

**Ecclesiastes 5:1-7**  
**December 15, 2021**

**II. Human Effort (1:2-6:9)**

**A. All Is Vapor (1:2-11)**

**B. The King's Experiment (1:12-2:26)**

**C. God's Work in Time and Eternity (3:1-22)**

**D. The Vapor of Our Work (4:1-16)**

**E. Words before God (5:1-7)**

As we move forward in Ecclesiastes, we come to our passage today about our speech. Solomon uses several of his favorite words and phrases in this passage, including a *better than* statement (v. 5) and the Hebrew word *hevel* (v. 7). There is a “meaninglessness” to an over-abundance of words!

This is an all-too-common theme throughout the Old Testament wisdom books, particularly Proverbs (e.g., 6:1-2; 10:19; 15:1-2; 17:27-28; 18:4; 25:11; 29:20; cf. Matt 6:7-8; James 1:19, 26; 3:1-12). We can quickly fall into sin or hurt others when we open our mouths. It's better by far to remain silent!

**1. Be Cautious in Speech before God (5:1-3)**

Solomon begins in v. 1 with a command to *walk prudently* when they go to the temple. It's better to worship in quiet, humble submission, then to offer sacrifices (cf. Ps 51:16-17). That's not to say that we shouldn't follow the Lord's commands – we ought to! – but we also shouldn't think properly executed commands take the place of a humble heart.

In elaborating v. 1, Solomon draws our attention to what we speak in particular (vv. 2-3). We would do well to remember our proper relationship with God: *God is in heaven, and you on earth* (v. 2). Yes, as believers, we are friends with God, we are His

children; yet, there always ought to be a reverence there, recognizing that He is still the Creator, and we the created.

Because of this, we ought to watch our speech carefully. After all, *a fool's voice is known by his many words* (v. 3).

**2. Fulfill Vows to God (5:4-7)**

A specific area in which we ought to watch our words is in the making of vows or promises, especially to God. How often do we casually hear the words “I swear!” any given day? Our lives should be marked by such trustworthy honesty that assurances aren't necessary (cf. Matt 5:37; James 5:12).

This is particularly important when it comes to what we promise God (cf. Deut 23:21; Prov 20:25). We've all heard phrases like “God, if I survive this, I will...” Such a promise is foolish and unwise considering how forgetful and fickle we can be! It's fine to ask for God's gracious deliverance, but don't stake your future action on it (v. 5).

*For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. May we be people marked by such a lack of words that, when we do open our mouths, people will want to hear what we have to say – and they will believe it!*