

## **Ecclesiastes 6:1–12 – The Futility of Worldly Gain and the Wisdom of Trusting God**

### **1. The Tragedy of Unenjoyed Wealth (vv. 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 power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.”* (vv. 1–2, NKJV)

Solomon points out a painful irony: a man may have everything he desires but lack the ability to enjoy it. Perhaps sickness prevents him, or death cuts life short, leaving his possessions for strangers to enjoy. Wealth without the capacity to find joy in it is not a blessing but a burden.

#### **Practical Application:**

This reminds me that joy is never guaranteed by what I own but comes through God’s gift of contentment. At the time of this writing, Elon Musk is regarded as the richest man in the world. Yet in an interview he admitted that he would not wish his life on anyone. Despite achieving extraordinary success in technology, automotive innovation, and space exploration, he still lacks the peace and joy that wealth and accomplishments cannot provide. True peace is not found in possessions but in recognizing God as the Giver of every good thing. I must therefore learn to thank Him daily for the simple blessings of life—food, health, work, and family.

### **2. A Life Without Satisfaction Is Worse Than No Life (vv. 3–6)**

*“If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he.”* (v. 3)

In ancient Israel, having many children and a long life were signs of blessing. Yet Solomon says that even if a man had both, without inner satisfaction and honor, his life is emptier than that of an unborn child. The stillborn never knows suffering or disappointment, while the rich man may endure centuries of unfulfilled desire. *“Do not all go to one place?”* (v. 6). Death levels them both.

#### **Practical Application:**

This sobers me to ask: Am I merely surviving, or am I satisfied in God? Longevity and prosperity without spiritual joy are meaningless. It is not the length of my days but the depth of my walk with God that matters.

### **3. Endless Labor, Endless Craving (vv. 7–9)**

*“All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied.”* (v. 7)

Human effort is often spent on feeding appetites—yet no matter how much we consume, we remain hungry. The wise man may understand more than the fool, and the poor man may learn how to live with dignity, but all still battle restless desires.

*“Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire.” (v. 9)*

In other words, it is better to be content with what one has than to chase fantasies of what could be. Dissatisfied desire is like chasing the wind—it never ends.

**Practical Application:**

I must ask myself: Am I restless, always looking for the next thing to satisfy me? Or am I grateful for what is already in my hands? Contentment is not complacency—it is recognizing God’s provision today instead of living in tomorrow’s fantasies.

**4. Striving Against God (vv. 10–11)**

*“That which has been is named already, for it is known that he is man; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.” (v. 10)*

Here Solomon warns against contending with God. People often fight Him when life doesn’t unfold as they expected. We see this in those who grow bitter when tragedy comes, when dreams collapse, or when their bodies fail them. But to strive with our Maker is both futile and destructive.

**Practical Application:**

Do I secretly accuse God when things don’t go my way? It is easy to expect that God should only bring me comfort, health, and prosperity—but He knows what I cannot see. My heart is limited and easily deceived, but His wisdom is perfect. Rather than fighting Him, I need to yield and trust.

**5. Who Really Knows What Is Good? (vv. 12)**

*“For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?” (v. 12)*

This is the heart of the passage: only God knows what is truly good for us. Riches may corrupt, poverty may humble. Health may strengthen, but weakness may draw us closer to Him. Our lives are fleeting shadows; we cannot predict the future or even understand our present. But God knows.

**Practical Application:**

Instead of demanding that God fulfill my script, I must trust His. When I cannot understand, I can still submit. Even disappointments, sicknesses, and hardships are tools in His hands to shape me for eternity. One day, I will thank Him for what now confuses me.

**Conclusion**

Ecclesiastes 6 reminds us of the limits of wealth, the emptiness of unfulfilled desires, and the futility of contending with God. The only safe place is surrender—entrusting our short and shadow-like lives to the God who knows what is best.

**Personal Reflection Questions:**

1. Am I enjoying the blessings I already have, or am I restless for more?
2. Have I allowed bitterness toward God to grow because life has not gone as I planned?

3. Do I believe that God knows what is best for me—even when I cannot see it?
4. How can I cultivate gratitude and contentment today, rather than chasing after tomorrow's desires?