

Ecclesiastes

Part Four: *observations pt2*

April 28, 2024

In Ecclesiastes, old King Solomon looks at life from a human perspective and with human reason and concludes, "Everything is meaningless!" The Hebrew word translated *meaningless* or *vanity* is *hevel*. Solomon uses *hevel* as a metaphor to describe how life is temporary, puzzling, and without real value. Today, we're going to look at Chapters 5 & 6, where Solomon makes observations about wealth that argue everything we do on Earth is meaningless.

1st – Solomon observed that God can take your wealth. 5:1-7

First, Solomon tells us to keep our ears open and mouths shut when we enter the house of God. Then, he tells us it is evil to make rash or thoughtless promises to God. Solomon warns us that failure to fulfill a promise to God will result in punishment. If you lie to Him, God can take away your wealth and health (Acts 5:1-11).

Why does God have the right to take your wealth?

- God owns the earth and everything on it (Ex 19:5; 1 Chr 29:11; Ps 24:1; 50:10, 12; Hag 2:8).

2nd - Solomon observed corrupt officials can take your wealth. 5:8-9

Having shown that God can take wealth (vs. 1–7), Solomon said we should not be surprised if corrupt officials take our wealth. Solomon described these officials as powerful oppressors of the poor who find ways to steal from the officials under them. The king is at the head of this corrupt system and profits from his own people.

3rd – Solomon observed that wealth cannot bring true happiness. 5:10-17

According to Solomon... Those who love money will never have enough. The more money we have, the more people want our money. The rich seldom get a good night's sleep. Hoarding riches harms the saver. We can lose all our money through bad investments. We cannot take our riches with us; we all leave this world empty-handed. The pursuit of wealth causes sorrow, sickness, and anger.

After stating that wealth cannot bring true happiness...

- **Solomon gave his third conclusion in 5:18-20.**

"Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past." (Ecclesiastes 5:18–20, NLT)

4th – Solomon observed that some people are not able to enjoy their wealth. 6:1-9

"There is another serious tragedy I have seen under the sun, and it weighs heavily on humanity. God gives some people great wealth and honor and everything they could ever want, but then he doesn't give them the chance to enjoy these things. They die, and someone else, even a stranger, ends up enjoying their wealth! This is meaningless—a sickening tragedy." (Eccl 6:1-2)

In Verses 3-6, Solomon uses hyperbole (an exaggerated illustration) to show how a man who does not enjoy wealth is worse than a stillborn child. After describing the tragedy of unenjoyed wealth, Solomon recommends in verses 7-9 that we be content with what God has given us.

“All people spend their lives scratching for food, but they never seem to have enough. So are wise people really better off than fools? Do poor people gain anything by being wise and knowing how to act in front of others? Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don’t have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind.” (Ecclesiastes 6:7–9, NLT)

5th - Solomon observed that God decides who is wealthy. 6:10-12

“Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what each person would be. So there’s no use arguing with God about your destiny. The more words you speak, the less they mean. So what good are they? In the few days of our meaningless lives, who knows how our days can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. Who can tell what will happen on this earth after we are gone?” (Ecclesiastes 6:10–12, NLT)

Solomon sees that God is ultimately in control of all things that happen on earth. He says it is good that God is in control of our lives because we do not know the best way to spend the few days of our meaningless lives.

What should you take home from Ecclesiastes Chapters 5 & 6?

1. Everything you own belongs to God.
2. Money cannot buy true happiness.
3. You must be content to receive joy from the Lord (Phil 4:4-20).