

## Ecclesiastes Chapter 6 "Same old, same old"

2,350 verses deal with the proper use and perspective towards \$\$\$**.** Solomon preaches... **verse 10** He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also *is* vanity.

**The THINGS THAT MATTER IN LIFE ARE NOT THINGS AT ALL . . . DO YOU HAVE THINGS OR DO THINGS HAVE YOU.**

The contemporary author Jessie O'Neill has diagnosed this spiritual problem. She calls it "affluenza"<sup>99</sup> which is "an unhealthy relationship with money" or the pursuit of wealth. Most Americans have at least a **mild case** of this deadly disease. Even if we are thankful for what we have, we often think about things that we do not have and how to get them. This explains the sudden pang of discontent we feel when we realize that we cannot afford something we want to buy or the guilt we feel because we bought it anyway, and now we are in debt as a result. **This is a lifelong struggle.** *The fact that we have resisted the temptation of money before does not make us immune to it from now on.*



**JOHN WESLEY, COFOUNDER OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, TOLD HIS PEOPLE, "MAKE ALL YOU CAN, SAVE ALL YOU CAN, GIVE ALL YOU CAN." live simply and give generously.**

**Say NO! to Cirrhosis of the Giver**

**SOLOMON GIVES SOME GREAT REASONS TO KEEP RICHES IN PERSPECTIVE...**

- \* Freeloaders, relatives and friends will soak you.
- \* Oppressive government and taxes

**BUT NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE, THE MORE WE HAVE, THE MORE OTHER PEOPLE TRY TO GET IT.**

**ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH HAVING MORE MONEY IS THAT IT WILL KEEP US UP AT NIGHT. HOW WILL I MAINTAIN ALL I HAVE, HOW CAN I KEEP FROM LOSING IT?**

**Another negative about riches YOU CANT TAKE IT WITH YOU!**

**Depressing close in verse 17** All his days he also eats in darkness, And *he has* much sorrow and sickness and anger. **Verse 17** gives us a pathetic picture of where greed will lead. "If anything is worse than the addiction money brings," writes Derek Kidner, **"IT IS THE EMPTINESS IT LEAVES."**<sup>99</sup> *The miser will end up alone in his misery.*

## 100'S OF MAKES AND REMAKES OF CHRISTMAS CAROL...

- *Scrooge, or, Marley's Ghost* (1901) 12 more movies after it then...
- *Mickey's Christmas Carol* (1983)
- *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992)
- Scrooged with Bill Murray and 5 more between 1994 and present day.

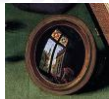
Many more TV programs and plays... **Our very own Christmas Clique... by the way the best one ever!**

Why so many and so successful, because none of us want to be a scrooge... **RICH MAYBE** . . . it seems that scripture communicates to us that they go together like oreo's and milk.

**If we focus more on the gifts 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 MASSYS SAW HOW EASILY MONEY CAN PULL OUR SOULS AWAY FROM THE**



**WORSHIP OF GOD. IT IS MASSYS HIMSELF. REMINDING HIMSELF TO ALWAYS REACH OUT TO JESUS AND THE CROSS AND TO NEVER LOOK TO MONEY TO BRING SATISFACTION IN LIFE.**

## PRAY

**One man noted,** In chapters 1 through 6, Solomon is a hedonist, living for pleasures as he pursues wine and money, power and women, education and philosophy. Nothing did he turn his eyes from... he tasted it all and it didn't fulfill his needs. **He has proven life without God is meaningless...** But in chapters 7 through 12, he changes his direction radically. He trades his Lamborghini for a Chrysler station wagon. He becomes a family man, a moralist—sharing truth, even though he's not necessarily always experiencing it. **Solomon will continue to struggle**—until he comes to the one all-important conclusion found at the end of the book...



**Ronald Rolheiser writes,** "It's no easy task to walk this earth and find peace. Inside of us, it would seem, something is at odds with the very rhythm of things and we are forever restless, dissatisfied, frustrated, and aching. We are so overcharged with desire that it is hard to come to simple rest. Desire is always stronger than satisfaction"

**Jonathan Clements** reached a similar conclusion in the pages of the Wall Street Journal. “WE may have life and liberty,” he wrote. “But the pursuit of happiness isn’t going well... we constantly hanker after fancier cars and fatter paychecks—and, initially, such things boost our happiness. But the glow of satisfaction quickly fades and soon we’re yearning for something else.”

**ECCLESIASTES 6 IS ONE OF THE BIBLE'S DARKEST CHAPTERS.** As Ryken notes, “Solomon lists a series of disappointments that left him deeply dissatisfied, followed by several questions that are hard for anyone except God to answer. Many people think about life the same way: a long list of disappointments has left them with serious question about God.”

**In Ecclesiastes 6, Solomon discussed three of life’s mysteries: riches without enjoyment (1–6), labor without satisfaction (7–9), and questions without answers (10–12).**

**Chapter 6 verse 1...** There is an evil which I have seen under the sun **STILL "UNDER THE SUN" LIFE WITHOUT ETERNITY IN MIND, LIFE WITHOUT GOD. LIFE "UNDER THE SUN" IS STILL VANITY, CHASING BUBBLES. THIS SETS THE STAGE FOR ALL THE FOLLOWING stinkin thinkin**

Again verse one of chapter 6... There is an evil which I have seen under the sun and it *is* common among men: **2** 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.



Courson: “I have observed,” Solomon says, “that rich people are unable to enjoy their riches.” It’s really true. Was Howard Hughes tremendously happy? How about J. Paul Getty? J. D. Rockefeller? No, says Solomon. He makes the observation that the wealthier a man becomes, the less able he is to enjoy what he has. It’s ironic that those who have the most are often able to enjoy it the least.

**Martin Luther called these verses** *“a description of a rich man who lacks nothing for a good and happy life and yet does not have one”*.

To enjoy the gifts without the Giver is idolatry, and this can never satisfy the human heart. Enjoyment without God is merely entertainment, and it doesn’t satisfy. But enjoyment with God is enrichment and it brings true joy and satisfaction.

**3** 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, **To die unburied was the mark of a despised and unmourned end.** Kidner *“One*

*could have the things men dream of - which in Old Testament terms meant children by the score, and years of life by the thousand - and still depart unnoticed, unlamented, and unfulfilled."*

You might say Solomon is having a long middle age crisis. Problem is; he already owns the sports cars and the yacht. **He is still empty**

Solomon continues in his despair... "I say *that* a stillborn child *is* better than he" This is a bitter statement, Life seemed so meaningless that he felt it would be better if he were never born.

More than one person in the Bible became so discouraged with life that he either wanted to die or wished he had never been born. The list includes:

**MOSES** (Numbers 11:15); **Elijah** (1 Kings 19:4); **Job** (3:21; 7:15); **Jeremiah** (8:3; 15:10), and **JONAH** (4:3).



Chuck Missler makes the point... "Even the great apostle Paul despaired of life during a particularly tough time in his life (2 Cor 1:8-11). Perhaps the basic problem is that life confronts us with too many mysteries we can't fathom and too many puzzles we can't solve. For life to be truly satisfying, it has to make sense. When it doesn't make sense, we get frustrated. If people can't see a purpose in life, especially when they go through deep suffering, they start to question God and even wonder if life is worthwhile."

## DEPRESSION- WHAT A HUGE SUBJECT!

Mark buckley in his book on depression... So why was I so depressed? The doctors had all kinds of reasons from emotional to physical, but I believe it was my focus. Life is like a camera, whatever you focus on is what develops. My focus was on myself. I was constantly looking at things with me as the central focus, no matter what it was. If my family wanted to do something, it depended on how I felt. If there was something I wanted, I bought it. No matter what was going on, I looked at how it affected me. I was always searching for peace and happiness, and believe me; I went to every store imaginable and didn't find it. During the course of my life I have had thirty-eight jobs, lived in twenty-nine places and couldn't even count the number of cars and toys I bought, looking for peace of mind. I would have done just about anything to change the state of mind I was in.

**God certainly did do just that for Mark . . .** In Chapter 12 he relays some ways to conquer depression... 1. Get your eyes off yourself 2. Get involved with people 3. Give to others 4. Live in the present 5. Listen before speaking 6. Start each day with prayer and God's word 7. Stay broken and humble 8. Never compare myself to others 9. Live knowing you have a purpose

I think our expectations are too high. We were never meant to be totally satisfied on this planet. After all it's not our home. **Satisfaction is not guaranteed**

I tell you with great joy in my heart... this used to be me... eternal life fixed it... truth fixed it... Jesus fixed it!

**4** for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. **5** Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything*, this has more rest than that man, **6** even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. **Never to be born is better than knowing the crushing disappointment of the realization of meaninglessness**, Do not all go to one place? **7** All the labor of man *is* for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied.

I'm a dark meat guy... I like to break it up put it on top of the mashed potato's... No peel for me baby just white and smooth. Gravy on top and black olives. Green beans swimming in cheese sauce, sweet potato's with melted marshmallows... Wow, are we ever blessed. Closing the whole baby out with some home made pecan pie. **The tryptophan kicks in... nappy time. I will never eat turkey again... as soon as it all passes through... turkey sandwiches baby.** Food for the body but the soul is left empty...

But what good is it for me to add years to my life if I don't add life to my years? Wiersbe: *"I'm like the birds that I watch in the backyard. They spend all their waking hours either looking for food or escaping from enemies. (We have cats in our neighborhood.) These birds are not really living; they are only existing. Yet they are fulfilling the purposes for which the Creator made them—and they even sing about it!"*

Missler... "Solomon is not suggesting that it's wrong either to work or to eat. Many people enjoy doing both. But if life consists only in working and eating, then we are being controlled by our appetites and that almost puts us on the same level as animals. As far as nature is concerned, self-preservation may be the first law of life, but we who are made in the image of God must live for something higher."

**8** For what more has the wise *man* than the fool? **WISDOM ITSELF CAN'T FILL A HUNGRY MAN'S STOMACH.** What does the poor man have, Who knows *how* to walk before the



living? **9** Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.



Chuck Missler in his commentary on Ecc. Says, “A century ago, when the United States was starting to experience prosperity and expansion, the American naturalist Henry David Thoreau warned that men were devising “improved means to unimproved ends.” He should see our world today. We can send messages around the world in seconds, but do we have anything significant to say? We can transmit pictures even from the moon, but our TV screens are stained with violence, sex, cheap advertising, and even cheaper entertainment.”

Shouldn't we find satisfaction in all life has to offer... food, family, entertainment... but as one man said, “desire is a tramp, never content to stay home, it always wants to go out wandering. This is the Preacher's vivid image in verse 9, where he talks about the wandering of desire”. Our desires are always traveling, but never arriving!



A striking example of perpetual dissatisfaction comes from the excavations at the city of Pompeii. When Vesuvius erupted and Pompeii was buried, many people perished, with their body shapes, postures, and in some instances their facial expressions preserved in volcanic ash. One woman's feet were pointed in the direction of the city gate, headed for safety. Yet here face was turned back to look at something just beyond the reach of her out-stretched hands. She was grasping for a prize—a bad of beautiful pearls. Whether suddenly she remembered that she had left them as she was running for here life, woman was frozen in a pose of unattainable desire”.

This is a temptation for all of us: to turn from life to death by reaching for something we think will satisfy us. **\*\*ie... Longing for love so many sisters in Christ settle for husbands that don't love God... they live in a godless marriage for seeking satisfaction in something that could never satisfy.**

**LET GOD BE OUR PORTION...** He has all we need. So many of us turn to other things rather than to God to fill our needs.



**Hughes says,** “This is important to remember whenever we feel unhappy about anything in life. We need to ask ourselves what we truly need and remind ourselves what God wants to give us. Before we buy something or eat something or turn something on, it is better for us to talk things over with our Father in Heaven, saying something like, “Lord, you know how empty I fell

right now. Help me not to run away from my problem but to turn them over to you. Teach me that you are enough for me. And by your grace, give me the peace and the joy that you have for me in Jesus.”

## **SO MANY PEOPLE SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME ROMANTICIZING THEIR PAST OR FANTASIZING ABOUT THEIR FUTURE.**

Solomon is saying, “It’s better to have little and really enjoy it than to dream about much and never attain it.” Dreams have a way of becoming nightmares if we don’t come to grips with reality.

“Enjoy the blessings of God now and thank Him for all of them.”  
Don’t plan to live—start living now. Carpe diem! Be satisfied with what He gives you and use it all for His glory.

**THE FUTILITY OF FEELING THAT NOTHING CAN MAKE IT BETTER. NOW SOLOMON POUTS THAT LIFE IS JUST THE SAME OLD, SAME OLD UNTIL YOU DIE, AND WHO KNOWS WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT?**

**EORE... WERE ALL GONNA DIE... WHO CARES... WOE IS ME...** the following verses find us in the middle of the book of Ecclesiastes and sadly Solomon is still saying the same sad stuff he said in the beginning. He still has stinkin thinkin. Life without God in mind will always stink.

**10** Whatever one is, he has been named already, For it is known that he *is* man; And he cannot contend (“contend” also means “dispute.”) with Him who is mightier than he. **If you are unhappy with life... why argue with God... It seems this is what Solomon is saying. When we argue with God we end up regretting it. Job ended up confessing after his spat with God, “I have uttered what I did not understand... therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust an sashes”** Job 42:3,6

**WE are the clay and He is the Potter... Let God be God and you be His child. He has your best in mind, ALWAYS. THE MOST TERRIBLE JUDGMENT WE COULD EXPERIENCE IN THIS LIFE WOULD BE TO HAVE GOD "GIVE US UP" AND LET US HAVE OUR OWN WAY!** **11** Since there are many things that increase vanity, How *is* man the better? Morgan "Evidently the thought of the preacher is that the more a man possesses under the sun, the more profoundly conscious does he become of the vanity and vexation of it all." **12** For who knows what *is* good for man in life, **(GOD DOES... THAT'S WHY I TRUST HIM EVEN WHEN WHAT HE DOES AND DOESN'T DO EXCEED MY UNDERSTANDING)** all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? **We often think we know what is good for us; but do we really? In the course of a life, which is**

better: Wealth or poverty? Health or sickness? Fame or obscurity? Many who have what is commonly thought of as **good** are not the better for it.

Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun? **Kidner said it right** "So the chapter will wind its way down to a depressing and uncertain finish, well suited to the state of man on his own."

Maybe Solomon's purpose is to talk openly about disappointment with life so it will awaken our longing for meaning beyond "this life".

**Solomon is brutally honest . . .** some questions will never be answered this side of heaven... certainly Solomon won't answer all the questions he has raised. Many will be not only be answered but fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

Yet his ending question is the one most on the minds of all people... Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun? **WELL, WE CAN . . . because Jesus answered that very question with His resurrection from the dead.**

No doubt if there is no Heaven, then there is no way to escape the vanity of our existence. **Nothing matters.** Our longings will never be satisfied. Our appetites will keep wandering forever...

If there was no hope of eternal life it would be better to have never been born... there would be great reason for depression. Nevertheless our hope of heaven is a sure hope. **This life is a short time of preparation for a long eternity.**

Our hope in Christ for the future is the mainspring and the mainstay of our joy here. It will animate our hearts to think often of heaven, for all that we can desire is promised there. Here we are weary and toilworn, but yonder is the land of *rest* where the sweat of labour shall no more bedew the worker's brow, and fatigue shall be for ever banished. To those who are weary and spent, the word "rest" is full of heaven. We are always in the field of battle; we are so tempted within, and so molested by foes without, that we have little or no peace; but in heaven we shall enjoy the *victory*, when the banner shall be waved aloft in triumph, and the sword shall be sheathed, and we shall hear our Captain say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." We have suffered bereavement after bereavement, but we are going to the land of the *immortal* where graves are unknown things. Here sin is a constant grief to us, but there we shall be perfectly *holy*, for there shall by no means enter into that kingdom anything which defileth. Hemlock springs not up in the furrows of celestial fields. Oh! is it not joy, that you are not to be in banishment for ever, that you are not to dwell eternally in this wilderness, but shall soon inherit Canaan? Nevertheless let it never be



said of us, that we are dreaming about the *future* and forgetting the *present*, let the future sanctify the present to highest uses. Through the Spirit of God the hope of heaven is the most potent force for the product of virtue; it is a fountain of joyous effort, it is the corner stone of cheerful holiness. The man who has this hope in him goes about his work with vigour, for the joy of the Lord is his strength. He fights against temptation with ardour, for the hope of the next world repels the fiery darts of the adversary. He can labour without present reward, for he looks for a reward in the world to come.