

HOW TO BE MISERABLE

October 20, 2019

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves. Better one handful with tranquillity than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

I. THREE THINGS THAT CAN MAKE YOU MISERABLE

1. *Envy*

Ecclesiastes 4:4 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

- *I give in to envy when I want something you have instead of being content with what God has given to me.*

A. Envy is a Meaningless Motivator

Proverbs 27:4 Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

Ecclesiastes 9:6 Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 5:15 Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands.

- We should all be motivated to be better... but which better?
- Do I want to be better than I am, or better than you are?

B. Envy has Cruel Consequences

James 3:14-16 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

- Envy breeds evil and confusion.

James 4:1-3 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you

kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- Envy leads to conflict.

Proverbs 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

- Envy erodes your peace.

2. Apathy

Ecclesiastes 4:5 Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves.

A. Apathy is Foolish.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.

Proverbs 24:30-34 I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

James 4:17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

B. Apathy is Self-Destructive.

Ecclesiastes 4:5 (ESV) The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

- I destroy myself when I fold my hands.
- Unfold your hands and embrace what is in front of you.

3. More

Ecclesiastes 4:6 Better one handful with tranquillity than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

- *When the quest for more comes at the expense of peace there is something out of balance in your life.*

A. Less May Be More.

Proverbs 15:16-17 Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil. Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred.

- Peace is better than position.
- Peace is better than possessions.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.

- Make sure that the things you have don't have you.

Ecclesiastes 4:7-8 Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. "For whom am I toiling," he asked, "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?" This too is meaningless— a miserable business!

B. The Best Way to Add May Be to Subtract.

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Philippians 4:12-13 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.