



## ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

*Ecclesiastes*  
6:1-12

### **Pastor's Notes**

This section continues with the theme of 'riches.' More specifically, we can examine the idea of 'contentment.'

V. 1 Contentment with our stuff doesn't happen by human effort; it happens by faith. Only when we realize that the things in our lives are gifts, are we able to truly enjoy them. And when we live by faith, even the smallest of crumbs from the table are gifts. However, when we grab, we never are content. We always want more. We never have enough. And everybody else has more than us. Sin perverts stuff; sin prevents us from seeing stuff as gifts of God.

V. 2 This reminds us of an old 95-year-old man who has millions of dollars in his estate but is worried when the stock market has a 5% drop. What foolishness! Death is knocking at his door; there is no way he could spend his wealth before death; and yet he worries!

V. 3 A very harsh—but true verse. Without God, life can be a living hell. This verse also depicts a money-hungry scrooge. A tight-fisted greedy person will often find that people will welcome his death. They are glad that he is dead because he was a jerk. And they are glad he is dead so that they can get his money. What a terrible legacy! Yet, this is what happens when we let the love of money rule our hearts and minds.

V. 4-5 These two verses pick up on the mentioning of a stillborn child in verse 3. Now, Solomon is speaking of life without God. Without God, he is saying that a miscarried child has it better than a person who lives life under the sun. Again, Solomon is playing the devil's advocate.

On another note, it is interesting how Solomon addresses the child in the womb as a human being. In other words, it is self-evident to Solomon that the miscarried child is a whole person. Life clearly begins at conception, and Solomon acknowledges life in the womb in these verses.

V. 6 To the point; Solomon is attempting to show us in verse 6 and the previous verses that a lack of stuff is not a valid reason for unhappiness. To prove that point, he is showing that a person could have it all and live for a thousand years—and still be unhappy. Why? Because dissatisfaction and covetousness lie in the heart of mankind. Material goods are not evil, but gifts. Our discontent hearts are always wandering—always grabbing and never satisfied. We have broken, dark, and sinful hearts.

V. 7 People live to eat and eat to live. That is fine; however, the appetite is never satisfied because of the sinful nature. It isn't what goes into the body that is the problem, but what comes out of the heart (as said by Jesus). That is why Paul says to "put off the old man." The problem is us!

V. 9 The essence of covetousness is wandering eyes. The eyes wander to what we don't have; thus we miss what is before us. This is why God calls us not to covet in the 9th and 10th Commandments; He wants to protect the gift of contentment.

V. 10 God is big; we are small. God does the naming. God is in control. We are not. Deal with it! This is bad news for the old Adam; good news for the new man in Christ.

V. 11 Before God our words are few, because we cannot control God. Remember that we Christians are listeners. We are characterized by hearing God's Word. However, consider funerals—those who do not have the fear, love, and trust of God will often lecture God in their eulogies with a lot of meaningless words. How futile! Rationalizing is the opposite of trust. Trust calls a thing what it is and then clings to the Lord's mercy. Rationalizing denies what a thing is and puts words into the Lord's mouth.

V. 12 We don't know the future. Only God knows. With all our forecasting in weather, stock markets, voting polls, etc. we humans are only pooling our ignorance. We may get it right at times, but we do not know the future. Thanks be to God that the Christian—through revelation—knows that no matter what happens in life that the Lord holds the end.