

## Message #14

## Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

If you want to try the ultimate experience of frustration, try to be a leader in some area and try to please all of the people. You will soon discover that you are trying to accomplish something that is impossible.

If you are trying to find meaning and fulfillment in leadership, you are looking in the wrong place. If the motive for wanting to be a leader is because you want the applause of all of the people, you are “chasing the wind.”

If ever there were a man who understood the lonely, empty feeling of leadership, it was Solomon. If ever there were a king who understood leadership without a real focus on God, it was Solomon. In fact, J. Vernon McGee said in these verses, Solomon is describing himself.

**NO MATTER WHO THE LEADER IS, NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE LEADER IS, TRYING TO FIND MEANING IN LEADERSHIP UNDER THE SUN IS SOMETHING THAT WILL LEAVE YOU EMPTY AND CHASING THE WIND.**

The only way being a leader makes any sense whatsoever is if God is at the center of the leadership.

**PRINCIPLE #1** – It is better to be poor, young and wise rather than powerful, old and foolish. **4:13**

The Hebrew word for “lad” is one that does not refer to a boy, but to a young man (Gesenius, p. 349).

The term “wise” refers to wisdom that reaches an intelligent, crafty and skillful level (*Ibid.*, p. 277).

The term “poor” refers to one that is at a poor and wretched level that is one of absolute poverty and misery (*Ibid.*, p. 489).

Now here is the point: it is better to be at a young and poor, wretched level of poverty and have a crafty understanding of the Word of God, than to be an older, powerful king who no longer knows how to receive instruction.

The Hebrew word for “instruction” is the word warning; specifically, admonition or warning from the Word of God (*Ibid.*, p. 239).

Now typically speaking, especially in the O.T., wisdom is said to develop with age. In fact, according to Levitical law, the aged were to be honored, which is part of a reverencing for God (Lev. 19:32).

However, sometimes God takes away the wisdom of those who are older (Job 12:20). Sometimes God takes away an older person's ability to discern His Word. When an older person does not discipline himself to obey the Word of God, God can and will allow a younger person to know more than an aged person (Psalm 119:100).

Look who the really rich person is—the one wise in the Word of God. The one who is really rich is one who knows how to look into the Word of God and receive instruction from its warnings and teachings.

If one knows how to look into the Word and can discover and knows how to receive its teaching, no matter what the age, that person is rich.

**PRINCIPLE #2** – Sometimes the poor and young will be raised to a great level of power.  
**4:14**

It is possible that Solomon was thinking about his own father, David. David was a poor, humble shepherd boy who ultimately became king of Israel.

The “for” which begins **verse 14** gives one reason why the poor, yet wise man of **verse 13** is better than the old and foolish king.

The one who ultimately becomes a powerful leader is one who is able to look into the Word of God and understand its instruction.

God raises up people who know His Word.

**PRINCIPLE #3** – When new leadership comes to power, people tend to rally around it. **4:15**

There is a principle that when a new leader replaces an old leader, the people tend to throng to the side of the new leader.

The words of Dr. Leupold are valuable here: “For a time our new young king enjoys all the glory that he could desire. He has a following. All acclaim him as the man of the hour. They support him. In reality, only those will entirely pin their hopes on him who are persons “under the sun,” that is such who do not recognize the true and abiding values” (p. 114).

All people focused “under the sun” love a change in leadership. It doesn't matter to this crowd whether that leadership is Biblical or not, they just want a change of leadership. Biblical leadership is not an anything goes leadership; therefore, people whose focus is “under the sun” especially like it when Biblical leadership is gone. The Word of God is clear that those who try to change God-honoring leadership will experience “sudden calamity” (Prov. 24:21-22).

For a while, the people will rally around any change of leadership because in their minds, any change is good. But what these same people don't realize is new leadership will soon become old leadership and it will eventually lose its popular luster.

**PRINCIPLE #4** – When all is said and done, eventually people will not be happy with any leader. **4:16**

There is an old saying about leadership—“Leaders must want the applause of the people, but they must never need the applause of the people.”

People focused “under the sun” are never happy with leadership focused “above the sun.”

We live in a day and age in which people will speak out against leadership and say anything they want even though this is contrary to the Word of God. People who do this will never please God and they will never be happy.

Frankly, there is not much happiness in the job of a leader. So if the leader is trying to find meaning and fulfillment in leadership, he will discover he is chasing the wind. It is very lonely at the top.

In fact, the only thing that makes sense of leadership when it is so detested is a focus “above the sun.”