Solomon’s waist!” The result was a divided kingdom.  
 Now we are going to be voting on candidates this Tuesday’s election but often  
 it seems that the best qualified are waling around sitting in the ground in  
“lowly places” while the foolish unqualified are sitting in places of authority.  
 Again the “spineless” are prone to collect “dead flies” usually from others that drop into  
their fragrance. The best leaders are those that are both Tough-minded as well as Tender- → use  
hearted. Balance is the best way to keep dead flies out of your fragrance of Christ.

### III.) Vs. 8-11 Don't be a stinker

Solomon now moves us into a series of five proverbs that if applied will help you keep dead flies out of the fragrance of Christ. What I noticed about this list is that they are all occupational. Now we are familiar with the phrase "occupational hazards" well these have a heart behavior that fits them all of which if not avoided well cause us to end up smelling dead flies.

- a. Vs. 8a "He who digs a pit will fall into it": I have a little proverb that I'm found of saying, "Those that live in glass house ought not to throw stones!" In those days people often would dig pits & put branches over them to catch prey. So the implication is pretty simple, "Don't go looking for trouble because you are bound to find some if you do!" Solomon makes sure that we come to that same conclusion by using the words "will fall into it". Often times people end up stinking because they dug some pits & ended up getting caught by their own traps. So the idea here is just don't go around trying to trip someone up. I watched a interview the other night with the King's center Vlade Divac where they were trying to get him to dig a pit against the Lakers & Shaq. They kept trying & all he did was say that the Lakers are the world champs until somebody beats them. Finally they asked his comments about some of the derogatory statements Shaq had mad about the Kings & him personally, Vlade just smiled & said "He's a real funny guy I like him very much!" I got to tell you I came away thinking what a class act! Man I need to do that! The best way to stay out of a pit is throw away your shovel & don't dig one!

For  
reference

use/

> use

use/

b. Vs. 8b *"And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent."* The word wall here is literally a hedges, which encloses. Perhaps today we would use the word fences to convey the thought. Fences keep someone from getting at someone or something that does not belong to us. Do you get Solomon's thought here? It's "mind your own business!" Man is that ever good advise if we want to keep "dead flies" out of frangrance of Christ in our lives. Again notice the way he puts it "will be bitten" (not) might be bitten. This is very similar as the above by here we are not laying traps no we are just putting our hands where they don't belong, don't do that Solomon says.

Fences  
often  
keep neighbors  
as friends

c. Vs. 9 *"He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, And he who splits wood may be endangered by it"*: Now both the person who quarries stones & guy who splits wood is involved in a similar activity. What similar you ask? Well they are both "cutting" material to be used to benefit them. Often times we do this verbally don't we? We cut other down to make ourselves look better. So Solomon says if you are engaged in cutting others down it may come back hurt you & endanger you.

use  
good point

d. Vs. 10 *"If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success."* Here we might say, think before you act. We are all so prone to act based upon our emotions instead of using our heads. I read in the paper a comment by Rick Fox who got into a fight with Doug Christy in the tunnel of the Staples center last week; "It's just a situation where my emotions got hijacked & I regret responding the way I did!" Man does that sound like something I would do let my emotions get

use!

good point

use

hijacked instead using my head & bringing success. This seems to deal with patience doesn't it? When I was a goldsmith my boss always use to comment to me about my impatience by saying, "Dale, there never seems to be enough <sup>> use</sup> time to do it right but their always seems to be enough time to do it over!" The point is if I would of just used my head instead of allowing my emotions to get the best of me I'd of finished the job & been done with it.

- e. Vs. 11 "A serpent may bite when it is not charmed; The babbler is no <sup>2 use</sup> different." The word "charmed" here is actually "hiss" thus this makes more sense this way. Now as in India today they had those fellows who made a living out of "charming poisonous snakes". They would take the snake out of the bag & play a flute have crowd gather & then collect his money & move on to the next town. Now you are probably aware that snakes don't have ears that means they don't hear the flute playing at all, it's not the flute that "charms" <sup>movement of the flute</sup> them it's the movement the snake will kind of get all confused & not know what to strike out at. Now as long as you have the snake hiss then you know where he is at & that is a big advantage but most often the fatal snake bite would happen when you took him out of the box as he would not hiss. The point is this "Keep your friends close & your enemies closer still!" As long as they are hissing at us we know where they are it's when they stop hissing that you better watch out. A lot of times we get all caught up in the hissing but that's when they are the safest!

Now folks we have some great wisdom from Solomon to help keep us from being  
stinkers all we need to do is keep on applying the Word of God to our lives & not get  
caught up in other peoples lives.

Count down: sat. 16th  
6:30 am @ church

Ecclesiastes  
"Life Only Under The Son"  
VI.) Chp. 10:1-12:8 Cures for the curse!  
Ecl. 10:12-20  
"Word's of wisdom to live by"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 12-15 Four things wisdom won't say

- a. Vs. 12 Criticism
- b. Vs. 13 Craziness
- c. Vs. 14a Continuous
- d. Vs. 14b-15 Conceited

III.) Vs. 16-20 Four things wisdom won't be

- a. Vs. 16-17 Immature
- b. Vs. 18 Idle
- c. Vs. 19 Impersonal
- d. Vs. 20 Insolent

I.) Intro.

From chapter 10 through 12:8 in my outline I've called this section, "Cures for the curse" as Solomon gives us practical instructions on how to live a life beyond the curse. - case!

In this chapter he is still on the topic of application of wisdom or in our case the word of God. Remember last week he spoke to us about along the general idea of keeping "dead flies" out of the fragrance of Christ. Such things as:

- The best way to stay out of a pit is throw away your shovel
- If you don't want to be snake bitten "mind your own business!"
- Don't cut other's down to make yourself look better.
- Think before you act
- Don't get all caught up in the hissing of others that's when they are the safest

Just think of how much smoother life would be if we applied those principals not to mention how much better the fragrance of Christ would be in us.

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Now Solomon left off with words about a hissing snake is less dangerous & the same is true with a guy who is always talking trash. So now he is going to get much more specific as he deals with two areas in which we will be able to detect in our own lives if we are applying the wisdom of the word of God.

- a. The truth is our speech will often reveal whether or not we are applying the word of God in our lives. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34 "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks". So Solomon is going to tell us of four words, that when we are applying the Word of God, we won't say!
- b. Along those same lines he will then tell us of four things that wisdom won't be as far as actions are concerned. Now most of these words of Solomon are fit into leadership roles so those of us in leadership in Church ought to look close at these words.

George  
Calkins  
words can't  
go on T.V.

## II.) Vs. 12-15 Four things wisdom won't say

Seven times in verses 12-15 Solomon uses language such as "words, mouth & talk" to describe his topic concerning how wisdom speaks or in most cases doesn't speak.

Consider what James the ½ brother of Jesus said concerning our speech:

- 1:26 "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless."
- 3:5 "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!"  
Doesn't TO CAUSE great destruction  
TAKE small
- 3:6 "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell."  
Small but defiles whole body

- 3:7-8 "For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."   
 *CANT be tamed  
must 10)2,*

Man what great council this all is for us. So what are those four words?

1. Vs. 12 Criticism: Solomon starts out on a positive note concerning the words of a wise man being gracious. In other words the wise man, (the person who applies the word of God), knows the right words to say at the right time.

Solomon would write in Prov. 10:32 NLT "The godly speak words that are helpful". I love to read the gospel's as we see how Jesus spoke with folk's there was never a word out of place when He spoke. Solomon had much to say about a person's speech as he makes it one of his favorite topics in Proverbs writing about it some 109 times. In contrast to the person who speaks gracious words Solomon turns to the fool who words swallow him up. The key to understanding this section is to be found in the descriptive words of "swallow him up". The best way of understanding this today is to say it this way, "chews him up". We even have a phrase we say when we are mad at someone that fits what Solomon is saying here "I'm going to chew him up & spit him out!" Clearly the idea is that of criticism which you will note not only "chews up" others but also ends up chewing him up as well. Solomon would write in Proverbs 13:3 "He who guards his mouth preserves his life". Today people boast of this by saying that they like to "speak their mind". Hey all that person does that, "speaks their mind is demonstrate that they don't"

*good point* have one" So you will know that you are applying the word of God in your life by speaking gracious words & not critical words.

2. Vs. 13 **Craziness:** Now write off the bat Solomon says that the speech of a fools starts off with foolishness then heads south to raving madness. The guy opens his mouth & you start to think that there is nothing of value but the more he speaks the more crazy he becomes. Now last week after 2<sup>nd</sup> service I had the opportunity to see this first hand. Greg came & got me as somebody that had been walking by in front of the Church had approached him helping himself to some of our food & asking to speak to the Pastor under the guise of wanting more information about our Church. When I got out to him I shook his hand & asked him if I could help him, well that's when things started getting weird. He told me he was a prophet & was told to come to our church to tell me a few things. Now he started off pretty calm but the more he spoke the more angry he became & I just listened as he began to shake his finger in my face. The more he spoke the louder he got & I was listening to his rambling until he informed me he was "The Son of God". I said, "Did you say the Son of God?" "Yes, I'm the Son of God & I..." "Hold on their a minute partner may I see your hands?" "My hands?" So I grabbed them & started looking for nail marks & asked him if he was Jewish. "No I'm not & what are you looking for?" I calmly said, "nail scars"! "Well, friend you are not the Son of God & you are not even a prophet of God as you have just lied therefore you are a false prophet & a liar. So here is my word to you repent from your sin ..." I never got to finish the rest as he took of down the street.

Blasphemy

*good  
fill in the blanks*

Hey folks, those that apply the Word of God in their lives won't be talking nonsense & craziness. There is a saying that goes like this, "Better to keep your mouth shut & everyone think you're an idiot then to open your mouth & remove any doubt!"

3. Vs. 14a Continuous: In chapter 5:2 Solomon spoke concerning our prayer life that our "words should be few". Now he tells us that just in every day conversation the foolish speak too much. We have a phrase about a person like this don't we? We say they just like to hear the sound of their own voice. In Proverbs 10:19 Solomon says, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise." Having just passed through another election it never ceases to amaze me how these people have so much to say about nothing. Jesus said in Matt. 5:37 that our "'Yes' ought to be 'Yes,' and our 'No,' 'No.'" I'm reminded of a question I asked my son several years ago as he had be on the phone with a girl for a better part of two hours. "Son, what did she want that took her two hours to say?" He replied, "I don't know she didn't say!" Have you ever considered how many words we hear every day most of which have no content? One of my pet peeves are the telemarketers who call & just ramble, I've gotten to where I just speak loud & say I'm not interested & hang up. Now some of this is biological as women speak on an average 30,000 words to men's 15,000. I heard a gal explain to her husband why this was so. She said they had to speak twice as many words to their husbands because they have to repeat everything twice. Her husband had only one word in response, "WHAT!" Hey, Christian the if we apply the Word of

God we will have less to say but what we say will be of much greater importance.

} good point use!

4. Vs. 14b-15 Conceited: Solomon now takes us to the natural conclusion of a person who talks a lot, that they talk mostly about themselves. They talk about what they are going to be doing in the future as if it was a guarantee. Solomon warns against this in Proverbs 27:1 where he says; "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth." To illustrate this warning about not talking about yourself he gives us a little proverb about the guy not even being able to find his way to the city. Now isn't that interesting in light of men not wanting to ask for directions. That old song that went "Do you know the way to San Jose" was obviously sung by a woman as a man would be to prideful to ask let alone sing about it. In those days cities were very clearly marked by having well traveled roads the led right up too the enclosed walls of the city. Perhaps to day we would change this phrase to say, "He would get lost in an elevator going only in one direction!" Solomon's point is that his arrogance has caused him to be aimless & directionless in life. Verbally a jack of all trades but a master of none. Husbands let me teach you four words that when used at the right time will save you years of grief, "I don't know honey!" I have found that my wife can handle my ignorance much more then my arrogance!

} good use

} use

} good use!

use!

good use

} use

III.) Vs. 16-20 Four things wisdom won't be

Though specifically aims his comments about wisdom's behavior as seen in a King I think that it could relate to each & every one of us. Simply put if we are applying the

Word of God in our lives then these characteristics should not be visible in us. What is interesting is see how these four characteristics relate to the four kinds of words that comes out of their mouths:

- A critical person by there own words reveal their immaturity.
- A person who speaks crazy nonsense obviously is idle & has far too much time on their hands.
- A person who continually talks is impersonal or indifferent as they are obviously not listening to anyone else but themselves.
- A person who is conceited & only talks about themselves is obviously arrogant.

There is a definite correlation between what man says & what he is in character as we shall see. So it will be obvious that if you are applying the Word of God in your life you won't exhibit these behaviors:

1. **Vs. 16-17 Immature:** The Jews saw this verse as not just relating to a persons chronological age but to how they acted. If those in leadership were immature then the nation was in trouble. How would you know if they were immature? Well Solomon says they, "feast in the mourning". The mourning was to be set aside to help govern the nation & instead they were partying. The Jewish commentary put it this way, "They eat bread before they offered daily sacrifices". Perhaps today we would say that they, "Set at the table before they sat at the feet of the Lord!" Now the word "nobles" in verse 17 is an interesting one as it means "white or pure" some render it as "heroes or freemen". They eat at the right time & only stay strong. Perhaps what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:18 could be applied, "do not be drunk with wine, in

which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit". The contrast is very clear as far as those that lead are concerned, there are those that merely hold a position rather than those that are called to it. Those that seek a position use people to build their authority, those who are true leaders use authority to build people. Jesus spoke of this in John 10:12-13 "A hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep."

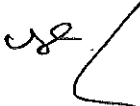
2. **Vs. 18 Idle:** I like this proverb as it relates to a house for to me it also speaks of the body of Christ. To many at times see their time in the body of Christ as enjoyment instead of employment! We are all our masters' servants! So Solomon speaks of those that aren't applying the word of God in their lives as being lazy & idle. When we look at men for leadership positions we tell them that their role is to be "ready, willing & available" as that is a heart of a servant. Interesting way Solomon puts it here as he says, "Idleness causes the roof to come crashing in & the out come is you will get all wet." There is the old saying "A stitch in time saves nine!" Idle people like to enjoy the privileges while ignoring the responsibilities, while mature folks see the responsibilities as privileges.

3. **Vs. 19 Impersonal:** Here the persons motto seems to be, "Eat all you can, drink all you can, spend all you can!" Literally it reads, "He who makes bread for laughter!" All of life is for their enjoyment, the world revolves around them & they are looking out for number one! There is far too much of this

kind of philosophy of the world that is creeping into the church. As people are looking to join Church's based upon what they provide instead of looking at what they can provide the Church! Listen to Jesus' words in Mark 10:45 "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." When He wanted to demonstrate how the church was to respond to each other he bent down & took the lowest spot of a servant & washed His disciples feet & said "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." (John 13:13-17).

4. **Vs. 20 Insolent:** Here we come to the last of what we don't want to look like the arrogant person who thinks they are better than everybody else. They are so much into themselves that they speak against others openly to which Solomon says you ought not to even think it or say it privately to yourself. No doubt this is where we get our saying, "A little birdie told me so!" How different is Paul's words to Timothy in (1:15 NLT) "This is a true saying, and everyone should believe it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- and I was the worst of them all." Instead of cursing the King in your thought life & speak ill of those who are better off than you in your bedroom we ought to be saying as Paul continued to say in verse 16. "That is why God had mercy




*on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great  
patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too,  
can believe in him and receive eternal life."*

There you have it the application of the Word of God as given by Solomon will cause us  
 to not uses words that:

- Criticize others
- speak crazy nonsense
- just like to hear the sound of our own voices
- Or speak of only us

Neither will be those kind of people who are:

- Immature
- Idle
- Into themselves
- Arrogant

Instead we will be like our Lord!

Ecclesiastes  
 "Life Only Under The Son"  
 VI.) Chp. 10:1-12:8 Cures for the curse!  
 Eccl. 11:1-10  
 "Putting life in living"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-6 Life is a gift so spend it on others

III.) Vs. 7-10 Life is precious so don't waste it

I.) Intro.

Having come from a non-Christian home & being extremely skeptical in nature one of the things that amazed me after becoming a believer was how practical the Bible was. > good

Getting saved in a Calvary Chapel no doubt helped as my pastor went verse by verse book by book, just as we do here. Its for this reason that I get bent out of shape when I hear Church's advertising using words like "relevant Bible teaching". I mention this as an introduction to the first of the final three messages of the book of Ecclesiastes. A book in which just may be the "most relevant" book for believers today, yet seldom is it taught. > use!

Solomon has been talking to us practical ways in which we can apply the Word of God in our lives. Two main areas last week were our words & or works:

Our words won't:

- Criticize others
- Be nonsense
- Many
- Or conceited

Along those same lines our works won't be:

- Immature
- Idle

- Into themselves
- Arrogant

You could notice the trend last week was more onto what we weren't & not what we are.

So this week Solomon speaks about two ways to put life into your living.

**II.) Vs. 1-6 Life is a gift so spend it on others**

Whenever you come to a section of scripture like this I always start out by asking the

question, "What do all of these things have in common?" It is clear that Solomon is trying

to speak to us but what does "bread, clouds, wind, a womb & sowing seeds" have to do

with each other? The most common mistake we make in interpreting a passage of

scripture is that we get caught up in the examples & fail to look at the rest of the text. Let

me show you what I mean. It's not the:

- Bread, it's what we are told we are to do with the bread, cast it!
- Clouds, it's what the clouds do, empty themselves upon the earth!
- Wind or clouds, it's what observing the wind & clouds will cause us not to do, sow & reap.

Still puzzled? Well take a look at verse 5b-6a as these verses help clarify the context; "So

you do not know the works of God who makes everything. In the morning sow your seed,

and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper."

What do all of these things have in common? Well they are all engaged in the act of

"giving"! Solomon's point is that life is a gift that can only fully be experienced when it is given away.

A person who is given the word of God in their lives will be a giving person.

Vs. 1 Godly folks have disagreed as to what this actually means.

- Some say that it related to a practice in Egypt of casting rice or wheat upon the flooded banks of the Nile that would be transported by the water & deposited upon the silt enriched soil as the waters resided, thus producing a crop later.
- Others contend that it had to do with providing bread to hungry sailors, or the loading of grain upon merchant ships without any guarantee that the cargo would ever return a profit.
- Finally others suggest that Solomon is advising that it would be better to take bread that you were unable to eat & place it in a basket upon a river so your neighbors in need could eat of it instead seeing it go to waste.

Again the common denominator in all of these interpretations is that of given of what you have been given. In fact the Jewish commentary on this passage suggests that the idea is in sharing the good given you with others. Bread is a staple in life, a necessity in which we feed our own families with. Isaiah 32:20 says something similar, "Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey." Jesus spoke of it this way in Matt. 10:8 "Freely you have received, freely give." Again we recall Jesus words in Luke 6:38 "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." It appears to me that this is one of the clearest ways of being able to determine if a person has submitted their lives & all they have to the Lordship of Jesus. How so? Well if all you have belongs to Him & He is telling you to give it away then you will have no problem doing so! We have found out this principal for years, "You just can't out give God!" I like what Peter has to say in 1 Peter 4:10 "each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of

the manifold grace of God. Every one of us has received gifts from God & we are to 'serve' them up to one another as good stewards of the grace of God. Folks that is why you have been given what you have so that you can give it away. There are far to many of us Christians with moldy bread in our cupboards it's time to start getting rid of some bread.

Vs. 2 The word "servicing" is literally "part or portion" & Solomon says to do so to seven or eight. Today we have a phrase that goes like this, "Don't put all of your eggs into one basket!" The idea here seems to be to give liberally & often. In other words don't limit how much or how many to help out in giving. Often we have an attitude that puts limits on how many & who to give. We say things like, "I gave at the office!" The rest of this verse which says, "For you do not know what evil will be on the earth" tells us the reason why we ought not set limits upon our giving. Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us the same thing in the N.T. "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." We don't have knowledge of our futures so today is the day that we ought to give for who knows what will happen tomorrow. Mordecai told Queen Esther, "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Jesus said in Luke 6:30 "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back."

Vs. 3-6 With these two verses as a back drop Solomon is going to give us four reasons why we ought to have a heart that sees life as a gift worth giving to others.

- a. It's how were formed: Vs. 3a "If the clouds are full of rain, They empty themselves upon the earth": Now clouds full of rain are interesting as this

use!

AS FOR US WORK IS CONCERNED IT WOULD BE GOOD TO GIVE TO SAME WAY!

use

use

speaks of the hydrological cycle. Cloud's form from water that has evaporated, clouds would not exist if it were not for this. They are full of rain because of water that they have poured out, so in emptying themselves upon the earth they get to be full of rain again. The point Solomon is making is that

use

giving is beneficial to your well being, it makes you who you are. What if

the rain cloud came over the land & said, "It's my rain & I'm not going to drop any of it." Well eventually a drought would happen & this would cause

use

no rain clouds to be formed. The truth is what we have we, like the rain clouds, received from others. Paul put it this way in 1 Cor. 4:7 "what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you

boast as if you had not received it?" Christian it is a natural consequence of your having received Jesus into your heart to be giving. The apostle John put

it this way (1 John 5:1) "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten

See it

of Him." A life that has drawn up the blessings of God's grace can only shower those same blessing of His grace upon a thirsty world & the run off of that will be drawn back up to rain upon others!

use

b. It's never out of season: Vs. 3b "And if a tree falls to the south or the north,

In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie." Now I read this one over &

it seem to me that the idea has to with the fact that we can not control which

Don't get concerned over where you are at.

way we may fall coupled with the fact that time is short. Perhaps we would

say that it's not important which way you fall only that you do so well! The

use

idea is that we are to give no matter what our present circumstances, a "bloom

use

where you are planted" concept. You see we are always making excuses for our giving think that at some future date we will start. That's the neat thing about a heart that gives there is never a wrong time to be that way! I mean you may be blown over to the south or perhaps to the north & that is where you find yourself stuck. So why not just be a blessing where you have landed? Christians we waste far too much time trying to fall in our direction rather than just being a blessing where we are! The reality is that the tree that has fallen no matter where it is at when it decays will help create fertile soil for others. So why not just fall & rot so that others can grow & produce fruit?

- c. **It's carefree:** Vs. 4 "*He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.*" Here is a great point we don't have to wait for ideal conditions we can just go for it. So much of our lives we stress over & worry about but as we give freely as we have been given we can just sow our seeds of God grace every where. We don't have to wait for a perfect time to give of our time, talents & treasures, as they are always needed for the kingdom of God. In fact this is one of those few equations spiritually where waiting for the opportune time will cause you "not to sow or reap". Worrying about the wind & the clouds will cause you to miss a greater opportunity of sowing & reaping. Let me ask you, "*Why would you be concerned about the wind & the clouds?*" The answer is, "*Well because I want to make sure that I get a good reward for my effort & seeds!*" Ok fare enough but may I ask you two more things? "Whose seeds are they & who controls the wind & the clouds?" You see where I'm going with this? It's not our problem to make

sure that what we give away produces the fruit we want when we want it! Just Sow & reap brothers & sisters, sow & reap! Remember it's not our time, talent & treasure it's His!

> we

d. The rewards exceed our expectations: Vs. 5-6 Twice in verse 5 we are told that "we don't know", first the way of the wind then the works of God. Verse five is a great pro-life verse as the word "wind" is breath or spirit so Solomon is saying that that man in not sure how breath of life comes into an embryo in the womb. What of interest is that it appears by the context that it does so before bones begin to form. So we can not figure out how God is going to produce something so miraculous as a human life. We all start out coming from two separate individuals & become a unique one of a kind person to which there has never been another like you before you neither will there be another one like you in the future. Folk's it's the power of God that takes what we give & produces incredible results. The cool thing is that we don't have to get out our calculators & figure out all this stuff we can just in the "mourning sow our seed" & in the "evening sow some more". Hear what Paul said in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:7 "So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase." How cool is that we don't have to get all worried about the right time to give of our time, talent & treasure as God will give the increase. Sometimes He may produce fruit when you have sown early & other times He will produce fruit when you sow late, other times He blesses both the same. I heard a Basketball coach say one time to a kid to shoot the ball. The kid was upset because he had missed a few shots, so the

> we

> shoot

at sows concept



coach took him aside & said you may have missed a few shoots but by not shooting you have just missed a lot more! Now spiritually speaking you increase your odds of allowing the Lord to score if you just continually sow seeds!

### III.) Vs. 7-10 Life is precious so don't waste it

Now just like the above section we need to see what Solomon is trying to tell us in verse 7-10. As you read this you will notice that he brings up the eyes (twice) & the heart (three times). The idea behind these verses is similar "life is precious so don't waste it".

Vs. 7-8 The first parable equates a persons life with that of a persons ability to see. We take for granted our eyesight don't we? Solomon says, "Light is sweet" that our eyes can because of light see all that God has created. I've had the privilege of traveling & seeing some glorious things that God has created. How would be able to describe Half Dome in Yosemite to a person who could not see? I mean we often tell people when we are talking to them "that they just have to see for themselves!" Well as light is to the eyes so to is everyday of life that God has given us. Often it takes a near death experience for us to wake up to how precious life is. The Psalmist in 90:12 declared "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." I always ask Arch how his day is going & he always says "Great I woke up today!" Now verse eight gives a little clue about how we can rejoice in the days that we have now by remembering the "days of darkness". There are ~~two~~ possible meanings with this verse:

1. It speaks of the fact that you will spend a lot more day's dead than you will alive so we ought to value the short time we have being alive. I suppose there is a truth to this that would help us appreciate the time we have now but to be

honest with you & looking forward to no longer being in this body. I'm looking forward to what Paul said in 1 Cor. 15:53 "this corruptible (body) to put on incorruption, and this mortal (body) to put on immortality."

} use

2. The other idea speaks to the fact as believers that it would do a world of good to remember what life was like before we had a relationship with the Lord. Remember how we used to live a empty life in darkness? Paul wrote to the Ephesians "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world".

} use

Vs. 9-10 Here the idea is that of appreciating the time God has given you to live & not wasting upon the temporal pleasures of sin for a season. Hey, Christian is your "heart cheering you one"? Or are you walking around guilty? We ought to be able to walk around in the way of our heart, cause if we aren't then we are wasting the life that God has given us. Have you ever seen a person who has gifts & abilities who has gotten all caught up in sin & said "What a waste?" You see we often forget that God will bring everything before His throne. Oh not for punishment but for rewards it is there that we will all be able to look at our lives & say "What a waste!" Folks those that sow their wild oats are guaranteed a crop failure. The truth is all that youthful sins lay is a foundation for old sorrows! Is it any wonder that looking at those who ran the race before us the author of Hebrews said, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us". So we need to lay aside any & every anxiousness from our hearts, put away every evil from our flesh because time is short! Remember:

} use

} use

} use!

} use

- Life is a gift so spend it on others
- Life is precious to don't waste it

}

COMMUNION

Ecclesiastes  
*"Life Only Under the Son"*  
 VI.) Chp. 10:1-12:8 Cures for the curse!  
 Eccl. 12:1-8  
 "Commit to the Creator, NOW!"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 1-2 Now is the day of salvation

III.) Vs. 3-5 Becoming a real fixer upper

IV.) Vs. 6-8 The time is gone the song is over

I.) Intro.

We close in on the last chapter of the book which Solomon makes his final pleas to us. For several weeks now he has been giving us solid arguments to apply the wisdom of the word of God. Last week he told us:

- That Life was a gift that could only truly be experienced through a life that was giving.
- Then he told us of the value of the life that has been given us so we should not waste it.

This week Solomon urges us to make a commitment to the Lord now & not to procrastinate. It's as my Grandmother used to say, "Never put off for tomorrow what needs to be done today!" Twice in these eight verses Solomon is going to tell us to "remember your creator" (Verse 1, 6). The word remember here does not just mean to have a mental thought of Him, "Oh yeh the man upstairs" kind of thing, rather it speaks of commitment as seen by a daily living relationship. Thus Solomon's call is to drop our self-sufficiency & start living a life that daily seeks to discover afresh the glories & greatness of living a life total dependent upon Him. The way Solomon is going to urge us

to do so is by taking us along a stroll down memory lane in one of the most poetic descriptions of aging ever written. use!

## II.) Vs. 1-2 Now is the day of salvation

Vs. 1 We have heard Solomon tell us of all the benefits of living an on fire life for the Lord but still we seem to put it off. You know how it goes, "This is the year I'm really going to get serious about my relationship with the Lord!" But this year turns into the next & then the next. use!

Believers, something is happening within Christianity that is very strange to behold. Researchers tell us that as far as those that are attending church the numbers are about the same as they have been, yet George Barna reported last week that of those, 50% are not saved. What? Half of those in church this morning are not saved? Our churches have become not a "body of believers" but rather an amalgam, (a mixture), of the two. Further more Barna went on to say that 44% of those who call themselves Christians are not born again! Do you get that? Half of those in church are not Christians & would not call themselves so & 44% of those that would call themselves Christians really aren't, as they are not born-again. That means that 94% of the Church is not really the Church that leaves only 6% of us! What has happened to Jesus' Church? The effects of this is being played out before our eyes as the saved are not having as much as an impact upon the unsaved as the unsaved are having upon the saved. In other words Jesus' church is looking more & more like the world that they were called out of because the world has come into Jesus' Church. use

What does that have to do with Solomon's words of "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth" well it's like a tug of war game NOW is the time we

grab the rope & start pulling before we are yanked into the pit! We are not alone in this situation as we can read the words of Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2 "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." To the Church in Rome Paul wrote in 13:11 "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed."

Still not sure what Solomon is telling us? Well he is giving us three stages of life:

you & wife

- "youth"(verses 1-2)
- "aging"(verses 3-5)
- "preparation for death"(verses 6-8)

His plea is to make a commitment to the Lord while you are still young. Statistics indicate that 95% of all those who commit their lives to Christ do so before they are 30 years old. Notice I did not say "come to church" or "repeat the sinners prayer" I'm speaking of a commitment to live their lives bound to Jesus is a loving relationship.

RALPH CHRISTIAN

The plain fact is that the longer a person waits to commit to Christ the greater the odds become that they won't. Now I'm not saying to give up on them because if you did that many of you wouldn't have become believers. What I am saying is that we need to reach the youth as it is our greatest odds of saying a generation saved. Solomon points out two reasons why it is better to commit to the Lord while your young:

Solomon's words

- a. Vs. 1b Mortality! "Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near..": Some render this word "difficult" as evil but the word is better rendered as it appears here in the NKJ. Other translations render this verse by saying, "those dismal days and years come when you will say, "I don't enjoy

you know how time goes

life” or “before the days of trouble come and the years catch up with you”.

Both of these translations carry the right idea in that it is not that the days become more “evil” but rather life becomes more complicated! Solomon encourages us to make a commitment to the Lord while we are young because life is just going to get more complicated the older we become. The fact is the older we become the less adjustable to change because there is greater pressure upon us to stay the way we are. The busyness of our lives & the commitments we have made spin a web that entraps us. It becomes easier to say, “I’m tired & just don’t feel like reading my Bible, praying or going to Church.” It is a lie of Satan when we are young that says, “I’m young I have plenty of time to get serious about the Lord when I get older!”

Ability of saving

use

use!

use

b. Vs. 1c **Motivation!** “When you say, I have no pleasure in them”: The older we become the less motivation we have to change, we often adopt a “I don’t care attitude” towards changing our commitment towards Jesus. Solomon lists two things here as time passes in our lives that sap our motivation to change. He is going to use very poetic language here in fact he is going to tell us this in verse 10 that he sought to teach “the plain truth, in an interesting way.”

Less motivated

like a person coming back to school when they are older

1. **Faded memories** “While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened”:

The word “darkened” here carries the idea of

growing dim or fading. We become less motivated towards changes

because as we grow older our passion for the things of Christ often

fades. When we are younger the “sun is bright” why even the “moon

& the stars” give light towards us. When I first became a Christian

use

feel

through my earlier years in Christ I really possessed a "go for it" attitude now I'm far more inclined to have a "go to bed" attitude. The psalmist wrote in 137:6 "May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth <sup>> use</sup> if I do not remember you". When I was 22 I became a Christian at 27 I left my career & went to Bible school. At 30 we moved to Merced to start this Church. I would be far less motivated to do any of those things at <sup>so</sup> ~~44~~ <sup>use</sup>

2. **Fogy mind** "And the clouds do not return after the rain": The picture of this verse is all too familiar for those of who live in the valley this time of year. The words "do not" are not in the Hebrew so literally it <sup>> use</sup> says, "and the clouds return after the rain". So let me ask you valley dwellers what clouds appear after the rain? The answer is **FOG clouds**. Solomon say's that another thing that can thwart our motivation to change as we get older is a "fogy mind". <sup>use</sup> Our passion <sup>use</sup> fades but our priorities all to often change as well. When we were young in our relationship with the Lord we were into what He wanted for our lives, all to often as we get older we just want to be <sup>use</sup> comfortable.

Is it any wonder then that Solomon admonishes us to get committed to the Lord now while we are young. Remember that he was the young King who spent his life apart from the Lord then realized that only in a relationship with the Lord does life make since. Oh dear saint hear me on this, don't waste a minute of the time God has given you get committed to him now! <sup>use</sup>

### III.) Vs. 3-5 Becoming a real fixer upper

We come now to one of the most imaginative description of the aging process ever written. The point of this section though is to show us that physical aging plays a part in our "faded memories" & "fogy minds". Before we go over this section let me say that it is never too late to get started in get fired up for the Lord, in fact some of our best servants are those that fit the descriptions we are about to look at. Yet with that said I'm sure those fellows would wish to have twenty more years of great health to serve as they are now. There is an old saying that there are three things that show you are starting to get older:

- You start to lose your memory & I can't remember the other two!

Solomon is going to give us four signs of aging in verse 3-4 & followed by four more signs as you get even older: (I've chosen to read these in the NLT)

- us 3a
- a. "*Your limbs will tremble with age, and your strong legs will grow weak.*" As we grow older our bone structure with our muscles & tendons are not as strong as they were when we were young. You can see this in athletes as they get into there 40's they are not as fast or agile as they were in there 20's. We become people whose knees buckle but our belts won't. Solomon uses a word picture of a house with its foundation & beams creaking & sagging as we get older. You know you go out & work in the yard or do something you aren't use too & you ache for a few days afterward. We become real fixer uppers in need of a lot of TLC!

- us 3b
- b. "*Your teeth will be too few to do their work*": As we get older our "grinders" often become fewer in number. Life seems to be on a revolving circle as we started out with milk & soft veggies & returns that way. One guy put it this way, "You start out

we get more concerned about our physical limitations

Just coming at the end

Jordan

use

we



life being concerned with three things, eating, sleeping & going to the bathroom & you finish life the same way you started.

7 JSL

U>3c  
c. "You will be blind, too": Solomon is talking about our eye sight which is an amazing instrument which can detect light flickering 25 billion light years away in the heavens. Yet as you start getting older looking through those windows becomes more difficult. In fact after a while we have to buy windows to look through in order to see the light flicker.

You have to get fitted with window to be able to look out the window

JS4  
d. "When the doors are shut in the streets, And the sound of grinding is low; When one rises up at the sound of a bird, And all the daughters of music are brought low". This section in the NLT is not as clear so I'll go back to the NKJ which makes it clearer to understand that he is talking about our hearing. The sound of grinding become low can either mean that we can't hear our self chew or it can mean that all we hear is a ringing in our ears. Again our hearing is an amazing instrument as it can detect 15,000 different tones yet it does so only at about 1-1/2 years of age. When we are younger we will wake up to the sound of a bird singing, yet as we get older when we are awake & trying to listen we won't be able to hear the tune.

POWU NLT  
"I said it's Down Hill"

JS4  
In verse 5 Solomon gives four more signs of aging but these are a little further past the first four as I'm not yet experiencing these:

JS5A  
a. "You will be afraid of heights and of falling": Here the picture is obvious as you start to get older highest & falling become more serious as broken bones to much longer to heal. When we were young climbing up on the garage to do some work was no big deal but as we get older & aren't as sure of ourselves we don't do that. The same is

true as well with watching where we are walking, the older we become the more afraid we become of falling.

USSD b. "*White-haired and withered*": Solomon used the word picture of almond blossoms something that we are very familiar with here in Merced. The blossoms are white so he is speaking of gray hair, something my wife likes to point out that she doesn't have & I do. The Hebrew does not say anything about being withered but this is true as well as we get older our skin loses its elasticity.

JS c. "*Dragging along*": Solomon uses the picture of a grasshopper to describe the walk of the elderly & it is very apt as we get older we will walk more laboring becoming more of a shuffle instead of a step kind of dragging our feet as we go.

USSD d. "*And desire fails*": The NLT translates this in terms of a person's libido (sexual desire) but it can also speak a person's appetite for food as well. The point Solomon is making that our passions & desires will fade as we get older & we will be more concerned with just being a live.

Finally Solomon say's, "*You will be standing at death's door. And as you near your everlasting home, the mourners will walk along the streets.*" The older we get the closer to our "everlasting home" we get. *Someone said you know that you are getting closer to your own "everlasting home" when you start attending more funerals than you do birthdays.*

#### IV.) Vs. 6-8 The time is gone the song is over

Vs. 6 Solomon again starts this section out as he did the first verse, yet notice the word "before". He is going to give us four things that will cause our demise & he pleads with us to make a commitment to the Lord before these happen. In other words as long as you

see

still have breath you still have time to commit you life to Him. Oh thank God for this verse. Perhaps you have been listening to this message thinking, "Man I've wasted so much of my time & I can't get it back what can I do?" Well here it is start today! Before these four things:

- USCA a. "Silver cord of life snaps": Most commentators believe that Solomon is speaking of the spinal column thus he is speaking of paralysis. His point is that paralysis or spinal injuries are often in an older person the beginning of the end. So better to give your life to Christ before paralysis. I think that is true spiritually speaking as well. What I mean is that better to commit to the Lord now before you become paralyzed with apathy. > use
- US6 b. "The golden bowl is broken": This appears to speak of the brain. Did you realize that we will forget 90% of everything we learn yet the 10% we will remember is still ten time greater than all the volumes in the library of congress which is 17 million. So we have at our access 170 million volumes of information. If a computer was built that could do all the things that your brain does it would have to be as large as the UN building. But with that said our brains will slow down & if we don't use them they will slow down even faster. Books
- US6c c. "Don't wait until the water jar is smashed at the spring": Most equate this with our lungs which breath 23,040 times every day taking in 438 cubic feet of air. But as we get much older breathing becomes much more labored & it is easier to get out of breath. So Solomon say's commit to the Lord while you still have breath!
- US6d d. "And the pulley is broken at the well": Here the picture is that of the heart which pumps blood through 168 million miles of veins, arteries & capillaries every day. But

if the pulley is broken at the well then you will die, so it's better to commit yourself  
 to the Lord while you still have a heart to do so!

Vs. 7-8 The truth is that our 98-cent worth elements that make up our "dust" will return  
 back to the dirt that God breathed into to start Adam with (Gen. 3:9). Yet how cool is this  
 verse which speaks of our Spirit returning back to the Lord who gave it. Hey, Christian  
 why not go for it now as one day we will be in the presence of the Lord forever. Solomon  
 finishes this section with the words in which he started this book in chapter 1:2 that is the  
 emptiness of life apart from having it lived committed to the Lord.

Spw 19

Destruction and  
 Sin

Ecclesiastes  
*"Life Only Under the Son"*  
 VII.) Chp. 12:9-14 Now That's wisdom!  
 Eccl. 12:9-14  
 "The lesson of life"

I.) Intro.

II.) Vs. 9-12 Open your books

III.) Vs. 13-14 Final exam

I.) Intro.

Among the fragments found in Quamran were three that contained parts of Solomon's Ecclesiastes. Based upon the texts found scholar's believe that they were copies from a Hebrew original dating around 200 year before the Birth of Jesus. What this means is that the Jews already considered this book as being inspired by God. So you say? Well I'm amazed that this book was so widely accepted as being from God yet, based upon the nation's rejection of the word of God applied so little. The other day a lady came up to me telling me that she raises dogs for hearing impaired people, she quipped that this would be a great asset for a hearing impaired person that might attend our fellowship in order that they may hear the word of God being taught. I replied that it would do no good as our problem centers not on hearing the word of God but rather applying it. James put it this way, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." Perhaps someone could start raising dogs that could help us apply the word & not just hear it?

In light of what I've just said the final six verses are all the more remarkable.

Solomon concludes this book of lessons learned through his life by telling us two things:

- The method in which he taught: He reveals four keys to how he taught this course.
- The motivation for the class: He gives us three things necessary to pass the final exam.

sel. An actor once said, "All the world is a stage!" I'm not so sure I buy that but certainly we could say, "All of life is a classroom!" The great question is will we pass the final exam? The great truth is that the Instructor has done everything possible to pass & not fail.

## II.) Vs. 9-12 Open your books

Vs. 1 The word "moreover" supplies the context to which Solomon will explain his teaching method. It points us back to his words of verse 8 (NLT) "All is meaningless," says the Teacher, "utterly meaningless." Literally the word means to be "redundant" or "over & above" do you get that? Several of you have commented to me that you are looking forward to getting through Ecclesiastes because he just repeats himself over & over, now you find out at the end of the book he did so on purpose, it was part of his teaching style. Not for the sake of just absent minded ramblings, but rather because life apart from what he had to say has no meaning. Solomon lived out the mistake in his own personal life of not applying the truth so he wants to make sure that we won't make the same mistake that he did. 2ur

In 2 Peter 1:10-15 Peter wrote something very similar. "Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease." Three times in five verses Peter told them that he was reminding them good

of truth that they were already established in. Why, you ask? Because he says, "For if > use  
you do these things you will never stumble".

Solomon's teaching, redundant? Absolutely because he says, "the preacher was wise." The word preacher you will recall is the word that means, "gather" & Solomon says that he was wise in as much as he still taught the people. The phrase is very suggestive & it reveals two things:

a. The word "wise" means wise hearted in other words a person who doesn't just have head knowledge but rather heart knowledge. Solomon had revealed this in his own life. As a young man his understanding lead him to be considered the wisest man on the earth. Yet at the same time his personal life was a mess. Thus Solomon's life was a living analogy of the difference between head knowledge & heart knowledge.

Concept - Root  
 to know is  
 from the heart  
 to the heart

b. The word "still" is the word "again" in the Hebrew & suggests that after Solomon's failure he went back to the truth of the Word of God & taught the people to apply it.

The problem was not that Solomon didn't teach truth in his younger days it was that he didn't teach people the importance of applying truth. So he went back only this time he gathered not just the accumulation of facts but the application of truth! > use!

Now we are going to look at four ways in which Solomon taught the people: "A's"

1. Vs. 9 Application "Knowledge": Obviously what Solomon taught them was the Word of God, but he did not just teach them the Word he taught them to apply the Word. use - How do we know that in dealing with the Word of God Solomon stressed application? Well look at the words, "he pondered and sought out". The word "pondered" means "to broaden out the ear with the hand" & the words "sought out" mean to "penetrate". Wow, what a word > use

picture Solomon gives us here. The first way in which Solomon taught the people the Word of God was to "broaden out their ears so the Word would penetrate past just hearing it to applying it". Solomon taught in such a manor as to make sure people were not just spectators of the Word participants. His goal was not some sort of professor expositing information his goal was to instruct to change lives! I have no doubt that his own personal failures added in his decision to teach in such a way as to encourage application.

2. Vs. 9 **Arranged** "Set in order many proverbs": The words "set in order" come from a root word in the Hebrew that means to "balance". So Solomon tells us that he arranged the Word of God (proverbs) in a certain way as to aid in their application. There are over 3,000 distinct proverbs that Solomon "arranged" or balanced in scripture. What is interesting to me to take an overview of those. If you do so you will find out that he did so by use of "word pictures" or parables to explain the truth he wished for us to apply. Simply put Solomon taught expository manor which means that he explained the scriptures. Now the difficulty that we have had during this book is that his use of explanations do not always fit our culture, so we have had to look at what they meant to his listeners & then put them into modern culture. So Solomon taught the Word of God, arranged it in such away as those that listened would not get mere information but rather they would seek transformation!

3. Vs. 10 **Acceptable** "Acceptable words": Solomon gives us the third way in which he taught by giving us a balance between two things:



- a. The word "acceptable" is a word that means "pleasant or gracious". Solomon says here that he sought to find words of grace. Words that led people towards the Lord based upon God's grace not man's works. use
- b. They also were "upright words of truth". Although they were of grace they were also words of truth not mere opinions or human psychology. use

We are reminded at once of the description of Jesus in John 1:17 saying that

"grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." I just love the way the NLT interprets this verse saying the Solomon taught the "plain truth in an use!

interesting way". Whenever we read of Jesus teaching in the gospels we always see Him teach the balance of grace & truth or if you will the "plain truth in an interesting way". Have you ever wondered why the balance of

"grace & truth"? Perhaps the key is to be found in how the Church is described as "sheep". Sheep are very weird animals! I mean they are

completely defenseless, why they can't even hide. They hang out in herds but use  
the funny thing is you can't herd sheep like you can other animals. When it comes to cattle you can "drive" them where you want them to go. Shout at them, crack the whip over their heads & guide them right where you want. But

if you do that with sheep they will just drop dead. I heard tell of a young man who was angry at a sheep they had because he was always escaping & going into places he wasn't suppose to. So the father told the boy to put him back in the pin & as he did the sheep pined him against some barbwire. He vowed to get back at the dumb sheep so he waited later in the day & snuck-up behind the sheep & through a firecracker down by its feet. Now that would of drove a use

cow but the sheep just fell down dead! You just can't drive sheep, no you have to lead them. Jesus describes Israel as "sheep without a shepherd." The weird thing is that the Jews had priests but all they did was to try to drive them by the law. Ezek. 34:2-3 says "*Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock."* Oh they needed exactly what we need the balance of the grace & truth of Jesus!

Both  
not  
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4. Vs. 1 Authoritative "Given by one Shepherd": Say what you will about teaching the word but there is one thing it must always be, authoritative or if you will God's word. Yes, I believe that I ought to teach in an "Interesting" way & I think there is even room to teach in a way that is "Entertaining" as to grab your attention. But above everything else what I teach must be in an "Inspiring" way! Solomon had already spoke to us concerning preparation, he now speaks to us concerning inspiration. Now to look at this passage is to understand Who it is that makes it inspiring, "One Shepherd". Solomon tells two ways in which you will know that the word of God is from "One Shepherd" it ought to "Spur our will & stick in our memory!":

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a. "The words of the wise are like goads": Now "goads" were used on cattle & oxen to keep them from kicking. They were sharpened pieces of wood that were aimed at the flank of the ox that was prone to kick when it was being led in a direction that it didn't want to go. So you will know the Word of God is inspired as it will always drive you in

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the right direction. Simply put the Word of God ought "spur your will"!

- b. "The words of scholars are like well-driven nails": The second way you will know that the Word of God is from "One Shepherd" is that it will be like well-driven nails. Nails are what fasten things together, in other words we will know that the Word of God is inspired & authoritative when we apply it because it will keep us from coming apart! I've been watching them put our house together & it's amazing to me see that the whole thing is fastened together with nails, bolts & screws without which it would all fall apart. Simply put the Word of God ought to "stick in your memory". <sup>Life or Life</sup>

Vs. 12 I like the way NLT interprets this verse, "*My child, be warned: There is no end of opinions ready to be expressed. Studying them can go on forever and become very exhausting!*" Solomon is not against study as he applied himself to do just that but what he is warning against is the practice of using man's wisdom to interpret God's truth. Far too many people use personal experience to interpret the truth of God's Word instead of God's Word to interpret their experience. The big debate this last week was "*What kind of car would Jesus drive?*" I mean how stupid is this? The Bible has the answer we know that it was a Honda as we are told that they were all in one Accord. On Friday I had a fellow call me with a question that must have been the topic at Thanksgiving diner. His question was dealing with the Biblical account of Adam & Eve in light of the Ice age. "*You claim that Adam & Eve were the first people right?*" "*But how does that square with the Ice age?*" So I said, "First I don't claim that I wasn't around but I do agree with the

eye witness account in the Bible!" "Second, the physical evidence is not on the side of Darwin it is on the side of the Bible." A lot of folks are trying to interpret the Bible in light of man's wisdom forget it, we are better off interpreting mans wisdom in light of God's Word.

### III.) Vs. 13-14 Final exam

Alright no that we see how the instruction of the class was geared we come to the final exam, or as Solomon says, "the conclusion of the whole matter". Solomon concludes this book with the final exam that has three answers we need to pass to graduate into heaven:

- a. **Fear God:** Now this word "fear" in relationship to the word "God" has caused no amount of problems over the years. We get the mental picture of fright & being afraid, when that is not what is meant by the word at all. The word means to reverence which Webster's dictionary defines as "profound adoring awed respect". Ray Stedman uses an acronym to explain its meaning:

"F" = Faith, as any "adoring awed respect" has to come from a place where you believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

"E" = Experience of His grace. We won't adore Him unless we have personally experienced His mercy & grace at the cross.

"A" = Awe at His majesty. This deals with just the wonder of the character & nature of God who reveals Himself through His creation as well as His Word.

"R" = Resolve to follow Him. Without the "R" all you have is "fea". All the above cause us to desire to allow God to change us.

b. "Keep His commandments": Simply put there is not true love without loyalty!

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Folks, the measure of a person's life is not its duration but rather its dedication! That's where we will see if a person lives what they believed.

Now what is interesting here is that Solomon sums up what Jesus said in Matthew. "*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*" In the Hebrew the word "duty" is not in the Hebrew literally this reads "For this is whole of man". The idea is after the love of God & the love for our fellow man there is nothing else to us! There is a "wholeness" that applying the Word of God will bring to us that nothing us will.

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c. Turn in you paper: "*For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*" The final part of the test is how you are living it will count, we are all going to have to turn in our papers in which He will be the Judge. Our fellow classmates may think that we are real smart but the Lord will way every secret thing.

The aim of God & His Word towards our life is not reformation it is transformation, so now is the time where we are all still students taking in the lessons & applying His Word.

Gen 20:  
Abraham's failure