

I. When Leading - Eccl. 4:13-16

1. Contrasts old king and poor but wise youth (**verse 13**)
 - the problem is that the king will no longer heed a warning
 - Rea -are their problems that are particular to old men?
 - youth are generally thought of as young and foolish
 - the older king's refusal to listen was called "foolish"
2. We ought have a teachable spirit
 - Rea -the KJV word for that is "meek"
3. Addresses the "youth" (**verse 14**)
 - background is explored - from prison, or from poverty
 - Rea -the idea is that this doesn't really matter if he is wise
4. I saw all who lived (**verse 15**)
 - Rea -surveys both wise and foolish, young and old
 - the youth will come after the older king - they are in an endless succession
5. In **verse 16** he says that there is no end to this long stream of people - replacing them who were before them
 - just like many were not pleased with the current king they were also not pleased with the successor
 - regardless of great empires built they all amount to a "chasing after the wind"
 - they are not a lasting venture
 - Rea 6. Raises subtly - "what are we chasing?"
 - Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
 1. Things have a way of swinging around... what seems right in the here and now, may not be in the future - with the young king
 2. We live in a cult of youth - young is better
 - they lived in a cult of the elderly - the wise are the older ones
 3. Discuss values that will last and what is just "chasing after wind"

II. When Worshiping - Eccl. 5 (1-3)

1. As you approach God, go as one who wants to listen and obey
 - rather than as fools who just do the necessary sacrifice and go their way
2. Approach God in reverence
 - guard your steps (**verse 1**)
 - Rea -think about what you're doing
3. The sacrifice of fools - without thinking
 - less than caring
 - Rea -apathetic - or a holy habit
4. Let your words be few (**verse 2**)
 - after all God is enthroned in heaven
 - Rea -and you are not
 - don't be quick with words
 - Rea -obviously empty words - because God knows the difference between real and sincere worship and all the other kinds
5. Many words mark the speech of a fool (**verse 3**)

- Rea -a fool may be “marked” by his too many words
- Rea -Jesus advised not to utter too many words, God is not impressed. Just my opinion but no one can pray like the man/ woman who doesn’t know how to pray.
- They pray with their heart, not their mouths.
6. When we are speaking we are not listening
 7. We ought respect the holy distance between God and man
- Rea -New Testament believers often think that this distance no longer exists. They are foolish. Jesus prayed “Father” - hallowed be your name... your kingdom come (not mine) your will be done (not mine).
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
1. We ought come boldly to the throne of grace confident that we have a loving heavenly father - but that does not mean we do not respect His majesty and holiness
 2. Isaiah said “here am I send me” - he was ready to obey, not to tell God what to do
 3. The Publican approached God beating his chest - knowing he was a sinner
 4. When we “get through to God” -we find that He is still awesome, wondrous and “holy”

III. When Promising - Eccl. 5:4-7

1. Fulfill your vow (**verse 4**)
- Rea -who is so “holy” that they have not vowed something before God? God takes seriously what we vow. Sometimes we vow to get God to do something for us - that’s a bargain.
2. Vows were oaths to God - Dt. 23:21-23
-Hannah made a vow - 1 Sam. 1:9-28 - and she fulfilled it
 3. Better to not make a vow (**verse 5**)
-if you’re not going to fulfill it
-foolish vows are those we don’t even think about
 4. Vows are not required by God
-voluntary
- Rea -vows were common especially in the pagan temples... swapping things to God in exchange for His blessing. Not only is this a “works” salvation but it gets to be an effort to control God... and His blessing
5. It is a sin not to fulfill your vow - so don’t let your mouth get you into trouble (**verse 6**)
-empty words cause many real problems
- Rea -see James 3:1-10 for the weight of our words
-Jesus advised against making vows... “let your yea be yea and your nea be nea”
6. Dreaming and many words are meaningless (**verse 7**)
-instead “fear God”
- Rea -there is a difference between “telling” God and listening to God
- Rea **Ideas and Questions:**
1. The context is worship and what we say/ don’t say to God
-the emphasis on prayer is on what we “say” - if you say it right you’ll get through
 2. Jesus has already “gotten through” and torn away the veil
-we ought come “boldly” but also come “reverently”
 3. There is a right way and a wrong way to approach God??

4. The context is worship but the theme of foolish vs wise is forever in “wisdom” literature
5. Many have discovered the power of words and attempt to use this “newfound” power to get somewhere with God - don’t be such a fool
5. Remember “fear God” - verse 7

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