

## Ecclesiastes 7:13-- Desirable Things – Part 3

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Solomon pointed out that **many of the pleasures of this life (but not all) are properly enjoyed, but they do not satisfy the soul.** That is why he called those pleasures “vanities.” In the grand schemes of life they did not accomplish anything important. Wives were good, construction projects were good, power was good, knowledge was good, wine was good, music was good, but none of these things satisfied the needs of the soul. **So Solomon pointed men to God – the ultimate source of satisfaction.** (Ch 5). After pointing men to God, Solomon positively **showed them what things they should desire after satisfying their souls with God.** Today we will look at 2 more things that you should desire... because you belong to Christ...things that truly matter.

Our headings are: **A Submissive 顺从的 Attitude,** and **A Balanced Approach to life.**

Our goals are: **That, based on the promises of Christ and your duty to him, you will endeavor to acquire and use these gifts so men will praise Christ.**

### **A Submissive Attitude**

13 Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked 弯曲的?

**1. You are hereby cautioned 警告 not to try to change Divine Providence ...the means by which God rules over everything he has created. You are to gratefully accept every action of God.**

**2. Why must you not try to change what God sovereignly does? Because if you properly consider God's works, you will know that he is always right. Specifically, when you consider God's wisdom, power, and goodness in his work you will admire him and then adore him. For example, Job did not know that God's arrows were in Satan's hands to make him suffer...until later...yet he trusted in God and found out God was right in what he did.**

**3. Why does man want to change what God does? Man wants to change what God does because it appears to him that God is wrong...that some of God's actions are crooked. What makes some of God's actions appear crooked? God actions appear crooked when he does not do what man expects him to do. When there are wars, famines, prosperity of the wicked, people born with handicaps, or there are natural calamities 灾难, man often wants to blame God for those things. He thinks it is unfair that the poor suffer...as if poor were truly innocent. He thinks it is unfair that bad things happen to good people...as if there were a single good man on the earth. So he grumbles 抱怨 against the Lord.**

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity 逆境 consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.

**4. When you do have wealth, peace, and health, learn to be joyful. That is relatively easy to do. But it is what comes next that is so important. When things don't go well, you need to combat 搏斗 that with the reminder that God has both good things and bad things under his sovereign control. God is the one who appoints and controls struggles in your life. These things don't come by chance. They are ordained by God. And yet at the same time, it is your sin and the sins of your forefathers that cause your adversity. So praise God when things go well, and go to God with pleadings for help and with repentance when he sends difficulties your way.**

**5. Considering that Solomon was writing to Christians, it is illogical to expect that you will not have troubles in this life. The wise man assumes it as par for the course - normal life. Good and bad are not the exception, but the rule.**

**6. You must accept the good with the bad because you are God's children, but there are incentives 动机 to live life in balance and accept the bad things with the good things that happen to you. Accepting the bad with the good is good for you. Troubles are temporary; good will always come in the end:**

**Psalm 30:5** For His anger *is but for a moment*, His favor *is for life*; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy *comes in the morning*.

**1Peter 1:6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

**Troubles motivate you to live better...** You are moved to repent, for example, if you have sinned.

**Lamentation 3:40** Let us search out and examine our ways, And **turn back to the LORD;**

**Ps 119:75** I know, O LORD, that **Your judgments are right,** And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.

**Trouble make your faith strong – as Job's in the end** and he praised God for his providential work.

Job 9:4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened *himself* against Him and prospered?

Troubles make you praise God better when he brings you through them...as Hannah acknowledged in her prayer.  
1Samuel 2:6 "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. 7 The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up.

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.

7. Solomon then **elaborated on what some might see as a problem with God's providential rule**: That the wicked rise and the godly die – not in an eternal way, but in a physical way...like Abel for his offering...and Naboth for his vineyard. The righteous will never perish in hell. They can never lose their salvation. (The first man who died, Abel, died because of his religious beliefs. And the innocent continued to be killed from Abel to Berekiah.) On the contrary, Manasseh was a most wicked king of Judah and he ruled the longest of any. Solomon probably saw these things during his days of wandering from the Lord...maybe he even contributed to the harm of the righteous and the protection of the wicked. In other words, Solomon may have killed the innocent and protected the life of the wicked during his "days of vanity." And surely this was a question that was often asked.

Job 21:7 Why do the wicked live and become old, Yes, become mighty in power?

## **A Balanced Approach to life**

16 Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself?

1. Now we come to another desirable thing...living a life in equilibrium平衡– life in balance.

**2. Do not be overly righteous.** What does this mean? Is Solomon saying that you must accept a degree of sin in your life lest you appear to be too pure? Not at all! God said: Be holy, for I am holy. What then did Solomon mean? Solomon meant that you must not live your life pretending to be overly righteous. Many people are show-offs and ostentatious炫耀的. They desperately want to appear to be better than they are. They use "holy" words and may even match their actions with their words, **but their hearts know better**, and the **One who knows the heart knows better**. The same thing is true for those who seek to be "overly wise." They are simply **pretending to know everything**. They "know" that God made a mistake by allowing bad things to happen. They "know" how bad everyone else is." Solomon warned those who are saved by Christ not to be pretensive.

3. But pretending to be righteous or wise when one is not is destructive. It is self-destructive. How? Those who pretend, know they are pretensive...and God knows they are...therefore it is suicide. Pretense is suicide. This is what destroyed the Pharisees and this is what destroyed many of those who blindly held on to the false doctrines of the Roman church. The Pharisees used to starve themselves twice per week...put dust on their heads to pretend... The Romanist used to beat themselves with cords...and deny themselves many foods (like pork and fish) God intended that man enjoy. They made pilgrimages朝圣, and make penance苦行 for their sins in order to show their faithfulness. Those who make pilgrimages and such in order to be saved from their sins are making large steps to hell. It is suicide.

4. What about today, how do people pretend to be overly righteous and overly wise today?

a. Some say: We have Reformed doctrines so we are automatically better than the Arminians! But better is semi-ignorant Arminian who worships God than a Reformed man with great doctrines and no worship.

b. Some people demand that you live like they live to show you are righteous. Whatever lifestyle choices they make they expect you to make that same choice also. If they eat tofu, they want you to eat tofu. If they are vegetarian they will fight to prove to you from the Bible that you should be vegetarians. If they read 3 chapters in the Bible every day they expect you to do the same, and look down at you if you read one. Consider:

Colossians 2:21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," **23** These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed自我加强的 religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

c. If you don't sing the same songs they sing something is wrong with you spiritually. That may be true, but if you don't sing from a heart that desires to thank Christ for his salvation, you pure 150 psalms singing means nothing. The simpler songs of the Arminians mean more.

17 Do not be overly wicked (condemning). Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?

5. Solomon continued to warn about being overly wicked...but you have to understand the context to properly translate this phrase from the Hebrew. The word translated “wicked” is most often translated condemning...and that is the sense here. If you think you are overly wise (V16), you will be overly condemning (V17, for that would be foolish (V17b). And overly-condemning the wicked is like “killing a fly upon a man’s forehead using a beetle大槌.” (Trapp) You are creating a more difficult situation for that man.
6. The result of condemning others all the time shows your foolishness and you will contribute to your own destruction. This again is suicidal. The result of overly condemning is often the swift judgment of God who often wants to protect the godly from those who attack them. He may judge like he judged the overly-foolish sons of Eli for becoming unbearable to his people.  
Psalm 55:23 But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; But I will trust in You.
- 18 It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.
7. So get this summary: Man must really be living a life of balance between giving correction and taking correction, between giving advice and taking advice, and between making every effort to truly live faithfully and encouraging others to live faithfully. Learn from the Nile River. If the water is low is it bad. If the Rivers is too high and floods the land too high it is bad. It is that medium height that is good and keeps the people alive. Too much of one good thing is usually bad...as it means you can’t do other things you are supposed to do, just like too much prayer can become sinful!!!
8. Those who fear God will be free from the punishment that will come on those who are “overly wise” and “overly wicked” because they will not act “overly wicked” and “overly wise.” John Gill wrote: “...the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, is the best preservative from, and antidote against, these things; for a man that fears God is humble, and renounces否认 his own righteousness, and distrusts his own wisdom; he fears to commit sin, and shuns folly.” Well said. I can’t add to that.

### **Conclusion:**

Because you are born again in Christ and have a new heart, a new record, and a new life, you must learn to submit to the will and work of your heavenly Father. If you don’t fully understand what he does and why he is doing it, yet you must trust him. He is your Father through Christ. Second, learn to live your life in balance. Don’t pretend to be overly righteous: Look at yourself- your own sins- fix your problems - and stay away from sin. Help others with their weaknesses. On the contrary, if you pretend to be good and put pressure on others to conform to your desires you will cause God to destroy you. God is jealous and does not want you to hurt his Bride by harsh unnecessary attacks.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Ask God to give you grace to take the good, but to take the harsh things that come from his hand also, knowing that even his fatherly punishment is out of love for you. Yes, chastening might not seem good at the time, but it yields peaceable fruits. (Hebrews 12:11) And learn to bear one another’s burden – that is the law of Christ – instead of adding to the burdens of other believers. This is how you show you are truly in Christ. Remember James’ words to those who were washed in in the blood of Christ and were made clean: Jas 2:8 If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;

Finally, Christ is calling home all those who are outside of his family. If you have been wandering among the pigs and filth, Jesus says: “Come.” He will remove your sins and protect your soul for eternity. He paid the full price for the sins of the world. That price was his blood. Take his free offer and live.