

**Study of Ecclesiastes: Chapter 6**  
**Questions for Discussion**

1. What is the “evil” which is described in these verses? Why can this man not enjoy his wealth and honor? What would it take for him to find enjoyment? What is the significance of the statement about the stranger? (vv. 1-2; 2:21; 5:14; Contrast with 5:19-20)
  
2. How is a stillborn child better than one who cannot enjoy their prosperity? (vv. 3-6; 2:15-16; 3:20-21; 4:1-3; Ps 127:3-5)
  
3. What makes man’s labor a meaningless or futile endeavor under the sun? What can it not provide? (vv. 7 ; 4:7–8; 5:10–12, 17; 6:2)
  
4. Is there any circumstance “under the sun” which frees us from this vanity? (i.e. wise or fool, rich or poor) (vv. 8; 2:12–17)
  
5. What advice does the Koheleth give for dealing with this futility? (v. 9)
  
6. Who knows everything about man? Who does the word “stronger” refer to? Why should we limit our words before God? (vv. 10-11; 3:11-14; 5:1-2; 8:17; 12:12)
  
7. What is man unable to determine about his life? (vv. 12; Job 8:9; 14:2; Ps 102:11; 109:23; 144:4)

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#### Notes & Answers

1. **What is the “evil” which is described in these verses? Why can this man not enjoy his wealth and honor? What would it take for him to find enjoyment? What is the significance of the statement about the stranger? (vv. 1-2; 2:21; 5:14; Contrast 5:19-20)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: <sup>2</sup>a 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.

*Stranger could either be having to leave things to someone else after death....*

#### **Ecclesiastes 2:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup>because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil.

*Or losing everything in a bad venture...*

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup>and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand.

*The key to enjoying life and what we have is to put our faith (treasure) in God / Heaven instead of in our own ability to find happiness, contentment, etc.*

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:19–20 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup>Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup>For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

2. **How is a stillborn child better than one who cannot enjoy their prosperity? (vv. 3-6; 2:15-16; 3:20-21; 4:1-3; Ps 127:3-5)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:3-6 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup>If 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. <sup>4</sup>For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. <sup>5</sup>Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. <sup>6</sup>Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

*All suffer the same fate....wise / foolish .... Man / beast*

#### **Ecclesiastes 2:15–16 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup>Then I said in my heart, “What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?” And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. <sup>16</sup>For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!

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#### **Ecclesiastes 3:20–21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. <sup>21</sup> Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?

*Dead more fortunate / Even better not to have been born*

#### **Ecclesiastes 4:1–3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. <sup>2</sup> And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. <sup>3</sup> But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

*Many children was considered a blessing from God...*

#### **Psalms 127:3–5 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,  
the fruit of the womb a reward.  
<sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hand of a warrior  
are the children of one's youth.  
<sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man  
who fills his quiver with them!  
He shall not be put to shame  
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

### **3. What makes man's labor a meaningless or futile endeavor under the sun? What can it not provide? (vv. 7 ; 4:7–8; 5:10–12, 17; 6:2)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.

#### **Ecclesiastes 4:7–8 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Again, I saw vanity under the sun: <sup>8</sup> one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:10–12 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. <sup>11</sup> When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? <sup>12</sup> Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.

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#### **Ecclesiastes 6:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> a 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.

#### **4. Is there any circumstance “under the sun” which frees us from this vanity? (i.e. wise or fool, rich or poor) (vv. 8; 2:12–17)**

No....must look “above the sun” to faith in God...

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> For 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?

#### **Ecclesiastes 2:12–17 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done. <sup>13</sup> Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness. <sup>14</sup> The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them. <sup>15</sup> Then I said in my heart, “What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?” And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. <sup>16</sup> For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool! <sup>17</sup> So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

#### **5. What advice does the Koheleth give for dealing with this futility? (v. 9)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

#### **6. Who knows everything about man? Who does the word “stronger” refer to? Why should we limit our words before God? (vv. 10-11; 3:11-14; 5:1-2; 8:17; 12:12)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:10-11 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man?

#### **Ecclesiastes 3:11–14 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. <sup>12</sup> I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; <sup>13</sup> also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God’s gift to man.

<sup>14</sup> I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him.

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#### **Ecclesiastes 5:1–2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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.

#### **Ecclesiastes 8:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

#### **Ecclesiastes 12:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

#### **7. What is man unable to determine about his life? (vv. 12; Job 8:9; 14:2; Ps 102:11; 109:23; 144:4)**

#### **Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> 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?

#### **Job 8:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> For we are but of yesterday and know nothing,  
for our days on earth are a shadow.

#### **Job 14:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> He comes out like a flower and withers;  
he flees like a shadow and continues not.

#### **Psalms 102:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> My days are like an evening shadow;  
I wither away like grass.

#### **Psalms 109:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> I am gone like a shadow at evening;  
I am shaken off like a locust.

#### **Psalms 144:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Man is like a breath;  
his days are like a passing shadow.