



The WORLD (and its values)

The "WORLD" –
a gift
vs.
meaningless

#4

[REVIEW] - - - How should we interact with the GOOD things of the "world"?



Do not love the **world** or
the things in the **world**.

1 John 2:15a (ESV)

[= kosmos (κοσμος) –
the "world system"]

THE WORLD

- Includes people and things, attitudes and interactions.
- Usually, the Bible focuses on its opposition to God, his Kingdom, his people.
- Even when it refers to something good, if we don't interact with it in a godly way, it becomes evil.

KEY ISSUE

FOLLOWING JESUS...

INFLUENCES EVERYTHING.

- It means we cannot choose to sin. It's NEVER an option.

~~SIN~~ ~~SIN~~ ~~SIN~~ ~~SIN~~ ~~SIN~~

- It also influences our response to good things in the world.

GOOD GOOD GOOD GOOD GOOD

THE OLD TESTAMENT ALSO HAS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD LIVE.

People tend to ignore it

(just as they ignore the NEW Testament)

whenever it condemns their desires
to claim, cling and consume what
the world offers them!

I SEE NOTHING
WRONG WITH...

I Crave
I Devour
I Cling

FOR INSTANCE...

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES TELLS US A LOT ABOUT:

- The meaning of life.
 - Our attitude.
 - How we should live.

⇒ But people tend to **DISLIKE** what it says!
(Some even get offended by its message.)

TYPICAL ATTITUDES ABOUT ECCLESIASTES ...

IT'S TOO
NEGATIVE! GOD
WANTS US TO BE
POSITIVE!

THE BIBLE INCLUDES
IT ONLY TO SHOW US
THE WORLD'S VIEW!

IT'S THERE TO SHOW
US THE VIEW WE
SHOULDN'T HAVE!

IT WAS WRITTEN BY A
DISCOURAGED OLD MAN
WHO REALIZED HE HAD
WASTED HIS LIFE!

TYPICAL ATTITUDES ABOUT ECCLESIASTES ...

IT'S TOO
PESSIMISTIC!

IT MAY BE OK FOR OLD
TESTAMENT PEOPLE,
BUT NOT FOR
CHRISTIANS TODAY!

IT'S THE BEST OF
HUMAN WISDOM – BUT
QUITE INFERIOR TO
GOD'S WISDOM!

IF IT WEREN'T FOR
CHAPTER 12,*
IT WOULDN'T EVEN
BE IN THE BIBLE!

*(Chapter 12 begins with
"Remember your Creator...")

BUT THE REAL ISSUE IS PROBABLY THIS:

Ecclesiastes is in part of the Bible
that is called:

WISDOM
LITERATURE.

And by nature, people are NOT WISE.

We need a radically changed way
of thinking, before we can accept
the message of Ecclesiastes!

JUST LIKE THE NEW TESTAMENT TELLS US,
WE NEED A CHANGE IN HOW WE THINK!

And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ...
Romans 12:2a (NASB)

WE NEED TO LET SCRIPTURE JUDGE US... NOT US JUDGE SCRIPTURE!

IT'S TOO
PESSIMISTIC
FOR ME TO
ACCEPT!

➤ The issue ISN'T whether or not it sounds:

- "optimistic" or "pessimistic"
- "positive" or "negative"

(Such concepts tell us more about our
own views, than about God's views.)

➤ The issue IS whether or not
it is a truthful and honest
description of life.

(And it is.)

GOD'S TELLING ME
THE TRUTH! I NEED TO
CHANGE MY VIEWS!

"NOT LIKING WHAT IT SAYS" IS NOT THE RIGHT CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ECCLESIASTES!

⇒ Don't be like these people!

... they have an itch to hear
what they want to hear ...

2 Timothy 4:3b (NET)

WE NEED TO
THINK
"POSITIVE"!

The concepts found in
Ecclesiastes can be found
throughout Scripture.
It's just that Ecclesiastes
brings them all together in
one place, and sometimes in
unexpected ways.

INSTEAD, SHOULDN'T WE
PURSUE TRUTH,
WHETHER OR NOT IT
SOUNDS PLEASING TO US?

WE SAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

➤ Our focus on the WORLD must have its foundation in GOD!
We must do ALL things for the glory and honor of God!

So whether you eat or drink or whatever
you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

➤ We also need to realize:

- ✓ We must not be consumed by the world and its values.
- ✓ Everything pertaining to the world is temporary, and must not be our primary focus.

ECCLESIASTES SAYS THE SAME THING!

➤ It's GOD'S view ... showing us how WE should view the things of this present life!

⇒ HOW SHOULD WE VIEW THE THINGS OF THIS PRESENT LIFE?



1. If we focus on this present life for ultimate value and meaning, WE WILL FIND NONE!

★ THERE IS NO VALUE! ★

I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Ecclesiastes 1:14 (NIV)



1. If we focus on this present life for ultimate value and meaning, WE WILL FIND NONE!

2. If we focus on the Creator for ultimate value and meaning, WE WILL FIND VALUE EVEN IN THE THINGS OF LIFE!

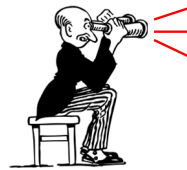
★ YES, THERE IS VALUE! ★

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—that is indeed a gift from God.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (NLT)

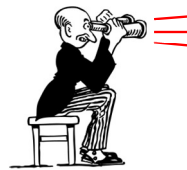
⇒ THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE FOCUS!

(And it's the SAME as what the New Testament says!)



1. This present life

↳ NO lasting meaning, here or in eternity.



2. The Creator

↳ Lasting meaning in eternity, and value here.



IF WE HAVE THIS ATTITUDE, THEN ...

➤ We can ENJOY the temporary things of this world as GIFTS from GOD!

It is also the gift of God whenever anyone eats, drinks, and enjoys all his efforts.

Ecclesiastes 3:13 (CSB)

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ...

"[God] fills you with food and your lives with happiness."

Acts 14:17b (GW)

➤ We can accept both the pleasant and the unpleasant circumstances of life!

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ...

There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under heaven.

Enjoy prosperity while you can. But when hard times strike, realize that both come from God. That way you will realize that nothing is certain in this life.

Ecclesiastes 3:1; 7:14 (NLT)

I've learned to be content in whatever situation I'm in.

I know how to live in poverty or prosperity. No matter what the situation, I've learned the secret of how to live when I'm full or when I'm hungry, when I have too much or when I have too little.

Philippians 4:11b-12 (GW)

- We can use and enjoy the things of this world with an awareness that they are TEMPORARY!

Generations come and generations go, ...

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 1:4a; 9:10 (NIV)

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ...

Those in frequent contact with the things of the world should make good use of them without becoming attached to them, for this world and all it contains will pass away.

1 Corinthians 7:31 (NLT)

- We can prepare for death, rather than ignoring it and being unprepared!

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ...

It is better to spend your time at funerals than at festivals. For you are going to die, and you should think about it while there is still time.

A wise person thinks much about death, while the fool thinks only about having a good time now.

Ecclesiastes 7:2, 4 (NLT)

"And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'"

Luke 12:19-20 (NIV)

- Awareness of the coming judgment will influence HOW we enjoy the things of this world!

Be happy, ... let your heart give you joy ...

Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things

God will bring you to judgment.

For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 11:9, 12:14 (NIV)

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ...

People die once, and after that they are judged.

Hebrews 9:27 (GW)

God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

Romans 2:6-8 (NIV)

IF WE LEARN FROM ECCLESIASTES, WE WILL HAVE THE SAME FOCUS AS JESUS AND THE APOSTLES DID!

- We will seek FIRST God's kingdom and his righteousness.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

- When we focus on the things of this present world, we will do so with GOD in view.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)

QUESTION:

IF YOU HAVE SUCH AN ATTITUDE ...

WILL YOUR LIFE BE CHARACTERIZED BY

"CRAVING, CLINGING AND CONSUMING"

WHAT THE WORLD OFFERS YOU??

Credits (1)

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