

Finding Life's Meaning "Under The Sun"

Lesson 5

The Monologue (1:12 – 12:8)

THE APPLICATION: Explaining & Applying God's Plan (6:1 – 8:15)

Introduction

Solomon has just completed the following:

- he admitted certain "truths" re: God's rule as eternal Sovereign (3:1-15)
- he admitted the presence of "puzzles" that seem to question God's sovereign rule (3:16 – 4:16)
- he warned of dangers in questioning God's sovereign rule (5:1-20)

Koheleth will now instruct us in how to wisely apply God's wisdom. In this section, some of his statements contradict conventional human wisdom. Particularly, he emphasizes injustices that at times dominate life "under the sun." Even if we suffer unfairness, we need to learn how to live in ways that please God, and put into practice behavior that won't destroy faith in trying to live in harmony with God's will.

Prosperity Is Not Always Good (6:1-12)

- 1) What warning about man & his prosperity does Solomon repeat in vv. 1-2? (cp. 2:18)

- 2) What else can befall a prosperous man? (v. 3a) Who is better off & why? (vv. 3b-5) How does he describe the eventual end of all men? (v. 6)

- 3) What is the problem with longing for prosperity? (v. 7; cp. 1 Tim. 6:9-10) Does anyone have an "advantage?" (v. 8) What is the solution? (v. 9; cp. Phil. 4:11-13; 1 Tim. 6:8)

- 4) How does Solomon refer to man's "nature?" (vv. 10-12; cp. Lk. 12:15) Why is the pursuit of wealth such a sad way to spend one's life? (v. 12; cp. Job 14:1-2; Jas. 4:14b)

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Adversity Is Not Always Bad (7:1-8)

- 5) What is praised in v. 1a? Why is this true?

- 6) 1st contrast => why is death better than birth? (v. 1b; cp. 4:2; Phil. 1:23)

- 7) 2nd contrast => why is a funeral better than a festive occasion? (v. 2)

- 8) 3rd contrast => why is sorrow better than laughter? (vv. 3-4)

- 9) 4th contrast => why is a rebuke better than a song? (vv. 5-7) What can foolishness eventually lead a man to do? (v. 7)

- 10) 5th contrast => why is the end of a thing better than its beginning? (v. 8)

Some General Admonitions (7:9-14)

- 11) What are we to avoid? (v. 9; cp. Eph. 4:26-27; Jas. 1:19b-20)

- 12) How does Solomon admonish those who might "pine away for the good old days?" (v. 10) What does such a mindset prevent us from doing?

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- 13) How does Solomon praise the value of wisdom? (vv. 11-12) What can wisdom do that prosperity cannot? (v. 12b)

- 14) What are we to realize about the wisdom of God? (v. 13; cp. 1:15)

- 15) What should be our attitude toward both prosperity & adversity? (v. 14)

The Value Of "Moderation" (7:15-18)

- 16) What has Solomon observed? (v. 15) To guard against forming the wrong conclusion, what does he encourage? (vv. 16-17)

- 17) Explain "*Be not overly righteous*" and "*Be not overly wicked.*" (vv. 16-17)

- 18) What is the solution he proposes? (v. 18)

The Value Of "Self-Restraint" (7:19-22)

- 19) How wise is a man who learns to "master himself" and his temptations? (v. 19) What must all men remember? (v. 20; cp. Rom. 3:9, 23)

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- 20) What else is man encouraged not to dwell on? (v. 21; cp. Rom. 8:33-34) What reminder brings the "offended man" back to reality? (v. 22)

Some Personal Observations (7:23-29)

- 21) What does Solomon say he did to try to understand all the activities he cataloged? (vv. 23-25) What did he discover about people in general? (v. 26)

- 22) What was he forced to admit? (vv. 27-28)

- 23) Thought question: who do you think is "the woman" in v. 26? Consider these texts in your answer: Gen. 3 (1 Tim. 2:14); 1 Kings 11:1-8; Prov. 2:16-19; 7:5-27.

- 24) Where does the fault lie for sinful behavior? (v. 29)

The Value Of Civil Obedience (8:1-9)

- 25) Is there any "advantage" to wisdom re: civil obedience? (vv. 1-5; cp. Rom. 13:1-6) What must be remembered re: the king? (v. 3b)

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26) What is encouraged, esp. if there is civil injustice? (v. 6) What is Solomon's reminder? (v. 7)

27) With what "proverbial wisdom" does Solomon discourage the use of evil to counter injustice or unfairness? (v. 8) Does he admit there is civil injustice at times? (v. 9)

The Advantage Of Righteousness Over Wickedness (8:10-14)

28) What does Solomon say eventually happens to the wicked? (v. 10) Sadly, what fails to restrain civil wickedness? (v. 11) Yet, what certainty needs to guide all men? (vv. 12-13)

29) What unfair "futility" does Solomon bemoan re: man's righteous and/or wicked actions? (v. 14)

His Conclusion (8:15)

30) How does Solomon again "reach above the sun" for the 3rd time? (v. 15; cp. 2:24-26; 5:18-20)