

Ecclesiastes Resumed (Part Thirteen)

Ecclesiastes 6

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Please open your Bible's to Ecclesiastes. I am getting as bad as Mr. Armstrong with the two trees, only I am using a whole book here. There is no doubt that chapters 4 and 5 frequently mention money. This is not because money is evil in any way. Money is actually morally neutral. It is neither of nor by itself good or evil. Rather it is frequently mentioned throughout the book because so many seem to think that the more wealth one has, they have the solution to life's problems.

In fact Solomon does say that in Ecclesiastes 10 and I will read that to you. This is of course in regard to money.

Ecclesiastes 10:19 A feast is made for laughter and wine makes merry but money answers everything.

That explanation from him has to be understood in the overall context of the book. However, though money does give one a sense of security in life, Solomon has clearly illustrated in these two chapters that money cannot be relied upon to be the solution that leads to one's satisfaction in life. Rather it is the *love* of money that is the greater problem and it seems from Solomon's illustrations that money appears to create as many problems as it solves and thus it remains a neutral.

The solutions to a profitable and satisfying life lies elsewhere. The solution to leading a meaningful life are internal and they lie within one's relationship with God and the application of righteous principals and attitudes. Let us begin here in Ecclesiastes 5. That is where we left off and I want to repeat these verses because they give a summary of what preceded it the two chapters and most especially in chapter 5.

Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the day of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and to rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. For he will dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.

So as we begin today I want to be reminded by this three-verse summary as to how important the relationship with God is so we will make the efforts to do whatever we must to keep it vibrantly alive. We *must* do whatever we must to keep it vibrantly alive. I am talking about the relationship that we have with God because a truly satisfying life largely depends on this relationship.

Note that God desires, he mentions it in verse 18, that we enjoy life. Note how frequently the terms in these three verses: “good,” “enjoy,” and, “gift” are linked with the term God, clearly indicating that the relationship is the source of those three. Notice also the word “heritage” that appears in verses 18 and 19. Now one’s heritage is not something earned. It is something passed on or passed down and in this case it is a value given. Not earned—given.

With these verses we are taught that the enjoyment of life is passed down with us as its recipients. The heritage of enjoyment of life is an unearned gift from our Father in heaven. Consider these facts: Our calling is *given*, we are granted repentance and thus it too is *given*. We are *given* the Holy Spirit. The relationship is something that is made possible by God and therefore it is *given*.

What must we do? Participate in the relationship in order to receive the heritage these verses speak off. If we do not participate, so much for the relationship, it will not exist for very long. What does Isaiah tell us in chapter 55? “Seek God.” That is our part. God makes it possible and we in turn use our life to seek Him.

Do you think you are ever a going to marry a guy or marry a girl that you do not actually seek? Seek, fellows and girls. If you just play it cool all the time and let the other person do all—what shall I call it, the work—the pleasurable work and receive all the enjoyment because of what they are putting into it? It is the same thing in our relationship with God. We must participate in it and if we give Him the cold shoulder by not really seeking Him, how can we say we are going to get any more from this?

Is it possible that God would withdraw from us? Yes, it is possible, but only after we have shown him that we have permanently withdrawn from Him. And so we have to exercise ourselves in this relationship to seek Him out.

In verse 19 we are given to understand that sufficient wealth and the power to eat of it (indicating, and if you remember in chapter 5 someone else is not eating it up), but we are able to use it, and thus being enabled to rejoice in one’s labors and what they produce, is also a gift of God.

Thus when we get to verse 20 it seems to me to mean that the person who truly takes God into consideration daily as a necessary part of his life and responds to Him will not have to look back on life in sorrow because God gives him joy.

You look at that and that is exactly what it says. It is almost as if Solomon is urging us to start storing up happy memories now and we do that by seeking God and participating as fully as we possibly can in the relationship. The New English Translation translates verse 20 in this manner.

Ecclesiastes 10:20 (NET) They will [they being those who participate with God in the relationship] take each day as it comes and use it to serve the Lord.

That is how they use the relationship to serve the Lord. The Living Bible translates it this way

Ecclesiastes 10:20 (LB) The person who does that will not need to look back with sorrow on his past, for God gives him joy.

That is the blessing that comes from participating in the relationship with God that He made available to us through His Son. I believe the topics of the past two chapters are particular helpful to those of us living in this nation where the accumulation of wealth is such a pressing cultural issue. And it is this way despite how greatly God has blessed this nation.

But the blessings are being withdrawn, or have been diminishing as God has been tightening the screws because of our idolatrous spiritual standing. I do not mean our spiritual standing, I am talking about the nation's spiritual standing and because of our immorality. Life is indeed becoming more economically difficult for the individual citizen as the entire nation progresses backward to bankruptcy as the casualties mount.

I gave you a quote at the end of the previous sermon from commentator Warren Wiersbe. Now I am going to read it to you because of what he says is appropriate toward remembering the overall teaching of chapter 5 so that we can make much better use of our relationship with God because within it he gives some elements that are very important to remember and to use.

He says (this was his summary of chapter 5): "If we focus more on the gift than on the

Giver we are guilty of idolatry. If we accept His gifts but complain about them, we are guilty of ingratitude. If we hoard His gifts and will not share them with others, we are guilty of indulgence. But if we yield to His will, what He gives us for His glory, then we can enjoy life and be satisfied.”

We are going to move on to chapter 6. In chapter 6 the word “satisfaction” becomes of primary importance. It is helpful to the overall picture of life that we carry in our relationship with God to understand that we are not always going to be happy, happy, happy, are we? Because we go through trials and get down in the dumps. “Where is God now that I am down in the dumps?”

You all know, as I can see your smiling faces, that you have gone through these things and so even though God has called us and we have a relationship with Him, we have a Savior, we can look forward to eternal life, life is not always happy, happy, happy.

That is my introduction to chapter 6. So the level of enjoyment of life or as we might call it satisfaction with life is going to vary from time to time. We are emotional beings and in many cases our emotions are greatly affected by our current situation. Perhaps these illustrations in chapter 6 will help us toward the right balance.

Chapter 6 is only 12 verses long, so we are going to read through all twelve verses before I really begin to expound. Here in chapter 6 and believe me brethren it is a goldmine.

Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction. If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he. For it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place? All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied. For what more has the wise man than the fool? What does the poor man have, who knows how to walk before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. Whatever one is, he has been named already, for it is known that he is man; and he cannot

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contend with Him who is mightier than he. Since there are many things that increase vanity, how is man the better? For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him?

This brief but strategic chapter is placed right before one reaches the middle of the book. My interest as we proceed through this chapter is the word satisfy. In this context, satisfy gives the sense of being assured, producing a low level of anxiety. Not everybody's life is always assured of a low level of anxiety. Sometimes it is pretty tight, is it not?

I have to drop back in time here in this explanation because before I began this present series on Ecclesiastes I already owned a single volume commentary on Ecclesiastes by Warren Wiersbe, whom I quoted. I noted that he subtitled the entire volume: "Be Satisfied". Now I did not pay much attention to it except wondering briefly what this subtitle had to do with Ecclesiastes. I had already begun to give the sermons and when I found another single volume in commentary about Ecclesiastes that looked interesting to me, it too had a subtitle but that subtitle was "Everything Matters". Did you hear me say that a number of times? Yes, I did.

I have now gained access to 8 volumes on Ecclesiastes and I am using them for this series. Now at the same time that I discovered the "Everything Matters" commentary, I was already partway through Ecclesiastes preaching on it. But at the same time I was beginning to realize something on my own and that is that Solomon was repeatedly making comparisons and giving critical counsel and conclusions about a large number of issues that pertain to daily life. But even though these were major issues, they nonetheless impact on one's life virtually every day.

Now by that time I had already giving 8 sermons on Ecclesiastes but I decided to scrap the whole lot of them, change my approach and begin all over again because I was seeing Ecclesiastes as intensely practical on a day to day basis and I was grasping that Solomon was clearly progressing from one practical spiritual subject to another so that life can be spiritually meaningful by applying them to daily life. So I started from the very beginning once again and I thank you all for patiently bearing with me and I titled the new series Ecclesiastes Resumed and we are now on part 13.

Now I am going to give you a quick overview that will lead us into chapter 6. So as I begin to give you this spiritual overview I want to give you this because I think it is very helpful. Ecclesiastes is purposefully written—specifically written—for the sons of God. It

is not really for the unconverted in the world. It is intensely practical even though it is difficult to read and one has to really work at it to get anything out of it, but once you begin to see this thing open before you, it is awesome.

Indeed, remember we are reading the writing of one of the wisest men who ever lived. Would you not expect that something that came from that man's mind and that man's pen, though it might be difficult to grasp, nonetheless was extremely valuable intellectually and in the giving of understanding?

In the first chapter he makes a startling statement that on the surface life is spent in meaningless repetition, inspiring the question: why do we even live? What is its purpose? In chapter 2 he looks into the activities. What do you do almost every day? You work! What does he look into in chapter 2? Work! What else do you look into almost every day? Entertainment. Work and entertainment are the subject of two of the things that everybody does almost every day. You work and you entertain.

What does Solomon say? They are both vanity. In other words it looks as if they are leading nowhere. That ought to be especially clear in regard to entertainment, but throughout the book what he is doing is adding things back and forth and adding to it so that work becomes really, not just physically beneficial, it begins to become spiritually beneficial so that each day can add to that. The same thing with entertainment as well, even entertainment.

We just heard a quote from the Fellowship of the Ring. That is a wonderful book, I kid you not. For me it is probably the best work of fiction that I have ever read in my life. The three of them together, not just the Fellowship of the Ring.

But he was Catholic, very Catholic, and diligent in following it and the principles in that book are awesome in terms of character growth and understanding of what life is about and so he picked up on those things and he wrote a fiction work on it. But again it is entertainment but it is entertainment that is really profitable if it is used in the right way. Ok that is chapter two.

In chapter three he is advancing here. In chapter three he inserts God in a huge way into the picture in a surge that God is very active in His creation inserting events in people's lives in order to test and shape them. The subject of time as it relates to God and to Christians are intimately linked in this chapter.

We also find in this chapter that God is a God who gives us a sense of eternity and this sense helps us to know that we are being created for another dimension of life within

God's purpose. So we now know for sure from Ecclesiastes that life is most certainly not purposeless and meaningless and this gives us then acute reason as to why the author chose to subtitle his work as "Everything Matters." You get the point. Everything in the life of the called of God matters toward eternity.

Whatever our choices are going to be, what kind of use are we going to make of the time and the calling that God has given us? Are we just going to fritter it away or are we going to use it in the right direction in bringing honor and glory to God because of what he had given to us? That is what He expects. He expects us to respond in appreciation to those things.

So life is not purposeless and meaningless because we are going somewhere and it has something to do with eternity. We have a huge and awesome purpose to get prepared for, living life for eternity in a family companionship with the great God who created us and died for us. That is what life is about. That is the reason why we work. That is the reason why we seek entertainment to turn all of these things in our life in the right direction and use them purposefully for that calling.

The subject materials of chapters 4 and 5 are occupied with the discouraging, tumultuous, upsetting corruption that we must live within our cultures combined with some brief but important comments regarding the drives to accumulate wealth.

Now why is this subject of wealth brought up? Because on the carnal surface of life it seems to be the answer to virtually all one's needs. Despite having revealed to us the fantastic purpose God has in store for us, how can one possibly have a satisfying life in the midst of such corrupt turmoil?

What we find then is that we step out of chapter 5 and we are beginning to receive some of the answers to these two chapters. The two chapters being 4 and 5, and they are discussing the corruptness.

The 6th chapter's dominant subject on the surface appears to be about the dissatisfactions in life experienced by people in a variety of situation so the key word here is dissatisfaction as compared with Mr. Wiersbe's key word in his summary as "being satisfied". Chapter 6 is about dissatisfaction and so Wiersbe's comment came at the right place because the subject turned in chapter 6 to dissatisfaction.

Recall that in this context satisfied indicates being assured, freed from anxiety. So before preceding any further in chapter six, I thought it would be good to show some of the complex intimacy of our relationship with God so that perhaps we can see Him a bit

more clearly. Now take note of this.

It might be helpful to understand that this relationship with God is filled with positive emotional content that if believed will greatly aid us in being able to see God in categories that will help us secure greater satisfaction in these difficult times.

Here is my premise regarding the relationship. God is many things to us. First of all He is a living reality and we are saved by the fact that He is living. You know it says that in Romans 5. We are saved by His life.

The first aspect of our relationship is that He is our Creator and so we impact or He impacts on us by the fact that He is our Creator and we exist only because He embarked on this program and He not only provides us with every breath of air but in Hebrews the first chapter it tells us that to this very day He upholds things by the word of His power. He is actively involved.

Now in addition, His relationship to us is now very, very personal because each one of us is a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17)—a spiritual creation being specifically prepared and fitted for an office in His Kingdom. He has many offices to fill. Jesus told us so, He is creating us to fill those offices. So He not only created us and gave us life, now the creation is getting much, much more specific and He has all the more reason to pay even greater attention to us. So we have the attention of the great God who has made everything because now He is personally involved in creating us into something that He desires.

Therefore He is our potter. We are the clay, we are being shaped, are we not? Now this relationship also contains: He is our sovereign ruler. He is our government Creator on two different levels, He is our ruler as well. He is our government, He is our healer, He is our doctor, He is our provider.

I want you to turn to this one because what we are going to see here is no little thing. What is mentioned is in relation to Abraham but it include us.

James 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.

That is another category. He is not only our ruler, creator and so forth, He is also our friend. Do you know what the word friend means? The *Oxford Complete Wordfinder*

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defines friend as: “a person with whom one enjoys mutual affection. In regard to, exclusive of sexual or family bonds.” A friend is one who sympathizes with you. A friend is one who helps you, a friend is your patron.

You are beginning to see how this relationship is expanding on it from category to category and that we interface with Him not just as our Father, it is much more complex than that. He is involved, brethren, in every aspect of our life. That is nothing to sneeze at. We turn to Him in everything, do we not? Those things that are important to our life.

Proverbs 18:24 there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Obviously referring to our Savior. Always there to aid us.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

There it is. He laid His life down for us and He sticks closer than a brother. Want to see how important this is? Go with me back to II Chronicles. This just gives one example. This principle appears in other places as well but this one is so interesting. I believe it was Jehoshaphat who prayed this.

II Chronicles 20:7 Are you not our God, who drove the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

Jehoshaphat was a godly king and he knew God fairly well. Maybe better than any of us here as personal, someone that understood what it meant to be a friend of God because God comes to the aid as a friend to those who are His friend and show themselves that they are His friend, and so His friend forever.

And then we find the very pinnacle of all of these things in the book of Romans.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

This is the relationship that we most commonly think of. But I have gone into these

things so you can see that—despite the fact that life might not always be all that satisfying because there are times when we really feel down. Did any of you ever go to a Baptist church or a Pentecostal church? You sang: What a friend we have in Jesus. Why did the poet who wrote that say friend and did not say God? Because friend connotes concepts to us that God does not. It makes us realize how close He is, whereas a God can be somebody that can be way off and untouchable but a friend is right there to help, to sympathize, to lift one up, and to come to the aid of.

You are beginning to see that this relationship with God is a lot more complex than it appears on the surface and why I keep beating at it because this is something that impacts on us every day in a practical way because our lives are going up and down, sideways. We hurt, we feel good, we laugh we cry, we go to work, we come home, we read a book, we watch television, we are doing all of these things within a relationship with Somebody who wants us in His Family and it is our Creator, it is our Healer, it is our Provider. That is pretty good company. Even when we feel down and life is not all that happy, happy, happy.

So the relationship includes contact with our Creator physically, and spiritually our Ruler and therefore our government, our Healer, our Provider, our Friend, our Defender, the General of our army, our Savior, our Bridegroom, and our Father. So it is a complex relationship and every day we draw on some aspect of that relationship and this is why we have to participate at it to keep it vibrant and alive because not every time, every day, is going to be good.

So what I am getting at here is how much and in how many ways our lives are impacted by aspects of these relationships in multiple ways, and we have no other relationship that even comes close to having so many helpful and necessary-to-satisfaction complexities. *Everything matters.*

Now let us proceed from here and we are going to go from here to Hebrews 2 before we get back to Ecclesiastes.

Hebrews 2:14-15 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same [our Savior did that], that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [and verse 15 is the one that I really want here] and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

The key word here for this sermon is fear and this kind of fear is the opposite of

satisfaction. Fear indicates fright, dread, uncertainty, and anxiety rising from the expectation of loss. Now recall Satan's cynical but essentially true taunt that (quoting him from Job), "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life."

Now what is so morally evil about this kind of fear? This kind of fear drives us, **here is the key**, fear drives us toward self-centeredness and therefore sin which we then commit in order to protect the self from loss. That is why we sin. We fear we are going to lose something.

That is the very opposite of what the Creator desires of us. He does not want us to be afraid and yet fear is a major part of our life. And you have to remember it is what motivates us towards protecting ourselves so that we do not lose. Where is God when I feel fear? See?

So, fear is the opposite of what our Creator desires of us and what is helpful to know is that the fear of death is not the only thing that we fear. There are multitudes of fears that can dominate one's life, thus making life miserable and actually turning people neurotic, emotionally distraught. Things like fearing not having enough money, fearing poor health, fearing injury, fearing not being able to measure up, fearing failure, or not being accepted, to just name a few. We are just getting started. We can come up with hundreds of different things that we fear.

Now what is there to fear if we know that God in all of this complex relationship in which He is part of our life is **always there**? If you start thinking about this, you begin to understand along with me that we have a long way to go.

In really knowing God, in really believing that He is there, and I am not trying to tell you that I am the epitome of this, I am not because I have my own fears just like the rest of you, though I am trying to grow out of them by making sure that I am asking Him almost every day—you know, "God help me to see You." I do not mean that literally. He is not going to do that, but I mean understand, and know, and know that I know, that He is there.

When I got the idea for that sermon way back in 1989 or 90 about *Do You See God?*, that was a major, major change in my life as I began to see what I had hold of here. And so I passed it on. That is what Solomon is talking about here and how we can really become satisfied with life. Because God is there, but we are so hard to convince that He really is, that **He is there**.

So it is obvious from the preceding chapters of Ecclesiastes that Solomon is strongly

suggesting that we should not look for our life seeking wealth to remove one's fears. That is what chapter 4 and 5 are about. Money does not cut it. It will not remove those fears. It might alleviate one fear of not having enough money but there are hundreds of other things that we fear. And it does not take those things away.

Now why? Let me give you a very simple answer. Anybody can understand this. We think it through, the reason money will not do that is because God has not given any physical thing the ability to do that. It is not just money, it is automobiles, it could be a building, it could be power, anything that is physical. Not a single one of them will satisfy us in life. It cannot be done.

So what is it that we need? ***We have to grow in the grace of God.*** I mean really believe it. That is what he is talking about here in chapters 6 and 5. How many times did you see the word **gift** in those chapters in relation to God? It begins with, brethren, He gave us life! We would not be alive unless He gave us this gift. You start looking at those chapters and you begin to realize how what Solomon is saying is impacting our lives every day in some way. And what did he say? It is the gift that God gives.

So we must grow in the grace the gifting God has given us to fully believe that having and being able to use material things truly can produce a major satisfaction but always it is only going to be *temporary* and in addition to that, nothing physical can reach the measure of fulfillment so that we are totally at peace. That is a gift of God. Nothing physical can do that.

Now let me go back to another sermon. Do you recall what John D. Rockefeller's comment was regarding the question: How much is enough? A little bit more, he said. That was a beautifully clear and correct answer. Carnal, no doubt, but it was honest because the urge for more is always just below the surface because what was achieved failed to truly satisfy.

Ok, the Olympics are on. What are athletes always doing? They are always pushing higher, farther, and faster. It is never enough. That is the way human nature is. Higher, farther, faster. Anybody here wants to go. They have the lowest score in life. You will run that course in 105 (laughter) and you are bursting with pride at going through this. It was never low enough. When I hit 104 yeah, when I hit a 103 yeah!! We all experience that. That is something that is there.

So we have to be aware of that. One championship is not enough. The Seahawks are already planning for the next one. You see, that is the nature of things because after a while the thrill of the past fades away and we start looking for this. Next year we are

going to win every game. That is the way it is.

Let us take this a little bit further. This drive that is within us sometimes deceives people into taking unfair advantage and thus leads them into taking drugs or securing any advantage that will give them the edge. Why did they do that? For the thrill of victory. And let us say they get it, even though they cheated. It is still thrilling for a while until someone finds out they cheated. That is what I mean how these human things leads us to do things so that we do not suffer what we feel will be a loss. We fear the loss and it drives us to be like this.

I want to clarify this so that we understand that this drive to succeed is not totally wrong. God built us in such a way that we would have a sense of urgency to succeed. And there is nothing wrong as long as it remains controlled. There is nothing wrong with having a victory even though others might suffer loss. You have pushed yourself harder, faster, and better and so forth, and as far as it goes this is all right. We always have to remember though that all of these things, like the race or whatever, are physical things and they are not totally going to satisfy a person. They will not remove that sense of urgency or that sense of fear that the next time I might lose or I am not going to do as well. Now I want you to turn with me to II Timothy because God spoke on this.

II Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

That word “sound” can just as easily be translated balanced. And so our understanding of these senses, these desires and drives that are within us is that God put the desire within us to succeed. In one sense we see it in competition where somebody drives themselves and they do succeed. Now a person having the Spirit of God should be able to control his mind enough to know that this is not going to be satisfying for a very long period of time. It is satisfying right now, but it is good enough and I am satisfied with it and I am not going to drive myself to win at any expense just to get that thrill back.

But people will do that and the spirit that God has given to us is one of love and because we love others in the world we are not going to do everything we possibly can to beat them so that we do not sin in beating them. We may drive ourselves to do it, and fine we have committed ourselves to do that and God allows us to have a victory, but that spirit that is in us lets us know, that it is enough.

You know it is not going to satisfy you totally, you are happy right now, let it pass, be gracious in victory and just leave it there. Because if we do not, the fear in us will rise up

and we will fear that we will lose and that fear may drive us to sin. I do not want to do that. But the balanced mind of the Spirit of God will draw us back and we will suffer loss rather than break the law or do something unloving to another person so that they lose.

You get the point? All of this is involved in chapter 6. It all has to do with satisfaction in life and so as we begin here I am helping you to see that these drives are within us and what it is driving us in most of the time is fear. But God has not given us the spirit of fear but he has given us the spirit of love and power and that power means to keep ourselves balanced within the framework of his law and loving relationships with other human beings without giving in to the fear of loss.

I want you to notice. Let us go back to Ecclesiastes 6 again. That was my preface for chapter 6 but it has to be given so that we understand where Solomon is coming from. What is this that causes this satisfaction in life? If this satisfaction is not coming from a relationship with God, the dissatisfaction has its root, its genesis, in not seeing God as a part of our life and seeking after Him because when we do He will respond with the gifts that we need to be truly satisfied in life.

My King James Version Study Bible has neatly organized chapter 6 in this way. Verses 1 and 2 are titled in my study Bible: No Satisfaction in Wealth. Now when it says no satisfaction it does not mean there is no satisfaction at all. It means that wealth will not sustain this satisfaction, cannot count on it.

Verse 3-6 are titled: No Satisfaction in Children. That sounds strange but we will see as we go through there. Verses 7 and 8 are titled: No Satisfaction in Labor. People like to get their joy from labor. That will give some joy, but it will not be sustained. Verses 9 to 12 are: No Satisfaction in the Future.

There are those who consider chapter 6 to be the most negative one in the book of Ecclesiastes. That may be a true assessment but it is realistic only because of Solomon's intent. He made it that way purposefully. Each section of this chapter briefly examines the areas of life people tend to hold as most important to them for finding satisfaction. But life is a lot more varied. We saw all the angles and ways in which it impacts on us.

Let us take a little moment to review. So what are those things those elements? Wealth, posterity, that is, children, their work, and finally the future. In each case Solomon shows that these things all by themselves lack the God relationship element. All you have to do is read the entire chapter and you will see that God is not involved here at all and that is the problem. That is why there is so much dissatisfaction because He is the

giver of what is good in life. People are trying to get it out of what they do and that is only momentary. What they do need to do is have a relationship with God, and participate in that relationship, and this opens up the door for God to be able to give us the gifts that we need to make life really satisfying.

So if God is not there, and even though people may receive some satisfaction from these things, they are not the ultimate, and that is his point. And he is saying in this that none of them will bring as high a level of satisfaction as one will achieve by having God involved in one's life as one seeks satisfaction. In other words, God wants you to do both. Both seek higher, faster, further. If I can put it in that regard but at the same time make sure that your relationship with God is vibrantly alive. And do you know what that will do? He will give us the gifts to enable us to achieve and at the same time feel really good about it and it will last and last and last. Because of what He does.

So from chapter 6 we find that God is the ingredient that is absolutely necessary for satisfaction in life because He alone fully knows each one's purpose within the body of the organization that He is forming—His Family.

And so He knows how to deal with each person in preparation for their, what shall I call it, the office that they are going to hold in His Family. That is the way Jesus put it in John 14. So he is all the time working to prepare people for that and brethren, that is what is fulfilling because we are fitting into God's purpose. He allows us to be able to direct our lives into great achievements but He wants it all done within the relationship. Then it becomes really worthwhile.

Ecclesiastes 6:1-2 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.

Solomon touched on this subject in chapter 5, verse 19 where he dealt with it in a positive way but here he is dealing with it in a negative way in which God is not part of the relationship. Now I believe that he did this because it is a fairly common occurrence among mankind and it seems as though it is a tragedy for it to happen at all, but it does.

Notice the word foreigner. You do not have to think of this person as an alien because within the context of what he is, the subject that he is talking about there, foreigners could simply mean a stranger. Somebody who is not of the family that he speaking of.

So a person or a family seemingly has all the material wealth needed to have an enjoyable life but for one reason or another something intervenes to deny satisfaction. So in this situation that Solomon describes, the person had no heir and somebody not even related, that is the foreigner, gets use from the estate that was accumulated. This happens once in a while.

Is Solomon hinting to us that we should learn to use right balance in the blessing God provides for us while we are still able to make enjoyable use of them? Timing becomes important here. Is he saying something to the line of, it is a little cliché but it is what he is talking about: Do not plan to live later. **Live now.** Do not let life pass you by.

When he says live, he is talking about a godly life. That is what happens here. The guy earned all kinds of money and maybe he got to age 65: “now I am going to spend it.” He had a heart attack and died. What happened the other 45 years that he was living while he was piling up this great estate that he never got to use?

That is what he is talking about. It is vanity—aghhhhh. You know it is like. He is pulling his hair out. Why did he not treat his family in such a way so that they could enjoy the wealth that God was giving to him? Instead he kept it all to himself waiting for the timing that he wanted to give to it. And so the family, well let us say they lived in practical poverty while they had a couple hundred thousand dollars in the bank that dad was saving for a better day.

That is what he is saying here. Again we use money as part of the illustration but what he is saying is, “live your life now as a godly son of God and do not be afraid of enjoying it.” With whom? With your family.

You know why he probably just saved all the money. He was probably afraid there is going to be a depression. He is probably afraid the whole economy was going to crash. He was afraid. You see what fear does? Fear drives us to do things that are unbalanced. And in the meanwhile life passed him by that he could have enjoyed with his family.

That is the first lesson. The second one is very interesting. Ecclesiastes 6:3-6, and as we begin to read this, understand that this is surely a hypothetical case.

Ecclesiastes 6:3-6 If a man begets a hundred children [who begets a hundred children?] and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he—for it comes in vanity and

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departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?

We will finish with this illustration. This truly is a hypothetical case because no one produces a hundred children and nobody lives for 2000 years, so he is obviously exaggerating in order to make a point. And the point of the comparison is exceedingly important for all of us to understand and accept. The point of verse three is that no matter how much one possesses, if you do not have the power to enjoy it, is so stressfully draining one would be better off not even being born.

He spoke on this in a previous chapter in a little bit different way but here he is expanding on it. So he compounds the person's dilemma further by suggesting that despite having one hundred children he has no burial. You mean they never stuck him in the ground, they just took him out to the cemetery and tossed him out on the grass there?

No, he is speaking in one thousand BC pictures here. It does not mean that he was not buried. What you are looking at is a Hebraism that means that he was not lamented at death. He had all this wealth, all this money, and nobody loved him. He died friendless even within his own family. Nobody even cared whether he lived or died. The family hung around only to use his money.

So the overall point is that regardless of how much material wealth this man accumulated, this man was really poor, meaning that his life was in no way satisfying. Everybody shared their mutual disrespect for him and they stayed around only to enjoy his money. And when he died he had no burial, nobody even cared.

What this statement means, the overall statement for this particular illustration, is that there is no love in the house. As the father he should have been giving the love in the first place. It should have been generated from both the father and mother but in this case Solomon is concentrating on the one who should have been leading it. His children did not even know that he loved them, but he did not. That was the problem.

Now there is a stillborn child that is mentioned here. In fact it says the stillborn child comes in vanity and its name is covered with darkness. At the time (this is 1000 BC), of Solomon it was the custom in Israel that if a child was stillborn it was not even given a name. They did that believing it would be easier to forget and to overcome and let the

child's memory pass because it had no name, there was nothing attached to it.

That is the way this man, who did not show any love for his family, was regarded by the family. He gave no love and he got no love back. They just hung around because of his money. Daddy should have been leading the family in love and then he would have had a burial and Solomon would not have spoken of him in this manner.