

Misplaced Hopes

Putting our hope in...

- what can't help
- the very thing that makes it worse

Hoping for the most important things in life:

- peace, joy, wholeness, rest, ...

1

"Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting."

Psalm 139:23-24

2

The Essential Ingredient Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:12

ref.ly/Ec5-6;niv



3

On the one hand

Proverbs 1:32-33

For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;
**but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm.**

On the other hand

Job 1:21b

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
may the name of the Lord be praised.

Ecclesiastes

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Ecclesiastes 5:8-9

⁸ If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, **do not be surprised** at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. ⁹ The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.

**Systemic oppression of the poor
is an age old problem
that isn't going to end
(until Jesus returns)**

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Ecclesiastes 5:10-12

¹⁰ Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.

This too is meaningless. **Wealth never satisfies**

¹¹ As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.

And what benefit are they to the owners
except to feast their eyes on them?

¹² The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance
permits them no sleep.

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Ecclesiastes 5:13-15

¹³ I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:

Wealth steals from its owners

wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners,

¹⁴ or wealth lost through some misfortune,

so that when they have children

there is nothing left for them to inherit.

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.

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Ecclesiastes 5:16-17

¹⁶ This too is a grievous evil:

Wealth steals from its owners

As everyone comes, so they depart,

and what do they gain,

since they toil for the wind?

¹⁷ All their days they eat in darkness,

with great frustration, affliction and anger.

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Ecclesiastes 5:18-20

¹⁸ This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot. ¹⁹ Moreover, when **God gives** someone wealth and possessions, and **the ability to enjoy them**, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—**this is a gift of God**. ²⁰ They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart.

True blessing is only from God

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Ecclesiastes 6:1-2

I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on mankind: ² God gives some people wealth, possessions and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, **but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them**, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

Without God's blessing, all is meaningless

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Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 / 6:1-2

This is ...good: ...

Moreover...God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.

I have seen another evil...:

God gives some people wealth, possessions and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them...

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Ecclesiastes 6:3-6

³ A man may have a hundred children and live many years; yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity and does not receive proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ⁴ It comes without meaning, it departs in darkness, and in darkness its name is shrouded. ⁵ Though it never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man— ⁶ even if he lives a thousand years twice over but fails to enjoy his prosperity. Do not all go to the same place?

Even great gifts are nothing without God's blessing

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Ecclesiastes 6:7-9

- ⁷ Everyone's toil is for their mouth,
yet their appetite is never satisfied.
- ⁸ What advantage have the wise over fools?
What do the poor gain
by knowing how to conduct themselves
before others?
- ⁹ Better what the eye sees
than the roving of the appetite.

This too is meaningless,
a chasing after the wind.

**Riches and poverty,
wisdom and folly
are meaningless without God's blessing**

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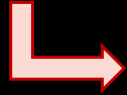
Ecclesiastes 6:10-12

- ¹⁰ Whatever exists has already been named,
and what humanity is has been known;
no one can contend
with **someone who is stronger.** **God is over all**
- ¹¹ The more the words, **We only have what God gives**
the less the meaning,
and how does that profit anyone?
- ¹² For who knows what is good for a person in life,
during the few and meaningless days they pass
through like a shadow? Who can tell them what will
happen under the sun after they are gone?

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The Big Idea

“Shalom” comes from God alone



Joy
Peace
Rest
Wholeness
Contentment

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Mirage

It claims to give what it cannot give

➔ peace, joy, contentment, rest, ...

- Money
- Family
- Honor
- Time
- Self fulfillment

They may make things worse!



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Mirage

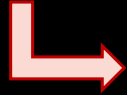
Everything but God is a mirage!
It promises to give what it often takes away



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The Big Idea

"Shalom" comes from God alone



Joy
Peace
Rest
Wholeness
Contentment

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Application

1) Pursue shalom from God alone

- before, during, and after every other good
- whether or not we have any other good
- "Feast on God"

Pray, meditate, worship, obey,
fellowship with others, ...

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest."

Matthew 1:28

"We lift our cup, whether full or empty, to God"

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Philippians 4:12-13

I have learned to be **content whatever the circumstances**. 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.**

The secret of contentment: trusting God
head / heart / hands

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Psalm 16:2

I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."

Psalm 33:20

We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.

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Application

1) Pursue shalom from God alone

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Application

- 1) Pursue shalom from God alone
- 2) **Know what pulls your heart from God**
 - "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." *Matthew 6:13*
 - We take action "in order that Satan might not outwit us. For **we are not unaware of his schemes.**" *2 Corinthians 2:11*
 - "When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony." *Proverbs 23:1-2*

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Application

- 1) Pursue shalom from God alone
- 2) **Know what pulls your heart from God**
 - Whether you have much or little or none
 - God knows our hearts, even if we can hide them from others or from ourselves
 - "Search me and know me..."

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Application

- 1) Pursue shalom from God alone
- 2) Know what pulls your heart from God
- 3) **Fast for a season** (if it is a good resource)
 - "If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." *Matthew 5:30*
Better to go without this good than risk falling

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Application

- 1) Pursue shalom from God alone
- 2) Know what pulls your heart from God
- 3) **Fast for a season** (if it is a good resource)
 - "[God] humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, **to teach you** that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." *Deuteronomy 8:3*

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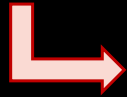
Application

- 1) Pursue shalom from God alone
- 2) Know what pulls your heart from God
- 3) **Fast for a season** (if it is a good resource)
 - **Stop or minimize:** Don't watch, read, shop, consume, hang out with, overachieve, ...
 - **Give:** Be extra generous with time, money, attention, invite others to enjoy together, ...
 - **Ask God** to change your heart and give shalom
Fasting is NOT what gives shalom
Shalom is from God

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The Big Idea

"Shalom" comes from God alone



Joy
Peace
Rest
Wholeness
Contentment

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“Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.
Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the LORD,
and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”
Isaiah 55:6-7

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Jesus said:
“Come to me, all you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you rest.”
Matthew 11:28

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