

## **I. Intro**

Question: Why would we fast as Christians? What are some biblical reasons that we fast as Christians?

However, two more fundamental reasons developed in my mind as I studied Ecclesiastes 6 this week.

1. Our mouths are a tangible illustration of our hearts.
2. Saying no to physical food is a very tangible expression and illustration of our saying no to the sin our hearts desire.

Question: Think with me for a moment, what are some connections between our physical appetites and the appetites/desires of the soul?

1. They are both \_\_\_\_\_ hungry.
2. They both want \_\_\_\_\_ food which only satisfies temporarily.
3. When they are driven by right \_\_\_\_\_, it leads to better \_\_\_\_\_, which leads to \_\_\_\_\_ better.

## **II. Evil under the Sun: \_\_\_\_\_ Three Different Ways (1-6)**

### **1. Illustration 1: The man who both lacks \_\_\_\_\_ and lacks \_\_\_\_\_**

Question: If you could have anything you asked for, what would it be?

God is the central player here. God is the determining factor. God is the one who holds the fate and the empowerment, not the person in the illustration.

Kaiser (126): A person may possess wealth, honor, numerous children, long life, and virtually every outward good that anyone could possibly imagine; yet he can still be a very broken, dissatisfied, and unhappy person. This is because God has deliberately isolated the gift of the goods themselves from the gift of the power to be able to enjoy those same gifts!

Kaiser (124): God's intention, then, was that mortals were to come to a proper joy in the material gifts placed in this world by God Himself.

However we know that ultimate enjoyment can ONLY happen through a proper understanding of the world through God's lens.

### **2. Illustration 2: The long life of an \_\_\_\_\_ overwhelmed parent**

Shaw (81): Ultimately, however, both the opportunity and the ability to enjoy good things are the gifts of God. That is the assertion of 5:17-19 (5:18-20), and that guides the understanding of these first several verses of chapter 6.

### **3. Illustration 3: 2,000 years to die**

Kaiser (128): Normally a long life is God's reward for living in a way that is pleasing to Him (cf. Exod. 20:12), but if in that long life there is no joy or satisfaction, what benefit would living long offer? The gift of enjoyment, once again, must come from God, for it cannot be found anywhere else.

Kaiser (128): If even the longest life eventually terminates without having yielded any enjoyment, not to mention any prospect of anything to follow for those who do not fear God, what is the benefit, or advantage, of all those years? Although others may have looked on with envious eyes, the truth is that the extension of days was not what it appeared to be; it only compounded that individual's sorrow.

## **III. Nails for Those under the Sun (7-12)**

### **1. Nail 1: The hunger pains of the soul are extremely hard to \_\_\_\_\_**

Shaw (81-82): Verse 7 is probably a proverb: the labour of the man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not filled.' The contrast is between the satisfying of the physical appetite and the satisfying of the spiritual appetite. The first can be accomplished, and must be accomplished if the man is to live. Yet the mere satisfying of the body will not satisfy the soul. Further, the soul is much harder to satisfy than the body. Solomon has much to say about satisfaction, most of it emphasizing the fact that man, living in a fallen world, is beset by dissatisfaction.

### **2. Nail 2: Is there advantage for the wise man? \_\_\_\_\_ \*\***

Question: When does the wise man have an advantage?

Question: How about for the poor man? What advantage does he have?

Shaw (83): The poor man with understanding, however, has the advantage in that he sees things in their proper perspective. He knows how to conduct himself. He is not driven by his appetites. He 'has learnt to accommodate himself to his circumstances.'

### **3. Nail 3: \_\_\_\_\_ souls are like grumbling stomachs**

#### **The NET Bible Ecclesiastes 6:9**

It is better to be content with what the eyes can see  
than for one's heart always to crave more.

This continual longing is futile—like chasing the wind.

**The NET Bible:** Heb “the roaming of the soul.” The expression מְהַלֵּךְ-נֶפֶשׁ (mehalakh-nafesh, “the roaming of the soul”) is a metonymy for unfulfilled desires. The term “soul” (נֶפֶשׁ,

nefesh) is used as a metonymy of association for man's desires and appetites (BDB 660 s.v. 5 נפש.c; 6.a). This also involves the personification of the roving appetite as "roving" (הלך); see BDB 235 s.v. הלך II.3.f; 232 I.3.

Shaw (84): It is better to have than to want. Yet the desire of a man will always remain unsatisfied. Therefore, learning to be satisfied with what one has, learning how to behave oneself in the land of living under the sun is something to be desired. Learning to control one's appetite is the way of wisdom.

**4. Nail 4: God is \_\_\_\_\_ than us.**

Kaiser (129): All words are useless and just so much hot air; a person might just as well acknowledge one's own limitations and begin immediately to start fearing God as the proper starting point. The ordinance of God dictates the incapacity of worldly things to yield their enjoyment on their own; in fact, it must be observed that often worldly prosperity, by itself, only increases the emptiness and dissatisfaction.

Shaw (86): Another way of thinking about this verse is as follows: most of us know someone who talks too much. So what do we do when they begin talking? We simply tune them out. Their words go into the air and are lost.

**5. Nail 5: \_\_\_\_ knows what is good for man.**

Shaw (86): It is important, according to Solomon, for man to have a proper understanding of his place in the order of things. There is one who is more powerful than man, with whom man cannot contend. He is the one who calls all things into existence. Therefore, man is to look to him in order to know what it is that is good for man to do. The life of man is a brief shadow. We do not have much time here. Therefore it is especially urgent that we know what is the good for us to do. That knowledge comes only from the one who called all things into existence, the only one who can declare what is to come.

**Micah 6:8:** He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?