

Ecclesiastes 9:1-10
February 2, 2022

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

III. Human Limits (6:10-12:8)

A. No One Knows What Is Good (6:10-7:14)

B. Wisdom and Righteousness (7:15-29)

C. Even the Wise Do Not Know (8:1-17)

D. Enjoy Life Now (9:1-10)

Death is one of the great equalizers in this life. The Word of God only names two men in the past six thousand years that never experienced death – Enoch and Elijah (Gen 5:24 and 2 Kings 2:11). So far as the Word of God is concerned, everyone else died. We're in the same boat as even the animals – *one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other* (Ecc 3:19).

In 9:1-6, Solomon continues to consider *what is good for man in life*, that *vain life which passes like a shadow* (6:12). Before we arrive at a satisfactory answer, we must first come face-to-face with the hopelessness that this world offers.

There's seemingly no rhyme or reason to anything that happens in life. If you're *righteous*, you die; if you're *wicked*, you die. *One event happens* to them both (v. 2). He evaluates this as *an evil in all that is done under the sun* (v. 3).

Solomon even seems to cast blame or doubt on God, as all *their works are in the hand of God* (v. 1). This shouldn't be discouraging note, however; rather, as we'll see in vv. 7-10, that God is still sovereign over all, and He does provide ultimate purpose!

In v. 5, Solomon writes that *the living know that they will die*, which places them at a distinct advantage. Even armed with the possibly discouraging knowledge that we will die one day, at least we are still living! The *dead know nothing* (v. 5). Everything they

had *now perished*, nor will they ever *have a share in anything done under the sun* (v. 6), although that sometimes seems like a pretty good deal (cf. 4:2-3).

So if we're all going to die, what's the best way to look at life? *What is good for man in life?* Is it to pursue our own gains and pleasures no matter the cost? After all, what benefit does righteousness bring? Solomon answers this question in vv. 7-10 by coming back to his normal advice: enjoy life!

1. *Eat with joy and drink with a merry heart* (v. 7).
2. Keep your clothes *white*, which Miller says means "clean and symbolic of joy." Longman adds, "the context makes it clear that joy is the reason for white here." Don't ask me why that is, I'm just relaying information by men who know Hebrew better than I do!
3. Rest in the joy of the Lord (v. 8; cf. Ps 23:5; 45:7).
4. *Live joyfully with the wife whom you love* (v. 9). Life is *vain* (2x) – it is brief, it's unsubstantial, and it often stinks. While there are exceptions, we were designed for companionship in marriage (Gen 2:18, 23-25; 1 Cor 7:8). The average age at marriage has increased dramatically, with most states that age is over 30!
5. *Work with all your might* (v. 10). This was also part of the creation mandate (Gen 1:26-28; Col 3:23). There might be toil in work, but there is purpose in work!

If we want to find satisfaction in life, if we want life to be something of substance and beauty, it's to rejoice in what the Lord has given to each of us each and every day.