

LIFE UNDER THE SUN



STUDIES IN ECCLESIASTES

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הַבַּיִת

“We live in an age of too much information, too few good questions. Let’s be the ones who ask great questions. Spark curiosity wherever you go, just like Jesus.”

— D. Everts & D. Schaupp, *I Once Was Lost*

Ecclesiastes Part 9 - “Questioning Our Materialism”

Introduction: The Allure & Danger of Materialism

Definition: As a philosophy, it is the belief that nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications. Practically, it is a tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values.

The Allure:

The Danger:

⇒ We have a tendency to become _____ →

A Question to Ask Ourselves: Do I really believe what the Bible says about _____?

The Failure of Materialism—Ecclesiastes 6:1-6

1. We are afflicted by our tendency to be materialists.

Ecc. 6:1-2—¹There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: ²a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil.

‘evil’— רָע (*rab*)—Something bad, disagreeable, or evil (hurtful). Used of something which afflicts.

⇒ The materialist, by definition, seeks to enjoy the good things of life apart from _____.

2. The misery that results from materialism is worse than having never been born in the first place.

Ecc. 6:3-6—³If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life’s good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ⁴For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. ⁵Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. ⁶Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

⇒ The materialistic person finds no true _____ in life’s good things.

‘satisfaction’— שָׂבַע (*saba*)—To be sated, be satisfied with, be fulfilled, be filled, have one’s fill of (have desire satisfied).

⇒ People rightly lament the loss of an unborn child, but we often fail to properly lament the person (including ourselves) trapped in the misery of a materialistic life.

⇒ In the end, no length of life or amount of wealth can provide lasting gain because _____ comes for all.

Qohelet’s Question: What do you really _____?

The Reason for Materialism—Ecclesiastes 6:7-9

1. All people, regardless of status or intelligence, are by nature creatures of desire.

Ecc. 6:7-8—⁷All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. ⁸For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living?

⇒ The example he considers is that of _____. Although it may be abated temporarily, it is never truly ‘satisfied.’

‘satisfied’— מָלֵא (*male*)—To satisfy, to accomplish, to be filled, to be made complete.

2. We have a tendency to desire more than whatever it is that we have.

Eccl. 6:9— Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

‘appetite’— נפש (nephesh)—Also translated ‘soul.’ Related to life and breath; t is the seat of the appetites and desires (lusts).

⇒ Our natural desires tend to become _____ and tend to manifest in the form of _____.

⇒ It is much better for us to be satisfied with the good things that God has provided for us.

Qohelet’s Question: Why are you _____?

The True Nature of Materialism—Ecclesiastes 6:10-12

1. Materialism is a futile attempt to rebel against God.

Eccl. 6:10-11—¹⁰ Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. ¹¹ The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man?

⇒ The human tendency to be discontent and to _____ about our circumstances shows the futility of seeking joy and satisfaction apart from Him.

2. Materialism cannot provide answers we are looking for.

Eccl. 6:12—For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?

⇒ Materialism cannot provide any transcendent _____ of meaning or purpose for our lives.

⇒ Materialism, by nature, is unconcerned with anything beyond this life.

Qohelet’s Question: Where do you go for _____?

Knowing the One Who Truly Satisfies

John 7:37-39—³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Occasion: The Feast of _____

- * The feast was to remind Israel of their time in the wilderness as they journeyed to the Promised Land.
- * On the last day, a priest would draw water from the pool of Siloam and take it to the altar where it would be poured out in memory of God providing water for them from the rock at Horeb.

The OT Background for Jesus’ Statement:

Isaiah 44:1-3—¹ “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

1. It is God alone who _____ freely that which truly satisfies.
2. He accomplishes this through His _____, bringing life to the soul.
3. His Word comes ultimately through His _____ who is the mediator of an everlasting covenant.
4. One of the key works of Messiah would be to pour out God’s _____ upon His people .