



[Ecclesiastes 8:14-15](#)

(14) There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity. (15) So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor *all* the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

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Solomon reminds us that, as life falls out for us, we frequently do not understand it. It may seem unfair because the evil are prospered and the righteous are persecuted. But he does not dwell on that. Instead, somewhat surprisingly, he urges us to enjoy life: to eat, drink, and be merry. He does the same at least three other times earlier in the book despite all the vanity “under the sun.”

This is neither a cynical nor resigned-to-one's-fate acceptance of the “Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” attitude. Notice that the last phrase of verse 15 asserts that these circumstances are a gift from [God](#). In addition, he says in [Ecclesiastes 2:24](#), “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also I saw, was from the hand of God.” Therefore, this agrees with his earlier counsel that what is happening to us harmonizes with God's purpose for us. So the times and circumstances we are living in are good for our preparation for God's Kingdom.

Yes, there is vanity under the sun. Yes, we see a lot of injustice. But we have a lot of overcoming work to do, and there is joy for us in the ordinary activities of life, sharing fellowship with the people of God. While we are involved with all our heart in these things, God is nourishing and sustaining us as He prepares us. Thus, there is even reason to celebrate. God is calling on us to rejoice.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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