



Daily Verse and Comment

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

(24) There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and make his soul see good in his labor? This I also saw, that it *was* from the hand of God. (25) For who can eat, or who can enjoy it, more than I? (26) For *God* gives wisdom, and knowledge, and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight. But to the sinner He gives labor, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him who is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and a striving after wind.

A Faithful Version

While concluding the thoughts of chapter 2, these verses also provide a smooth bridge to the instruction in chapter 3. They are the first positive, solid instructions that Solomon has given about both [God](#) and life. They pave the way for accepting truly thrilling instruction about God in relation to time and a Christian's life of [faith](#).

Solomon, to this point, describes life as a waste of time and energy, seemingly meaningless, monotonous, repetitious, and unendurable. This occurs even though one's life may be busy, just as Solomon's was. To those who have little or no relationship with God, and therefore have no clear knowledge of His purpose, what Solomon has written to this point is a realistic assessment. Recently, while in a supermarket, I saw a young woman wearing a shirt that proclaimed, "Life is divided between miserable and horrible." To many, it seems as though life has no object except to bring difficulty and pain.

Ecclesiastes, however, provides a message directly from our Creator about what our attitude must be if we are going to make the best use of the awesome opportunity He has given us—and especially of the instruction in chapter 3.

In the first two chapters, Solomon's approach to life is completely “under the sun.” “Under the sun” implies that his teaching has not positively considered God; it is an entirely earthy view, thoroughly self-centered and carnal. God is mentioned only in [Ecclesiastes 1:13](#), where Solomon calls life “a burdensome task God has given the sons of man.” His assessment closely parallels the words on the woman's T-shirt in the supermarket.

In the final verses of Ecclesiastes 2, Solomon takes a sudden, sharp turn to an “above the sun” approach, advising that we should enjoy good in our labor because it is from God. His statement, “This also, I saw, was from the hand of God,” is important. Our attitude toward labor, he counsels, should be that it is a gracious gift from our Creator. Laboring is a God-designed and -assigned responsibility of man.

Apart from angels, we are the only created beings who can labor like this. We can work using creativity, objectivity, and purpose, but no animal can. We need to give thanks for such ability because it places mankind in a category that no animal can ever enter. We are still less than God but so far above animals that there is no adequate comparison.

Is there a reason such a disparity exists? He adds two verses later that God gives gifts like [wisdom](#) and knowledge to those who are good in His sight, another positive reason for a person to approach life in a different attitude. Can an animal by reason appreciate life? Does a beast have the knowledge and wisdom to add value to its life?

Our attitudes and demeanors, however, are often highly variable. Overall, without directly using the terms, Solomon is saying our attitude should be thankful and contented. Why? Foremost, for the very fact that we even have life. Directly tied to this is that we have been given a mind that can think about God, that can look forward to the future on a basis of truth within His purpose, that can realize that we are the called of God, that can think spatially, and that can read and understand. We should be thankful that we can be given even more gifts because of these factors.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Three\): Time](#)

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