

## ARE YOU GETTING THE POINT YET? (Ecclesiastes 4:4-16)

- Ephesians 4:17-24

### C. Solomon's PERSPECTIVE on the EVENTS of Life & the Secret of God's PROVIDENCE. (3:1-5:20)

#### 3. The 7 goads of human frustration. (3:16-4:16)

- a. Goad #1: The frustration of earthly \_\_\_\_\_. (3:16-17)
- b. Goad #2: The frustration of \_\_\_\_\_ for a man like a beast. (3:18-22)
- c. Goad #3: The frustration of \_\_\_\_\_ and no earthly \_\_\_\_\_. (4:1-3)
- d. Goad #4: The frustration of \_\_\_\_\_. (4:4)

1) **The problem:** “Again {introduces another subject}, I saw {observed with perception} that for all toil {mental, emotional, physical stress} and every skillful work {that is accomplished} a man is \_\_\_\_\_ {refers to envy, jealousy, ill-will based upon perceived advantage; this may be in reference to the man's motivation in working or regarding the envy of others due to his prosperity} by his \_\_\_\_\_” {those in his sphere of life and contact}. (4:4a)

2) **The point:** “This also is \_\_\_\_\_ {transitory, without lasting meaning & value} and \_\_\_\_\_ for the wind” {frustration & without real satisfaction}. (4:4b)

#### 3) The perspective that is missing without God's Word and eternity:

- a) God has designed human work to be responsibly done to meet the \_\_\_\_\_ of one's family and others, and to be \_\_\_\_\_ in doing so. (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; 2 Thess. 3:10)
- b) God established the right of ownership of \_\_\_\_\_ (Ex. 20:15) and calls it sin to \_\_\_\_\_ your neighbor's house, wife, or things (Ex. 20:17; Rom. 13:9) or for you or the government to illegitimately take property that does not rightfully belong to them. (1 Kgs. 21).
- c) God has \_\_\_\_\_ on the oppressed and needy (Ps. 9:9, 10:18, 34:6, 68:10, ) and so should we (Ps. 41:1; Micah 6:8; Acts 20:35; Gal. 2:10), yet He does not rebuke the rich for being rich if gained \_\_\_\_\_ (Prov. 10:4, 13:4) but we must keep in mind what material riches can and cannot do for us. (Mark 10:25; Lk. 16:1-10; Ecc. 5:10-20)
- d) God's solution to financial poverty was not for ongoing dependence upon government programs or redistribution of wealth, but dependence upon the Lord (Phil. 4:19), personal responsibility (Gal. 6:5), hard work (Prov. 10:4, 22), family assistance (1 Tim. 5:3-16), and charitable voluntary giving (Matt. 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 6:17-19). But even then, remember the message of Ecclesiastes that .....

- e. Goad #5: The frustration of \_\_\_\_\_. (4:5-6)

1) **The problem:** “The \_\_\_\_\_ {who disregards wisdom} folds his hands” {this is an idiom for laziness and being a sluggard – Proverbs 6:10-11, 12:24, 18:9, 19:15, 21:5, 24:30-34}

2) **The point:** “and \_\_\_\_\_ his own flesh” {he is self-destructive}.

- 3) **The perspective to embrace:** “**Better a handful** {small amount cradled in one’s hand} **with** \_\_\_\_\_ {inner rest & tranquility; freedom from great stress} **than both hands full** {clutching a larger portion of gain}, **together with** \_\_\_\_\_ {mental, emotional, physical backbreaking efforts} **and grasping for the wind**” {frustration & without real satisfaction}.

f. **Goad #6: The frustration of the** \_\_\_\_\_. (4:8-12)

- 1) **The problem:** “There is one \_\_\_\_\_, without \_\_\_\_\_ {companion, dependent}: **He has neither son nor brother** {those who would share or inherit his wealth}. **Yet there is** \_\_\_\_\_ **to all his labors, Nor is his eye** \_\_\_\_\_ **with riches. But he never asks, "For** \_\_\_\_\_ **do I toil and deprive myself of good?"** (4:8A)
- 2) **The point:** “This also is \_\_\_\_\_ {transitory with no lasting value} **and a** \_\_\_\_\_ {a miserable, grievous, depressing task}.” (4:8b)
- 3) **The perspective and value of caring companionship:** “{in working} \_\_\_\_\_ **are better than** \_\_\_\_\_, **Because they have a good reward** {greater benefits and returns} **for their labor. 10** {in walking} **For if they fall, one will lift up his** \_\_\_\_\_. **But woe** {woe, pity} **to him who is** \_\_\_\_\_ **when he falls, For he has** \_\_\_\_\_ **to help him up. 11** {in warmth} **Again, if** \_\_\_\_\_ **lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can** \_\_\_\_\_ **be warm alone? 12** {in watch-care} **Though** \_\_\_\_\_ **may be overpowered by another, \_\_\_\_\_ can withstand him. And a** \_\_\_\_\_ **cord is not quickly broken.**” What does that mean? What else do the Scriptures teach about companionship, friends, and teamwork? (Psalm 15:3, 41:9, 55:12-14, 21-22, Prov. 12:26, 16:28, 17:9, 17-18, 18:24, 19:4-6, 22:23-24, 27:5-6, 17; Jn 15:14; Eph. 4:25; 1 Pet. 4:8-12)

g. **Goad #7: the frustration of** \_\_\_\_\_. (4:13-16)

- 1) **The temporary perspective:** “**Better a poor and wise youth** {who takes counsel and correction} **than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more** {which means he use to take it}. **For he comes out of prison** {either literally or by way of poverty} **to be king** {succeeding the old and foolish king}, **although he was born poor in his** {now} **kingdom.**” (4:13-14) This is a rags-to-riches story with kingdom-wide popularity.
- 2) **The problem:** “**I saw** {observed with perception} **all the living who walk under the sun** {in this earthly existence}; **They were with the second youth** {the successor} **who stands in his** {the king’s former} **place. 16 There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king** {in his kingdom}; **Yet those who come afterward** {when his reign ends} **will not rejoice in him.** (4:15-16a) People are fickle & the king’s popularity largely dies with him.
- 3) **The point:** “**Surely this also is** \_\_\_\_\_ {transitory, with no lasting value} **and grasping for the wind** {frustration & without real satisfaction}.” (4:16b)
- 4) **The eternal perspective on popularity & pleasing others:** Out of gratitude for God’s love & grace and their new position in Christ, believers should \_\_\_\_\_ live for themselves but for \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Cor. 5:14-15) in order to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord in their walk (2 Cor. 5:9-10; Col. 1:9-11) as faithful stewards and servants of Him (1 Cor. 4:1-5) without aspirations of popularity but anticipation of \_\_\_\_\_ by some – whether unbelievers or even believers. (John 15:18-19; Gal. 1:10; 1 Cor. 4:7-16; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 13:20-21) How does all of this apply to you?