

Living Life to the Max!

Selected Passages from Ecclesiastes

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- We today are in the midst of the *“most wonderful time of the year.”*
- The *“emptiness”* of living for pleasure
- The ultimate *“Party Animal”*-- Solomon
 - Ecclesiastes 2:10-11-- *“Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward for all my labor. Then I looked at all the works that my hands had done and on the labor on which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.”*
 - Ecclesiastes 2:17-- *“Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.”*

Keys to Living Life to the Max

A. Relax: God is in control!

1. Must factor God into the equation of life.

- Ecclesiastes 2:24-26-- *“Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I? For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.”*

2. God’s in control of the events and circumstances of life

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-- *“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”*
- Ecclesiastes 3:14-- *“I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it that men should fear before Him.”*

3. Result: Stress-Free, Relaxed Living

- Ecclesiastes 3:12-13-- *“I know that nothing is better than to rejoice and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.”*

B. Enjoy: Life is a Gift from God!

1. For many, life is a “grind to be endured”.

- Ecclesiastes 1:3-- *“What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?”*
- Ecclesiastes 1:13-- *“And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this is a burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised.”*
- Ecclesiastes 2:22-23-- *“For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.”*

2. **Life is a “gift from God to be enjoyed.”**
 - a. **The things of life and the ability to enjoy them comes from God**
 - Ecclesiastes 3:12-13-- *“I know that nothing is better than to rejoice and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.”*
 - Ecclesiastes 5:18-20-- *“Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. And for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.”*
 - Ecclesiastes 6:1-2 -- *“There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him the power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity and it is an evil affliction.”*
 - b. **Life is not something we “make” for ourselves, but a gift we receive from God**
3. **Be content with what God has given you.**
 - Ecclesiastes 6:9-- *“Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire.”*
4. **Results: Regret-Free Living**
 - Ecclesiastes 5:20-- *“He will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.”*
 - Ecclesiastes 5:20 (NIV)-- *“He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart!”*
 - Ecclesiastes 5:20 (NLT)-- *“People who do this rarely look with sorrow on the past, for God has given them reason for joy!”*

C. Balance: Avoid the Extremes out of the Fear of God!

1. **Avoid the extreme of being “overly righteous or wise”**
 - Ecclesiastes 7:15 -- *“I have seen everything in my days of vanity. There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs life in his wickedness.”*
 - Ecclesiastes 7:16-18-- *“Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time? It is good that you grasp this, and also do not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.”*
 - a. **“Self-righteous, super pious, legalistic”**
 - b. **Two truths that are appalling to the self-righteous**
 - 1) **All are sinners**
 - Ecclesiastes 7:20-- *“For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.”*
 - 2) **All are guilty of the same sins**
 - Ecclesiastes 7:21-22-- *“Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.”*
2. **Avoid the extreme of being “overly wicked or foolish”**
 - Ecclesiastes 7:17-- *“Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?”*
3. **Seek to find a “Balance” in life.**
 - Ecclesiastes 7:18-- *“It is good that you grasp this, and also do not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.”*

4. **Balance the “Partying” with the truth of Accountability to God.**

- Ecclesiastes 11:9-- *“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.”*

5. Results: **Guilt-Free Living**

- Ecclesiastes 11:10-- *“Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.”*
- a. **False guilt: Accept and Enjoy what God allows!**
 - b. **True guilt: Repent and Do what God commands!**