

WEEK 9: November 5, 2017	Ecclesiastes 6:1 – 7:15	Good or Bad?
--------------------------	-------------------------	--------------

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU CONSIDER GOOD

Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

1 I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men: **2** God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

- **Gifts, without the Giver, are not gifts**

3 A man may have a hundred children and live many years; yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity and does not receive proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. **4** It comes without meaning, it departs in darkness, and in darkness its name is shrouded. **5** Though it never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man— **6** even if he lives a thousand years twice over but fails to enjoy his prosperity. Do not all go to the same place?

- **A long life, apart from the author of life, is no life at all**

7 All man’s efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied. **8** What advantage has a wise man over a fool? What does a poor man gain by knowing how to conduct himself before others? **9** Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

- **Don’t be ruled by your appetite.**

10 Whatever exists has already been named, and what man is has been known; no man can contend with one who is stronger than he. **11** The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone? **12** For who knows what is good for a man in life, during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow? Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?

- **Remember your limitations**

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU CONSIDER BAD

Ecclesiastes 7:1–15

1 A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. **2** It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart.

- **Reflection is a very good thing.**

3 Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart. **4** The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

- **No Pain, No Gain**

5 It is better to heed a wise man's rebuke than to listen to the song of fools. **6** Like the crackling of thorns under the pot, so is the laughter of fools. This too is meaningless.

- **Pick a song that will stay with you forever**

7 Extortion turns a wise man into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart.

- **Big promises, Sad endings**

8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. **9** Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. **10** Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions. **11** Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. **12** Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor. **13** Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked?

- **James 1:19–20,¹⁹ My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,²⁰ for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.**

14 When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future. **15** In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and a wicked man living long in his wickedness.

- **Good is found not in the externals, but by embracing the Eternal**

Jesus said, I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10)

For further study . . .

1. In your experience, what has been a painful situation that God used for good.
2. Read James 1:1-8 and Job 1:1-22. What is the cause of Job's plight? How does it help us interpret Eccles. 6:1–2?
3. Take a psychological health check from this passage. Do you react to issues instead of responding (v. 9)? Do you dwell too much on the past (v. 10)? Is your thinking properly balanced (vv. 16–18)? Are you oversensitive (vv. 21–22)?