

## Soul Food

### Psalm 23:5–6 (NLT)

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. <sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

- The key to a healthy soul starts with what we feed it
- How full is Your Cup?
- How depleted are you?

## Tell Her to Help Me

### Luke 10:38–42 (NLT) No Slide:

Aren't we a lot like Martha?

- Worried and upset about many things
- Overwhelmed, overscheduled, and exhausted
- He's not just there for the food but for the connection
- Jesus said, "there is only one thing worth being concerned about"
- Martha missed it – Mary got it!

Five things are key if we are going to live a replenished life

- Connect with God
- Spend quality time with Family
- Satisfaction in work
- Make time for recreation
- Exercise

### 3 John 2 (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

### Matthew 11:28–30 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- Your soul must rest to prosper just like your body needs rest to be in good health
- Engaging in activities and taking on responsibilities initiated by man instead on the Holy Spirit is a recipe for failure

The key is to magnify the Lord in our soul

### Luke 1:46–47, 49 (NKJV)

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. <sup>49</sup> For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

- Your soul is a magnifier
- Whatever your soul magnifies will determine what you experience in life
- The thing, person, or circumstance you set your focus on eventually will totally consume your entire being
- What you magnify is what becomes the most important thing in your life

## Psalm 63:5 (NLT)

<sup>5</sup> You satisfy me more than the richest feast. I will praise you with songs of joy.

- How satisfied are you?
- Is your soul prospering?
- Are you living life for the things that matter most?
- Do you know God's will for your life?

Have you taken an inventory of your life?

- Are you on track?
- How satisfied are you with your job?
- How satisfied are you with your income?
- How satisfied are you in your marriage?
- How satisfied are you in your singleness?
- How satisfied are you with your home?
  - With your car?
  - With your computer or cell phone?
  - With your closet full of clothes?

Better yet, how satisfied should I be?

- How satisfied could I be?
  - Are my expectations too high?
  - Are my expectations too low?
  - Am I in denial of my satisfaction level?

The real root of our satisfaction goes deeper than the things the world and advertisers say are important

We seem to think that one more thing will make us happy

### Genesis 3:1 (NLT)

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

- Before this, Eve was delighted in God’s provision
- But now she wants more
- She decides it’s that one fruit God said not to eat
- She finds out, as we all have, eating outside of God’s boundaries and provision leads to fatal dissatisfaction

Only a few people in history have been successful at pushing the quest for satisfaction to its ultimate limits

- One of those many who have tried was Solomon
- If anyone could speak to the experience of having everything his heart desired it was him
- Solomon pursued satisfaction with breathless abandon

His honest, raw heartfelt feelings of this pursuit are recorded in scripture

- He starts out the book of Ecclesiastes with this statement

### Ecclesiastes 1:2 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> “Everything is meaningless,” says the Teacher, “completely meaningless!”

- In the first two chapters, he builds a pretty convincing case to prove his theory for a depressing world view
- He finds that chasing temporal pursuits are as productive as “chasing after the wind”

## *Seven Paths for Chasing After the Wind*

### *Physical Health*

- Physical health is a key, quality of life indicator
- Few would deny that being healthy adds to one's enjoyment of life
- If you have always been in good health you may not have thought about it much

Talk to someone who has or is suffering physically you'll understand why people assume that physical health and longevity are keys to satisfaction in life

However, we cannot pin our hopes on good health and longevity as a key to a satisfied soul

- How can life bring ultimate satisfaction when we only live 70 years or so?
- The world has been around a lot longer than us and will continue after we die
- Whether we have enjoyed good health or struggled in this area, we all end the same
  - We will die and the world will go on
- Next time you mow your lawn, remember, it will outlive you

**Ecclesiastes 1:4, 11 (NLT)**

<sup>4</sup> Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes.

<sup>11</sup> We don't remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now.

## ***Education***

### **Ecclesiastes 1:13, 16-17 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup> I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race.

<sup>16</sup> I said to myself, “Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and knowledge than any of them.” <sup>17</sup> So I set out to learn everything from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that pursuing all this is like chasing the wind.

- No one knew more than Solomon in the tenth century BC world he lived in
- He was purposeful about obtaining knowledge

To many, education seems like the logical path to finding a satisfying life

- Education isn't bad
- It just won't bring the soul satisfaction you think it will

There are students everywhere who finish college and don't know what to do next

- They go on to grad school
- After that earn a master's degree
- Then try postgraduate studies or earn a doctorate
- Yet remain dissatisfied

If this hits close to home for you let Solomon save you some time and tuition money

## Ecclesiastes 1:18 (NLT)

<sup>18</sup> The greater my wisdom, the greater my grief. To increase knowledge only increases sorrow.

- Knowledge as an ultimate pursuit doesn't pay
- At the end of the road you won't find what you're looking for
- It will not fill that void in your life
- Knowledge isn't designed to fill that void

Education and knowledge are a means to an end, not an end in themselves

If you spend your life striving for more and more knowledge, while sacrificing the “one thing that is needed”, you'll be left with sorrow and grief

- The “Big Payoff” will never come

## *Pleasure*

## Ecclesiastes 2:2–3 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> So I said, “Laughter is silly. What good does it do to seek pleasure?” <sup>3</sup> After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.

- How much wine does it take to fill the soul?
- There isn't enough wine on earth for that
- Same for drugs, sex, gambling, food or anything else people use to anesthetize their pain
- Eventually you will be chasing the wind

## *Work or Accomplishments*

### **Ecclesiastes 2:4–6 (NLT)**

<sup>4</sup> I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards. <sup>5</sup> I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. <sup>6</sup> I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves.

The term *workaholic* is probably a familiar one to most of us

- You either know one or are one
- Work is merely a different drug of choice
  - The next big deal
  - The next promotion
  - The next acquisition

Solomon didn't just build a nice home, he built houses, complete with vineyards, gardens, orchards, and ponds

- Don't spend your life chasing the wind by spending all your time at the office

If you're a stay at home parent don't spend all your time keeping the house perfectly clean....

- Or preparing, time-intensive meals
- Or making a career out of volunteering at your children's schools

An obsession with your career, even if it's a career at home is chasing the wind

- Invest your time in relationships that matter most to you



## *Wealth*

### **Ecclesiastes 2:7–8 (NLT)**

<sup>7</sup> I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me. <sup>8</sup> I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire!

- It's easy to confuse work with wealth because often one leads to the other
- One involves an obsession with achieving accomplishments
- The other involves an obsession with possessions and material gain

Solomon was driven and focused, he thought that wealth would fill the void in his life

He wholeheartedly pursued all that life had to offer, yet remained empty inside

### *A recent interview with Bill Gates:*

At the time, he was worth between \$55 and \$60 billion

They were in the process of setting up a charitable foundation that gives billions of dollars to medical treatment in developing countries, finding cures for diseases, agricultural development, and educational assistance to the poor

He was asked the question: *“So you’re moving from wealth building to wealth distribution? Why are you doing that?”*

He answered: *“I woke up one day and asked myself, ‘what’s the point? I can earn a billion more dollars, or five, or ten billion more. What’s the point? How many billions are enough?’”*

Few of us have to make billion dollar decisions like this but we all have the same question to ask ourselves

- How many thousands can I stack up?
- If I can just get my business to this number
- If I can just get the larger house or the nicer car, then I’ll be satisfied

We have two choices when it comes to material wealth:

- Wealth is to bring me satisfaction
- Wealth is a tool for doing good in the world

### 1 Timothy 6:17-18 (NLT)

<sup>17</sup> Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment.

<sup>18</sup> Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.

- Christianity is not against material wealth
- What we do with wealth is of great significance
- The pursuit and enjoyment of wealth will never bring the fulfilment you think it might

## *Sex*

### 1 Kings 11:3 (NLT)

<sup>3</sup> He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD.

- I have my hands full with one wife
- Just spending one night with each woman would take almost three years
- These women were from all over the world
- They lead him astray

Finding the right person or having the best sex will never bring the satisfaction you are looking for

- Our culture is full of sex-addicts and porn-addicts
- This will only leave you broken and empty

## *Fame*

### Ecclesiastes 2:9 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me.

If there had been a paparazzi in ancient Jerusalem they would have been chasing Solomon

- People came from all over the world to meet him
- Our culture is more addicted to fame and popularity than ever before
  - If I can just be famous everything will be great
  - How many Celebrities who seemingly have it all end up divorced, broke and miserable?

### Ecclesiastes 2:10–11 (NLT)

<sup>10</sup> Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. <sup>11</sup> But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

Western society operates under the assumption that more is better

- Unlimited acquisition
- Unlimited pleasure
- Total unbridled self-indulgence
- Solomon lived this way to the fullest
- In the end, it was an absolute bust!

### Ecclesiastes 2:17–18, 20, 22 (NLT)

<sup>17</sup> So I came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless—like chasing the wind. <sup>18</sup> I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned.

<sup>20</sup> So I gave up in despair, questioning the value of all my hard work in this world.

<sup>22</sup> So what do people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety? <sup>23</sup> Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even at night their minds cannot rest. It is all meaningless.

Three things to consider in life choices for a healthy soul:

- Will it bring true satisfaction?
- Does it align with God's purpose for my life in this season?
- Does it help me lead a life of significance?