

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 — Reverence Before God and the Vanity of Riches

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 turns attention toward two major areas of life:

Worship.

And:

Wealth.

The Preacher begins by warning people about approaching God carelessly.

He says:

Guard your steps.

Listen.

Do not rush into foolish speech.

Do not make promises to God that you have no intention of keeping.

Do not confuse many words with true spirituality.

This section teaches that worship is not casual.

God is in heaven.

We are on earth.

That distinction should produce:

Humility.

Reverence.

Carefulness.

Obedience.

The chapter then turns toward:

Injustice.

Oppression.

Money.

Possessions.

The restless desire for more.

The Preacher observes something humanity continues to discover:

The person who loves money never reaches a point where money finally says:

“You have enough.”

The appetite grows as the possessions grow.

More wealth often brings:

More responsibility.

More consumers.

More anxiety.

More fear of loss.

Sometimes more sleeplessness.

Then the Preacher reminds us of one of life’s unavoidable truths:

We entered this world with nothing.

We will leave it with nothing.

No amount of earthly wealth can be carried beyond death.

But the chapter does not condemn every possession.

Instead, it ends with a positive message.

Wealth can be received as a gift.

Work can be enjoyed as a gift.

Food can be enjoyed as a gift.

Life itself can be enjoyed as a gift.

The problem is not possessing something.

The problem is loving the possession more than the Giver.

The central truth of Ecclesiastes 5 is:

God must be approached with reverence and integrity, while wealth must be received as a temporary gift rather than loved as the source of security, satisfaction, or meaning.

I. APPROACH GOD CAREFULLY

Ecclesiastes 5:1 — Guard Your Steps

“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not realize they are doing wrong.”

The Preacher begins with worship.

He does not say:

Avoid the house of God.

He says:

Approach carefully.

The phrase:

“Guard your steps”

means worship should never become careless or thoughtless.

The foolish person may perform religious actions without truly listening to God.

But God desires obedience more than empty ceremony.

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:22

Samuel said, “Does the Lord take greater pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices than in obedience to His voice? Listen carefully: obeying God is better than offering sacrifice, and paying attention to Him is better than giving the richest offering.”

Psalms 119:101

I have kept my feet away from every evil path so that I may faithfully obey Your Word.

Amos 5:21

God says, “I hate and reject your religious festivals, and I take no pleasure in your gatherings when your worship is empty and your lives are disobedient.”

Spiritual Principle

True worship begins with listening.

Key Truth

Religious activity without obedience can become the sacrifice of fools.

II. DO NOT BE HASTY BEFORE GOD

Ecclesiastes 5:2 — Let Your Words Be Few

“Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.”

The Preacher warns against careless speech before God.

Prayer is not meaningless talking.

Worship is not impressive vocabulary.

God is not impressed by wordiness.

The contrast is clear:

God is in heaven.

You are on earth.

Therefore:

Speak humbly.

Speak truthfully.

Speak thoughtfully.

Cross References

Proverbs 10:19

When words are multiplied, sin is difficult to avoid, but the person who controls his speech shows wisdom.

Matthew 6:7

When you pray, do not keep repeating empty words as people who do not know God often do. They think they will be heard simply because they use many words.

James 1:19

My dear brothers and sisters, remember this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.

Spiritual Principle

Reverence produces careful speech.

Application

Prayer should not be rushed words thrown toward heaven.

Prayer should come from a heart that knows who God is.

III. MANY WORDS CAN REVEAL FOOLISHNESS

Ecclesiastes 5:3 — Restless Dreams and Foolish Speech

“As many cares bring restless dreams, so the speech of a fool comes with many words.”

The Preacher compares two things.

An anxious mind can produce restless dreams.

In the same way, a foolish heart can produce endless words.

Speech often reveals what is inside us.

The fool does not know when to stop talking.

Cross References

Proverbs 10:19

When people keep talking without restraint, sin is likely to follow, but the person who knows when to stop speaking acts wisely.

Proverbs 29:11

A foolish person pours out every feeling immediately, but a wise person controls himself and does not release everything at once.

Ecclesiastes 5:7

Many dreams and many words can amount to emptiness. Therefore, the most important response is to fear God.

Spiritual Principle

A person does not become wiser by saying more.

IV. KEEP WHAT YOU PROMISE TO GOD

Ecclesiastes 5:4 — Fulfill Your Vow

“When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He takes no pleasure in fools—pay what you have promised.”

A vow is serious.

The Preacher warns against making promises to God lightly.

People sometimes make promises during emotional moments.

They say:

“God, if You do this, I will do that.”

But when the crisis passes, the promise is forgotten.

God takes our words seriously.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 23:21

When you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not delay in fulfilling it, because the Lord will certainly hold you responsible for what you promised.

Numbers 30:2

When a man makes a vow to the Lord or gives his word under oath, he must not break what he has said. He must do everything he promised.

Psalms 76:11

Make your promises to the Lord your God and keep them. Let all who are around Him bring gifts to the One who deserves reverence.

Spiritual Principle

Integrity before God means doing what you said you would do.

V. BETTER NOT TO VOW THAN TO BREAK A VOW

Ecclesiastes 5:5 — Take Your Words Seriously

“It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.”

The Preacher makes the point stronger.

God does not require reckless promises.

Better silence than dishonesty.

Better not to vow than to promise something you will not do.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 23:22

If you choose not to make a vow, you are not guilty of sin simply because you did not make one.

Proverbs 20:25

It is dangerous to make a promise to God without thinking carefully and only afterward consider what that promise truly requires.

Matthew 5:37

Let your “Yes” truly mean yes, and let your “No” truly mean no. Anything beyond honest speech can lead into evil.

Spiritual Principle

Simple honesty is better than dramatic promises.

VI. DO NOT LET YOUR MOUTH LEAD YOU INTO SIN

Ecclesiastes 5:6 — Words Have Consequences

“Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. Do not say before God’s messenger, ‘My vow was a mistake.’ Why should God be angry at your words and destroy the work of your hands?”

Words can create obligations.

The Preacher warns against making a promise and later pretending:

“I did not really mean it.”

Careless words can become sinful words.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 23:23

Whatever you have freely promised with your lips, be careful to do it, because you made that promise voluntarily to the Lord your God.

Matthew 5:34

Jesus said, “I tell you not to make careless oaths at all. Do not swear by heaven, because heaven is God’s throne.”

Malachi 3:8

God asks, “Should a person rob God? Yet you are robbing Me.” The people asked, “How have we robbed You?” God answered, “In the tithes and offerings you have withheld.”

Spiritual Principle

Your mouth should never make commitments your character refuses to keep.

VII. FEAR GOD

Ecclesiastes 5:7 — The Proper Response

“Many dreams and many words are meaningless. Therefore, fear God.”

After discussing:

Words.

Dreams.

Vows.

Speech.

The Preacher brings everything down to one simple command:

Fear God.

Reverence matters more than religious performance.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Now that everything has been heard, here is the conclusion: fear God and obey His commands, because this is the responsibility of every person.

Job 28:28

God said to humanity, “The fear of the Lord—that is true wisdom, and turning away from evil is real understanding.”

Deuteronomy 6:2

Fear the Lord your God, obey His commands and instructions throughout your life, and teach them to your children and grandchildren so that your days may be prolonged.

Spiritual Principle

True worship begins with reverence for God.

VIII. DO NOT BE SURPRISED BY HUMAN CORRUPTION

Ecclesiastes 5:8 — Oppression and Bureaucracy

“If you see the poor oppressed in a province, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at the matter; for one official is watched by a higher one, and there are higher still over them.”

The Preacher turns from worship to government and society.

He observes systems of power.

Officials answer to higher officials.

Layers of authority exist.

Yet corruption can still operate throughout the system.

The poor can be denied justice.

Cross References

Psalm 12:5

The Lord says, “Because the poor are being oppressed and the needy are groaning, I will rise up and place them in the safety they long for.”

Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do what is good. Seek justice. Correct oppression. Defend the orphan, and plead the cause of the widow.

Psalm 82:3

Defend the poor and the fatherless. Give justice to those who are weak, suffering, and oppressed.

Spiritual Principle

Complicated systems do not remove God’s concern for justice.

IX. EVERYONE DEPENDS UPON THE LAND

Ecclesiastes 5:9 — Even the King Benefits

“The increase from the land is taken by all; even the king profits from the fields.”

Despite human hierarchies, everyone ultimately depends upon basic provisions.

Even kings need food.

The highest ruler still depends upon the productivity of the earth God created.

Cross References

Genesis 1:29

God said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant across the earth and every tree that produces fruit with seed in it. These will provide food for you.”

Psalms 104:14

God causes grass to grow for livestock and plants for people to cultivate, bringing food out of the earth.

Deuteronomy 8:7

The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams, springs, and deep waters flowing through valleys and hills.

Spiritual Principle

Even the powerful remain dependent upon God’s provision.

X. THE LOVE OF MONEY IS NEVER SATISFIED

Ecclesiastes 5:10 — Never Enough

“Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is vanity.”

The problem here is not money.

The problem is:

Love of money.

Money promises:

Security.

Freedom.

Comfort.

Importance.

Control.

But the person who loves money always wants more.

Cross References

1 Timothy 6:10

The love of money is a root from which many kinds of evil grow. Some people, because they were determined to become rich, wandered away from the faith and brought many painful sorrows upon themselves.

Proverbs 27:20

Death and destruction are never completely satisfied, and in the same way, human eyes never stop wanting more.

Isaiah 55:2

Why spend your money on what cannot truly feed you, and why work for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, receive what is truly good, and let your soul delight in what really nourishes.

Spiritual Principle

Money can satisfy a bill.

It cannot satisfy the soul.

XI. MORE WEALTH BRINGS MORE CONSUMERS

Ecclesiastes 5:11 — Increased Goods, Increased Demands

“As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them?”

More possessions can bring more expenses.

More workers.

More responsibilities.

More people depending upon the owner.

The wealthy person may eventually do little more than look at what he owns.

Cross References

Psalms 39:6

People move through life like passing shadows. They rush around gathering possessions, yet they do not know who will eventually receive what they collected.

Luke 12:16

Jesus told them a story: “The land of a certain rich man produced an unusually large harvest.”

Job 20:22

Even while the wicked person is surrounded by abundance, distress can suddenly come upon him, and trouble can close in from every direction.

Spiritual Principle

More ownership often means more responsibility.

XII. THE LABORER SLEEPS SWEETLY

Ecclesiastes 5:12 — Wealth Can Steal Rest

“The sleep of the laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of the rich keeps them from sleeping.”

The ordinary worker finishes the day tired.

He sleeps.

The wealthy person may lie awake thinking about:

Investments.

Losses.

Security.

Competitors.

Property.

Responsibility.

More can sometimes produce less peace.

Cross References

Psalm 127:2

It is useless to rise early, stay up late, and wear yourself out anxiously working for food, because God gives rest to those He loves.

Proverbs 3:24

When you lie down, you will not need to be afraid. You will rest, and your sleep will be pleasant.

1 Timothy 6:9

Those who are determined to become rich fall into temptation, traps, and many foolish and harmful desires that drag people toward ruin and destruction.

Spiritual Principle

A peaceful night may be worth more than a larger account.

XIII. WEALTH CAN HARM ITS OWNER

Ecclesiastes 5:13 — Hoarded Riches

“I have seen a terrible evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner.”

Wealth can become destructive when hoarded.

The owner may become:

Fearful.

Greedy.

Suspicious.

Controlling.

Obsessed.

Instead of owning the wealth:

The wealth begins owning him.

Cross References

James 5:3

Your gold and silver have become corroded, and their corrosion will testify against you. It will expose the judgment coming upon your greed. You stored up wealth selfishly while the last days were moving forward.

Proverbs 11:28

The person who trusts in riches will eventually fall, but righteous people will flourish like healthy leaves.

Luke 12:21

Jesus said, “This is what happens to the person who stores up treasures for himself but is not rich toward God.”

Spiritual Principle

Wealth becomes dangerous when it replaces trust in God.

XIV. RICHES CAN DISAPPEAR

Ecclesiastes 5:14 — Wealth Lost Through Misfortune

“Or wealth lost through misfortune, so that when he has a son there is nothing left to give him.”

Money is uncertain.

A person may work for decades.

Then:

A disaster.

A business failure.

A bad decision.

An unexpected event.

And wealth disappears.

This is why wealth cannot become our ultimate security.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 2:26

God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to the person who pleases Him, but the sinner may spend his life gathering wealth only for it eventually to pass into someone else's hands.

Proverbs 23:5

The moment you look toward riches, they can disappear. Wealth seems to grow wings and fly away into the sky like an eagle.

Job 20:20

Because the wicked person never knew contentment and was never satisfied inside, nothing he greedily desired will ultimately save him.

Spiritual Principle

If your peace depends on possessions remaining stable, your peace will always be fragile.

XV. WE LEAVE THE WORLD WITH NOTHING

Ecclesiastes 5:15 — Naked We Depart

“Everyone comes naked from their mother’s womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands.”

This is one of the clearest truths in Ecclesiastes.

We arrive with nothing.

We leave with nothing.

No person carries:

Money.

Property.

Jewelry.

Titles.

Businesses.

Possessions.

Into death.

Cross References

Job 1:21

Job said, “I came naked from my mother’s womb, and I will leave this life with nothing. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised.”

1 Timothy 6:7

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we cannot carry anything out of it.

Psalm 49:17

When a rich person dies, he cannot take his wealth with him, and his earthly glory cannot follow him into the grave.

Spiritual Principle

Everything you possess is temporary stewardship.

Key Truth

You never truly own earthly possessions permanently.

You manage them for a season.

XVI. TOILING FOR THE WIND

Ecclesiastes 5:16 — What Has Been Gained?

“This too is a grievous evil: As everyone comes, so they depart, and what do they gain, since they toil for the wind?”

The Preacher repeats the picture of:

Chasing the wind.

Human beings may spend an entire lifetime accumulating what death immediately removes from their hands.

That is tragic if accumulation itself became the purpose.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 1:14

I examined everything people do under the sun, and I saw that it was temporary and like trying to chase and hold the wind.

Ecclesiastes 2:11

When I examined all my accomplishments and everything I had worked to achieve, I saw that it was temporary and like chasing the wind. Nothing under the sun produced lasting profit.

Hosea 12:1

Ephraim feeds on emptiness and chases the east wind. Day after day he increases falsehood and destruction, making alliances that cannot ultimately save him.

Spiritual Principle

A life devoted only to accumulation eventually discovers that it accumulated what could not be kept.

XVII. WEALTH WITHOUT JOY PRODUCES DARKNESS

Ecclesiastes 5:17 — Frustration and Anger

“All their days they eat in darkness, with great frustration, affliction, and anger.”

The person described here has possessions but no peace.

His inner world is dark.

He lives with:

Frustration.

Pain.

Anger.

This is the opposite of true enjoyment.

Cross References

Job 5:7

Human beings are born into trouble as surely as sparks from a fire rise upward.

Job 3:20

Why is light given to those who suffer deeply, and why is life continued for those whose souls are bitter?

Psalms 90:9

All our days pass beneath the reality of Your judgment, and our years disappear quickly like a sigh.

Spiritual Principle

Wealth cannot brighten a heart that has lost peace with God.

XVIII. ENJOY THE PORTION GOD HAS GIVEN

Ecclesiastes 5:18 — This Is Good

“This is what I have seen to be good: It is fitting for people to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in their toil under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their portion.”

The Preacher again gives a positive conclusion.

Life is brief.

Therefore:

Receive today.

Eat.

Drink.

Work.

Give thanks.

Enjoy what God allows you to enjoy.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 2:24

There is nothing better than for a person to eat, drink, and find satisfaction in his work. I saw that the ability to enjoy these things comes from the hand of God.

Ecclesiastes 3:13

Everyone should eat, drink, and enjoy the good that comes from his labor, because the ability to do this is a gift from God.

1 Timothy 6:17

Tell those who are rich in this present world not to become proud or place their hope in uncertain wealth, but to trust in God, who generously gives us everything for our enjoyment.

Spiritual Principle

Contentment allows us to enjoy today instead of spending today longing for more.

XIX. THE ABILITY TO ENJOY WEALTH IS ALSO A GIFT

Ecclesiastes 5:19 — Wealth, Possessions, and Joy

“Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their work—this is the gift of God.”

The Preacher makes an important distinction.

God may give:

Wealth.

Possessions.

Work.

But there is another gift:

The ability to enjoy them.

Possession and enjoyment are not the same thing.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 8:18

Remember the Lord your God, because He is the One who gives you the ability to produce wealth, confirming the covenant He promised to your ancestors.

1 Chronicles 29:12

Riches and honor come from You. You rule over everything. Power and strength are in Your hand, and You are able to make people great and give strength to all.

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift comes from above, coming from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Spiritual Principle

Possessions become blessings when they are received with gratitude instead of worshiped as gods.

XX. GOD CAN FILL THE HEART WITH JOY

Ecclesiastes 5:20 — Joy in the Present

“They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with joy in their hearts.”

The contented person does not spend every day anxiously counting what is missing.

God gives joy.

That joy allows the person to receive life rather than constantly analyze its disappointments.

Cross References

Ecclesiastes 2:10

I did not deny my eyes what they desired, and I did not withhold ordinary enjoyment from my heart. I experienced temporary pleasure from my work, and that was the immediate reward from my labor.

Nehemiah 8:10

Nehemiah told the people, “Go and enjoy good food and sweet drink, and share with those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not remain in sorrow, because the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Philippians 4:11

I am not saying this because I am in need, because I have learned how to be content in whatever circumstances I am in.

Spiritual Principle

Contentment shortens the distance between what you have and what you think you need.

XXI. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ECCLESIASTES 5

1. Approach God with Reverence

Worship is not careless.

God deserves:

Attention.

Humility.

Listening.

Obedience.

Principle:

The first responsibility in worship is not speaking but listening.

2. Words Before God Matter

Promises are serious.

Vows are serious.

Speech is serious.

Principle:

Never make spiritual promises you do not intend to keep.

3. Fear God More Than You Trust Religious Activity

Many words do not equal true spirituality.

Principle:

Reverence matters more than religious performance.

4. Wealth Cannot Satisfy the Person Who Loves Wealth

More money creates the desire for:

More money.

Principle:

Greed has no finish line.

5. Riches Are Uncertain

They can:

Increase.

Decrease.

Disappear.

Change hands.

Principle:

Never place eternal trust in temporary wealth.

6. Death Removes Earthly Ownership

We arrive with nothing.

We leave with nothing.

Principle:

Everything we possess is temporary stewardship.

7. Enjoyment Is a Gift from God

Life becomes richer when ordinary blessings are received gratefully.

Principle:

The ability to enjoy what God gives may be a greater gift than the possession itself.

XXII. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 5 TEACHES ABOUT WORSHIP

Worship begins with:

Reverence.

Listening.

Humility.

Careful speech.

Integrity.

The Preacher warns us against treating the presence of God casually.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not enter worship asking only:

“What can I say to God?”

Also ask:

“What does God want me to hear?”

XXIII. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 5 TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER

Prayer does not need:

Performance.

Repetition.

Impressive language.

Many words.

God already knows who we are.

Spiritual Principle

The strength of prayer is not measured by the number of words but by the sincerity of the heart.

XXIV. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 5 TEACHES ABOUT PROMISES

Words spoken to God are serious.

This applies to:

Vows.

Commitments.

Public declarations.

Private promises.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never use spiritual language to impress people while ignoring the responsibility those words create before God.

XXV. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 5 TEACHES ABOUT MONEY

Money itself is not condemned.

The chapter condemns:

Love of money.

Trust in money.

Hoarding money.

Finding identity in money.

Believing money can satisfy the soul.

Key Truth

Money is useful as a servant.

It becomes dangerous as a master.

XXVI. WHAT ECCLESIASTES 5 TEACHES ABOUT CONTENTMENT

Contentment says:

“I can receive what God has given me today.”

Greed says:

“I cannot be happy until I have more.”

Contentment can enjoy:

Food.

Work.

Family.

Rest.

Provision.

Ordinary life.

Spiritual Principle

Contentment does not require perfect circumstances.

It requires a heart that recognizes God's gifts.

XXVII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does "guard your steps" mean?

It means approaching God thoughtfully and reverently.

Worship should not be careless.

Question 2

Why does the Preacher emphasize listening?

Because obedience matters more than empty religious activity.

Listening to God should come before speaking many words to Him.

Question 3

What is wrong with many words in worship?

Many words are not automatically wrong.

The problem is careless, empty, or foolish speech.

Question 4

Why are vows serious?

Because promises made to God are not meaningless statements.

God expects integrity.

Question 5

Is it wrong not to make a vow?

No.

The Preacher says it is better not to make one than to promise and then refuse to fulfill it.

Question 6

What does “fear God” mean?

It means to approach God with:

Reverence.

Awe.

Respect.

Obedience.

Recognition of His holiness and authority.

Question 7

What does verse 10 teach about money?

The person who loves money never reaches permanent satisfaction.

More wealth creates a desire for still more.

Question 8

Why can wealth create sleeplessness?

Wealth may create concerns about:

Loss.

Investment.

Security.

Responsibility.

Competition.

Management.

Question 9

Why is hoarding wealth dangerous?

Wealth may begin to control the person who possesses it.

Fear and greed can replace generosity and trust.

Question 10

What does verse 15 teach about death?

We leave the world just as we entered it materially:

With nothing in our hands.

Question 11

Does Ecclesiastes condemn enjoying possessions?

No.

The chapter says the ability to enjoy possessions is itself a gift from God.

Question 12

What should Ecclesiastes 5 change about our lives?

It should teach us to:

Worship reverently.

Speak carefully.

Keep our promises.

Fear God.

Reject greed.

Hold wealth loosely.

Practice contentment.

Enjoy God's gifts gratefully.

XXVIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Ecclesiastes 5 asks several searching questions.

Do I Approach Worship Reverently?

Am I listening?

Or merely going through religious motions?

Are My Words Before God Careless?

Do I make emotional promises I do not keep?

Is My “Yes” Dependable?

Can God and others trust my word?

Do I Love Money?

How much would be enough?

Is My Wealth Helping Me Serve God or Distracting Me from Him?

Who owns whom?

Am I Hoarding What God has Given?

Could some of what I possess become a blessing to someone else?

Is Anxiety Stealing My Rest?

Am I carrying concerns God never asked me to carry alone?

Am I Content?

Can I enjoy what God has already placed in my hands?

XXIX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Listen More, Promise Less, Obey More”

Ecclesiastes 5 begins with worship.

And the lesson is powerful.

People sometimes think spiritual maturity means:

Talking more.

Promising more.

Appearing more religious.

But the Preacher says:

Guard your steps.

Listen.

Let your words be few.

Keep what you promise.

Fear God.

Principle:

God values obedience more than impressive religious language.

XXX. THE DANGER OF LOVING MONEY

Money makes promises it cannot keep.

It says:

“I will make you secure.”

But wealth can disappear.

It says:

“I will give you peace.”

But wealth can steal sleep.

It says:

“I will satisfy you.”

But the person who loves money always wants more.

It says:

“I will stay with you.”

But death takes everything from your hands.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The problem with money is not that it is worthless.

The problem is expecting temporary wealth to provide eternal security.

XXXI. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POSSESSING AND ENJOYING

A person can possess wealth without enjoying life.

Another person may possess far less and live with:

Gratitude.

Peace.

Rest.

Joy.

The difference is not always income.

The difference may be contentment.

Spiritual Principle

Having more and enjoying more are not the same thing.

XXXII. FINAL APPLICATION

Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 brings worship and wealth together because both reveal what controls the heart.

How you approach God reveals what you believe about God.

How you handle money reveals what you trust.

The careless worshiper speaks without listening.

The greedy person accumulates without enjoying.

Both have a heart problem.

The answer is:

Reverence.

Integrity.

Contentment.

Trust.

Approach God carefully.

Listen before speaking.

Do not make promises simply because the moment feels emotional.

If you give your word:

Keep it.

Fear God.

Then look at your possessions.

Do you own them?

Or do they own you?

Can you give?

Can you rest?

Can you enjoy what God provides?

Can you say:

“This is enough”?

Remember:

You entered life with empty hands.

You will leave life with empty hands.

Therefore:

Hold wealth loosely.

Use it wisely.

Share it generously.

Receive it gratefully.

But never worship it.

Money cannot follow you into eternity.

Only what is done in relationship with God has lasting significance.

Do not spend your life accumulating what death will remove.

Spend your life becoming rich toward God.

And enjoy the ordinary gifts He places before you.

Food.

Work.

Rest.

Relationships.

Provision.

Joy.

These may seem simple.

But received from the hand of God, they become sacred gifts.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Teach us to approach You with reverence.

Keep us from careless worship.

Help us guard our steps when we come before You.

Give us hearts that listen.

Teach us to value obedience more than religious performance.

Keep our words honest.

Keep us from making promises we do not intend to fulfill.

Give us integrity before You and before others.

Let our “Yes” truly mean yes.

Let our “No” truly mean no.

Teach us to fear You with holy reverence.

Father, open our eyes to injustice.

Help us defend the weak.

Help us care for the poor.

Help us use influence in ways that honor You.

Protect us from the love of money.

When we begin believing that more wealth will finally satisfy us, remind us that greed has no finish line.

Teach us contentment.

Protect us from anxiety over possessions.

Protect us from hoarding.

Protect us from trusting what can disappear.

Remind us that we entered this world with nothing.

Remind us that we will leave with nothing.

Give us wisdom to manage what You place in our hands.

Teach us to give generously.

Teach us to enjoy gratefully.

Teach us to rest peacefully.

Thank You for food.

Thank You for work.

Thank You for provision.

Thank You for every good gift.

Give us the ability to enjoy what You provide.

Help us accept our portion without constant comparison.

Fill our hearts with joy that money cannot produce.

May our worship be sincere.

May our words be truthful.

May our promises be dependable.

May our possessions remain servants rather than masters.

May our lives show that our true treasure is in You.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

“Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is vanity.” — Ecclesiastes 5:10

Central Truth

True worship requires reverence, listening, and integrity before God, while true contentment comes not from loving wealth but from receiving life, work, possessions, and joy as temporary gifts from His hand.

Ecclesiastes 5 in One Sentence

The Preacher warns against careless worship, rash promises, oppression, greed, and hoarded wealth while teaching that reverence, integrity, contentment, and grateful enjoyment of God's gifts provide the wiser path through a brief and temporary life.

