



Ecclesiastes 5:1-6:12

SEEING GOD AS GOD

Whereas the prophets hurl their invective against the vicious and the hypocrites, this writer's target is the well-meaning person who likes a good sing and turns up cheerfully enough to church; but who listens with half an ear, and never quite gets around to what he has volunteered to do for God. Such a man has forgotten where and who he is; above all, who God is. The reiterated word fool is scathing, for to be casual with God is an evil (5:1), a sin (5:6), and a provocation which will not go unpunished (5:6b). If we are tempted to write this off as a piece of OT harshness, the NT will disconcert us equally with its warnings against making pious words meaningless or treating lightly what is holy. No amount of emphasis on grace can justify taking liberties with God, for the very concept of grace demands gratitude; and true gratitude cannot be casual. —Derek Kidner

In 5:1-6:12, the Teacher brings the first semester of Reality 101 to a conclusion. He has confronted us with life as it really is “under the sun.”

- This world does not care about you.
- This world will not satisfy you.
- The more you see of this world, the more it will discourage and depress you.
- Your time in this world is brief and ends in death.

His point is to drive home the fact that a life lived without God is *vanity of vanities*, meaningless, empty, futile. Our only hope in this world is to look “above the sun” and to put our trust in the sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom of God.

Now, the Teacher gives us **four basic truths** that we must know, embrace, and live if we are going to pass Reality 101.

1. GOD IS _____ (5:1-7).

- Don't approach God like the fool who thinks that he can manipulate God to do what he wants through...
 - _____ (5:1; Is. 1:11-14)
 - _____ (5:2-3; Matt. 6:7-8)
 - _____ (5:4-7; Deut. 23:21-23)
- Approach God with humility and reverence, seeing His greatness, transcendence, and holiness (cf. Prov. 1:7; Isaiah 6:1-8; 40:28; 57:15; 66:1-2; Psalm 46:10; 95:6-11).

If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God you'll be at rest.

—Corrie ten Boom

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. ...The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.

—A.W. Tozer

"Many words" in 5:2-3, 7 projects the presumption of a person announcing to God his self-determined ambitions ("dreams") without any consideration of God's intended purposes for him. He attempts to manipulate God with "vows" to "guarantee" that God will bless his ambitions.

—James S. Reitman

Worship decenters the ego, the "I."

—Craig Bartholomew

The ear is the Christian's primary sense organ. Listening to what God has said is our main spiritual discipline.

—David Gibson

God's holiness refers to His greatness and His transcendence to the fact that He is above and beyond anything in the universe.

—R.C. Sproul

2. MONEY IS NOT _____ (5:8-17; 6:1-9).

The Teacher sees the “love of money” as the root behind oppression, government corruption, and many of the problems in the world. Money and possessions are the “god” that many people pursue and worship in this world (cf. Matthew 6:19-24; 1 Tim. 6:10).

Money is a false god that brings....

NO _____ NO _____

NO _____ NO _____



3. YOU ARE NOT _____ (6:10-12).

The Teacher ends this first section of Ecclesiastes (1:1-6:12) with a blunt reminder of who we are as humans.

- God’s purpose has already been determined.
- You, as a human (Hebrew, *adam*), are just a creature of dust.
- You cannot prevail against the sovereign, eternal God.
- The more you argue with God, the less you accomplish.
- You are mortal, limited in power, limited in perspective, bound in time, unable to know the future, and entirely dependent on God.

4. LIFE IS A _____ FROM GOD (5:18-20).

- _____ your life as a gift from God.
- _____ your life as a gift from God.
- _____ in your life as a gift from God.

The officials (5:8) have an intricate network of corruption. The point of one official watching over another is that they protect each other’s backs in the maintenance of oppression.

—Craig Bartholomew

Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one.

—Benjamin Franklin

If anything is worse than the addiction money brings, it is the emptiness it leaves. Man, with eternity in his heart, needs better nourishment than this.

—Derek Kidner

There is within the human heart a tough fibrous root of fallen life whose nature is to possess, always to possess. It covets things with a deep and fierce passion. The pronouns "my" and "mine" look innocent enough in print, but their constant and universal use is significant. They express the real nature of the old Adamic man better than a thousand volumes of theology could do. They are verbal symptoms of our deep disease. The roots of our hearts have grown down into things, and we dare not pull up one rootlet lest we die. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended. God's gifts now take the place of God, and the whole course of nature is upset by the monstrous substitution.

—A.W. Tozer

The real measure of your wealth is how much you'd be worth if you lost all your money.

—Anonymous