

got wisdom? Lesson 7

Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Solomon, again shifting his focus, begins to consider our religious practices and shares a warning against the vanity of empty and meaningless worship. He apparently watched and noted the behavior of those who went to the “house of God” to worship and found that some were *robbing* God of the reverence and honor that He deserves.

Not forgetting that Solomon’s father David was a worshipper and the one who initially wanted to build the temple as a house for God (1 Chron 22:5-10). Solomon, therefore, could see beyond their vain attempts to just show up for worship without mentally, emotionally, and spiritually taking part in the experience.

This is the sacrifice of fools; to expect to receive blessing and favor from God for simply showing up and going through the motions (Is 1:10-17). It is true that no matter what we do we can’t “earn” God’s favor and blessing (Eph 2:8-10). However, it is even more truly foolish to assume that we could without a reverent relationship of love and obedience.

An accurate understanding of things of God is crucial for effectual worship. Many remain unaffected at worship services because they do not truly understand the character and grace of God and for this reason, are unable to contemplate who God is and are unable to appreciate all that God has done for them.

This leads to the reverence required to humble ourselves in His presence enough to hear and not be so swift to give God our opinions and make our demands (Vs 2). Solomon suggests that we should be careful to not be so emotional, thinking God wants our hearts and forgetting that He wants our mind, soul and strength as well.

It’s the greatest commandment (Mk 12:30). It’s also how we can, with a divine rationale and a kingdom mindset, let our words be few (Ps 141:3). An abundance of words does not make up for a lack of devotion (Mt 6:7). Our prayers should not be impromptu utterances of just anything that comes into our heads. Instead, they should be heart-felt, well-chosen words.

It is right and proper to pause and meditate during prayer, and to listen to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to our hearts what we ought to pray (Rom 8:26–27). Hastily uttered prayers are, at best, a waste of time, and at worst, they can lead to a lack of faith that God even answers our prayers (Jn 14:12-14; Jas 4:2–3).

When we pray, we must remember who we are praying to—the Lord of the Universe—and show Him the reverence He deserves. Remembering, as Solomon reminds us, that “God is in heaven and we are on earth” and He can see through our frivolous words. So we must weigh them carefully with reverence and humility.

Vs. 4-7

Solomon also suggests that there is great frivolity (foolishness or silliness) in making vows to God that we more than likely, especially without His aid, cannot keep. God, in His Law, does not require us to make vows. He has, however, provided us with rules concerning vows if we choose to make them as a show of our devotion (Deut 23:21-23; Numb 30:2).



It feels very much like God is a God who keeps His word and expects us to do the same thing (Num 23:19). This is why it's important to not make vows that we cannot or do not intend to keep (Mt 5:33-37, Jas 4:13-15). Many people make vows when they are in dire straits or undergoing extreme trials; i.e. "Lord if you do this... I'll do that".

This too is foolishness, because by making a vow in such a situation, we are implying that God needs to be bribed or paid in order to answer our prayers. It's a misrepresentation of His love. Under no circumstances should you make a vow to God that you cannot or will not carry out, because unfulfilled vows are detrimental to our spiritual growth, as well as being "unlawful".

Often, an unfulfilled vow is yet another instance of our loose lips getting us into trouble, this is why we can let our mouths get us in trouble. Even more trouble still, is the idea that rationalizing or making excuses will free us from the responsibility to keep the vow (**Vs. 6**). It won't. God will require the vow as will the person that we made it to.

Lastly, Solomon gives a remedy to making the aforementioned mistakes concerning our relationship to God. The remedy to these things is a living faith (**Vs. 7**). So walk by faith and not by sight; neither by a bunch of empty words and fleshly ideas that create for us more burden than we have to bear.

A living faith does not forget that God is the Supreme Lord of the Universe, the Creator of the Universe, who is all-wise, all-knowing, all-righteous, and all holy. Because He alone is worthy of our praise He deserves the utmost respect and reverence. To be aware of these things is the first step in practicing the right and proper worship of God.

The Take Home:

- 1. In your preparation and approach to the worship service, what could help you be better equipped to embrace the presence of God and the potential blessing of being in worship?**
- 2. Because we have all done it, besides marriage vows, what is a vow that you have made that you regret not being able to keep?**