



Links Players

The Satisfied Life - Chasing the Wind

There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? (Ecclesiastes 2: 24-26, ESV)

What's your attitude toward playing in the wind? Depending on where you call home, the wind might or might not feature that prominently.

If you've regularly played golf in West Texas, you could teach the rest of us a thing or two about how to ride the wind, hold it up against the wind, and when choosing one over the other is the most prudent.

As everyone knows, playing golf is played in God's great outdoors. As such, the elements figure prominently in our game. Underestimating the strength of a right-to-left wind can prove hazardous to your emotional health the moment you realize your ball is headed toward the hazard to your left.

It has often been wittily remarked that the "pursuit of happiness" is like "chasing the wind." The unspoken truth slightly hidden in this analogy is that your chance of finding happiness by chasing happiness is doomed to failure.

Usually, we make two different and opposite mistakes when reading Ecclesiastes and/or thinking about happiness, pleasure, and satisfaction.

On the one hand, we often understand Solomon to teach that the enjoyment of "fine wines, possessions, and songs" are tawdry at best and evil at worst. Thus, we think the godly life is best pursued by abstaining from earthly pleasures.

On the other hand, we can misunderstand Solomon to be saying something like the following: Since life is "meaningless," we should "eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die." It is true that he says these things, but is that what he means? Nope!

Solomon is examining the human condition in relation to pleasure. He wants to remind us that life lived purely "under the sun" (a secular life without a love for God) has no chance of finding deep satisfaction or sustained joy in what, as it turns out, are God's gracious gifts of song, a fine wine, sex, virtuous wealth, and work.

In truth, life would be pretty dull and empty without these and the many other gifts lavishly granted to us by such a generous God.

Solomon is not addressing the issues of illicit sex, drunkenness, or idolatrous wealth. It should be evident that those are off-limits to the follower of Christ.

Solomon is eager to point out that chasing after God will, in the end, enrich every other endeavor and pursuit. After every attempt at finding happiness without God, he said, "I hated life" (Eccl. 2:17).

Yet, regarding a life properly ordered by a deep love for God, he said:

There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil (work). This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

Prayer: Teach us to enjoy life by enjoying you!

READING - Ecclesiastes chapters 1 and 2. Suggested Reading: chapter 3.

OPENING QUESTIONS: What kind of wind player are you? Have fun with this one!

1. After reading and meditating on the great themes surrounding the topic of happiness found in chapters one and two, discuss what Solomon teaches us regarding happiness, joy, and pleasure.

2. Discuss your personal experiences from seasons of life when you pursued happiness in right and wrong ways.
