

**5:1 Rash Vows a
consideration of what
happens when God is not in
our plans.**

Ecc 5:1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. (2) Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. (3) A dream comes when there are many cares, and many words mark the speech of a fool.

(4) When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. (5) It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it. (6) Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? (7) Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.

Government Corruption

Ecc 5:8 If you see the poor oppressed [extortion – NET] 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.

Covetousness

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

Materialism Thwarts Enjoyment of Life

Ecc 5:13 I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: 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. (16) This too is a grievous evil: 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.

Enjoy the Fruit of Your Labor

Ecc 5:18 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.

5:20 For he does not think much about the fleeting days of his life because God keeps him preoccupied with the joy he derives from his activity. [NET Online]

Not Everyone Enjoys Life

Ecc 6:1 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. (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.

Not Everyone Enjoys Life

(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? (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?

v. 8 The rhetorical question in Hebrew implies a negative answer: the wise man has no absolute advantage over a fool in the sense that both will share the same fate: death. Solomon does not deny that wisdom has no relative advantage over folly; he affirms that wisdom does yield some relative benefits in life (7:1-22). However, wisdom cannot deliver one from death.

(9) Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

The Futile Way Life Works

Ecc 6:10 Whatever exists has already been named, and what humanity is has been known; no one can contend with someone who is stronger. (11) The more the words, 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?

