

Study of Ecclesiastes: Lesson 6 – Chapter 5:1-7
Pleasant View Church of Christ / Summer-Fall 2022

Using a physical instruction to represent a spiritual idea.

Approaching God is a serious matter

- I Samuel 15:22
- Proverbs 15:8
- Hebrews 12:28-29

How does this phrase apply to today?

- John 4:19-21
- Acts 8:3

1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, **for they do not know that they are doing evil.**

James 1:19-21
 - Listen First
 - Speak Second

The fool is oblivious to his position before God.

Matt 6:7
 Luke 18:9-14

2 Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

What does the presence of "many words" indicate?

3 For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

The first phrase illustrates the second

Judges 11:29-40

4 When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow.

II Peter 2:20-23

5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

What vows or commitments do we make before God?

מלאך - mal'âk

-Often "angel"
 -Lev 5:4-5
 -Rev 2:1

6 Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

7 For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.

Questions to Consider:

1. Through what avenue(s) do we approach God?
 (II Tim 3:14-17, Matt 6:5-15, Psalm 100:1-2, John 4:23-24)
2. Why do we approach God?
 (Isaiah 40:28-31; Eph 2:1-10; I Cor 6:20; II Tim 3:14-17; Heb 4:16)
3. How will we approach God if we truly have the proper regard for Him?
 (I Sam 1:12-15; Luke 18:9-14; Hebrews 12:28-29; 13:15; James 1:19-21)
4. What happens when we lose our reverence for God?

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Approaching God is a Serious Matter

I Samuel 15:22 (ESV)

And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams."

Proverbs 15:8

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.

Hebrews 12:28-29 (ESV)

²⁸Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.

How Does it Apply Today?

John 4:19-26

¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

Acts 8:3 (ESV)

But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Listen First, Speak Second

James 1:19-21 (ESV)

¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires. ²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

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Words be Few

Matthew 6:7-13 (ESV)

⁷"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)

⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Vow to God

Judges 11:30, 32, 34-35 (ESV)

³⁰And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." ³²So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand.

³⁴Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow

II Peter 2:20-23 (ESV)

²⁰For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²²What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."

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Messenger

Leviticus 5:4-5 (ESV)

⁴or if anyone utters with his lips a rash oath to do evil or to do good, any sort of rash oath that people swear, and it is hidden from him, when he comes to know it, and he realizes his guilt in any of these; ⁵when he realizes his guilt in any of these and confesses the sin he has committed

Revelation 2:1 (ESV)

¹"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

1. Through What Avenues Do We Approach God?

- Study of Scripture
- Prayer
- Praise
- Worship

II Timothy 3:14-17 (ESV)

¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ **All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Matthew 6:5-15 (ESV)

⁵"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁷"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this:

"**Our Father in heaven**, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also

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forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Psalm 100:1-2

¹Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

²Serve the LORD with gladness! **Come into his presence with singing!**

John 4:19-26

¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will **worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things."

²⁶Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

2. Why do we Approach God?

- We recognize His Power (Majesty)
- We recognize His gift to us
- We recognize His right to our lives (Blood of Jesus)
- We seek guidance
- We see mercy (we recognize our failings)

Isaiah 40:28-31 (ESV)

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? **The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.** ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV)

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- ⁶and raised us up with him and

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seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For **by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

I Corinthians 6:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price**. So glorify God in your body.

II Timothy 3:14-17 (ESV)

¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and **profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness**, ¹⁷that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then with confidence **draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need**.

3. How will we approach God if we truly have the proper regard for Him?

I Samuel 1:12-15 (ESV)

¹²As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴And Eli said to her, ¹⁵"How long will you go on being drunk? Put away your wine from you." But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but **I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD**."

Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)

⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even

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like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Hebrews 12:28-29 (ESV)

²⁸Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 13:15 (ESV)

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

4. What happens when we lose our reverence for God?

- Going through the motions in worship (don't remember the details)
- Apathy
- Stop studying, stop praying
- Stop living sacrificially
- Divisions in the church

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General Notes:

This chapter starts a change in style – moves from soliloquy to personal address (second person) / Verse 1 is the last verse of Chapter 4 in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin Bibles

Verse 1:

“Guard your steps” – “Keep thy foot” – KJV – Give your mind to what you are going to do – Approach God with seriousness, reverence and awe. Approaching God is not merely an outward observance or religious duties, but also includes a pattern of life honoring God’s commandments?

What is the sacrifice of fools?

- When one approaches God (i.e. to worship) without regard to the proper understanding and intention of it.
- John 4:24 – “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

“Ready to Listen”

James 1:19-21

19Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; **20**for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires. **21**Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Jesus may have had verse 1 in mind when he told the parable in Luke 18:9-14:

Verse 3:

Personal and business cares produce dreams (which are unsubstantial things)

Many times we approach God preoccupied with our own affairs. We are more “Important” than God.

Verse 4:

Hannah, Jonah and Jephthah are among those whose ‘vows’ are mentioned in the Word of God.

Num. 6:1-21

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Jonah 2:9
1 Sam. 1:19-28
Judg. 11:29-40

Jephthah is often cited as an example of one who made a rash vow; and Jonah's prayer indicates that he had made vows without paying them.

Christians today are not sinless in this matter of keeping our promises to God. Our very baptism is a holy vow to love and serve God through Jesus Christ; and any failure to do this falls under the condemnation cited here:

2 Pet. 2:20:22 –

...with reference to the Christian who, in a sense, vows to serve God in Christ, and then turns back, declares that it would have been far better for such a person, not to have known the way of righteousness. This is very nearly the same thing that is here stated with reference to the making of vows, i.e., that it would be far better not to vow than to vow and then not perform it.

The challenge that comes from scripture should be clinched by definite commitment.

Verse 7:

We should try to put ourselves in a position to discover God's way use what He has given us in our daily life.

In a word, this is the message of the whole paragraph. The worship and service of the holy and righteous God is no flippant or casual business. It is weighted with eternal meaning and significance. Furthermore, we must not write this paragraph off as some outmoded example of Old Testament harshness. The New Testament also even more urgently warns us in the same manner (Matt. 7:21ff; 23:16ff; and 1 Cor. 11:27ff). No amount of emphasis upon the grace of God can justify taking liberties with God. The very conception of grace demands gratitude; and gratitude can never be casual.