**Study Guide-Ecclesiastes 5:8-7:14**

Yes.  There is some reading today.  Take turns to give each other a break!

1. Read Eccl. 5:8-17.  Discuss together how wealth offers certain illusions that it doesn’t deliver.

2.   Read Eccl. 5:18-20.  What would be a possible solution in finding satisfaction in the simple pleasures of life?

3. Read Eccl. 6:1-12.  Notice how possessions (v.1-2), family (v.3-6) and work (v.7-11) don’t guarantee enjoyment.  Do you agree?  Discuss.  What is the decree in verse 12?

4. Read Eccl. 7:1-14.  Up is down and down is up!  What paradoxes do you see? How can the down sides of life really be some of the most blessed parts of our lives?

5. A good verse to focus on during this season is very practical for us.

*“Give thanks in all circumstance, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”*  1 Thess. 5:18

How can listing things we are thankful for, pull us out of feeling displeasure, envy, anger, discontent?

**Application**

Share and pray together about some of the top things you are thankful for in 2017.

**Message Slides**

**Ecclesiastes 5:8-7:14**

**Show picture of Woman illusion**

**Show picture of Mirage**

**I. The Illusion of Wealth (5:8-17)**

**Eccl. 5:8-17**

**8** If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still.

**9** The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.

**10** Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.

**11** As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them?

**12** The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much, but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep.

**13** I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners,

**14** or wealth lost through some misfortune, so that when they have children there is nothing left for them to inherit.

**15**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.

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

**17** All their days they eat in darkness, with great frustration, affliction and anger.

**The Solution (v.18-20)**

**18** This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot.

**19** Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.

**20** They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart.

**II. The Illusion of Enjoyment (6:1-12)**

**A. Possessions (v.1-2)**

**1** I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on mankind:

**2** God gives some people wealth, possessions and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

**B. Family (v.3-6)**

**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?

**C. Work (v.7-11)**

**7** Everyone’s toil is for their mouth, yet their appetite is never satisfied.

**8** What advantage have the wise over fools? What do the poor gain by knowing how to conduct themselves before others?

**9**Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

**10** Whatever exists has already been named, and what humanity is has been known; no one can contend with someone who is stronger.

**11** The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone?

**Decree!**

**Eccl. 6:12**

“For who knows what is good for a person in life, during the few and meaningless days they pass through like a shadow? Who can tell them what will happen under the sun after they are gone?”

**Why would God give us the ability to have things and not the power to enjoy them?**

Eccl. 2:25

“…for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?”

**III. The Illusion of the Down Sides (7:1-14)**

**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 everyone; the living should take this to heart.

**3** Frustration 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.

**5** It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise person 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.

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

**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: Wisdom preserves those who have it.

**13** Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked?

**14** When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future.

**Application**

1 Thess. 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstance, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.