

FORMER QUESTION: What does a man gain for all his toil under the sun?

NEW QUESTION: Where are we to find satisfaction in this life?

### **Ecclesiastes 2:24–26**

<sup>24</sup> A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup> for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? <sup>26</sup> To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

### **TRUE SATISFACTION LIES BEYOND OUR GRASP**

*Scholars uniformly assume that a Hebrew word indicating “than” (Hebrew min, “from”) has dropped out of the Hebrew text of 2: 24, because it does appear in the other two passages. But no textual evidence supports that assumption, even though the translators of most English versions have adopted it. . . . There is simply not a comparative statement being made in verse 24, but a statement about what is, or is not, a residual entity within mortals themselves. . . . Thus we must conclude that even the most mundane and earthly things of life do not lie within a man’s grasp to achieve for himself by his own endeavors.<sup>1</sup>*

- Beyond our **ability**
- **Distinct** from our achievements and acquisitions

### **TRUE SATISFACTION IS A GIFT FROM GOD**

- **Self-fulfillment** is a grave frustration
- Given to those who **please** him

Romans 3:21–24, <sup>21</sup> But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of

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<sup>1</sup> Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Coping with Change - Ecclesiastes* (Kindle Locations 783-793). Christian Focus Publications. Kindle Edition.

the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 7:18, I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

## IN ALL THINGS **GOD** WORKS FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM

- God determines the ultimate **outcome**
- God's purposes are never **thwarted**

James 1:2–8, <sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

### For further study . . .

1. Do you agree with Solomon that man is incapable of finding lasting significance and enjoyment in themselves, in others, and in the world apart from God? As you answer this question, Read Romans 3:9-26; 7:18.
2. God gives us the ability to experience joy. The key is whether we receive it. Read Psalm 1. In this Psalm, the blessed man is likened to a tree, planted by replenishing water, yielding fruit, and never withering. All the conditions needed for the tree to thrive are provided outside of itself. However, the tree is now able to do what it was created to do, produce fruit. What are the implications for finding satisfaction in all our toil under the sun?
3. In Ecclesiastes 2:26, there is a contrast between the one who pleases God and the one who does not. Read the following verses and discuss: Romans 8:28-39; James 1:2-8.