



[Ecclesiastes 5:1-7](#)

(1) Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

(2) Do not be rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.
For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth;
Therefore let your words be few.

(3) For a dream comes through much activity,
And a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many words.

(4) When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it;
For *He has* no pleasure in fools.
Pay what you have vowed—

(5) Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. (6) Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger *of God* that it *was* an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? (7) For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also vanity. But fear God.

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To those whom [God](#) has called, nobody is more important than God Himself. This should be self-evident because, to us, God is a reality, a family reality. However, we are not like those whom Solomon describes in chapter 1, those to whom life is essentially meaningless. It is not that the uncalled have no goals in life; that they do not plan what they will do with their time; that they are not buying or selling or repairing their homes, going to games or theaters, or seeking the latest fashions. Most of their lives are quite busy, involved in the normal activities of marrying, having children, divorcing, taking vacations, repairing their automobiles, going to work, and returning home at night to dine and read a book or watch television.

To many of them, involvement in a church is a portion of life, but God is not a reality to them in the way He must be to us because we truly believe Him and live by [faith](#) in Him. They may have some awareness and concern about Him. Yet, through the blood of

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[Christ](#) and the covenant we made with Him, we have dedicated our lives to Him. Thus, what God thinks, works on, and is planning are not guiding, overriding concerns to them as they are to us.

In chapter 4, Solomon pays a visit to a courtroom and comes away critical of what he saw. He then goes to the marketplace and observes four different workers and the way they ply their trades. He then comments on partnership and the instability of civic life. All the while, he is speaking of the uncalled.

In chapter 5, Solomon visits the House of God. What he observes leaves him with foreboding thoughts about the spiritual state of those he saw. Until the specific context ends, it suggests that he is concerned about whether the worshippers are truly worshipping God in spirit and in [truth](#). Chapter 5 directly addresses those whom God has called.

Perhaps we have seen a television program or movie in which a family grumpily staggers through dressing for Sunday morning church, arguing with each other about what they will or will not wear. They continue on to the service in the family car, either totally silent or bickering about things that irritate them. Then, as soon as they leave the car and enter the sanctuary doors, a broad smile creases their faces, and they are polite to all who greet them. When they sing a hymn, their eyes are reverently closed, and on their faces are rapturous expressions, as if they are about to be transported to heaven itself. When services are over, they fly out the door and back to the dog-eat-dog real world. That quickly, their behaviors and attitudes return to normal.

All of this is, of course, a huge exaggeration, but it makes clear that attitudes and conduct can be flicked on or off depending on whom the person wants to impress. This on-and-off attitude toward God is the very kind that is Solomon's concern.

Why? Because it indicates unresolved hypocrisy. Undoubtedly, Solomon observed people whom he deemed were not consistently and faithfully sincere about God in relation to their lives. The context gives the impression that their worship of God was confined to their appearance at the Temple on the [Sabbath](#). But what about the rest of life?

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and Christian Living \(Part Six\): Listening](#)

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