

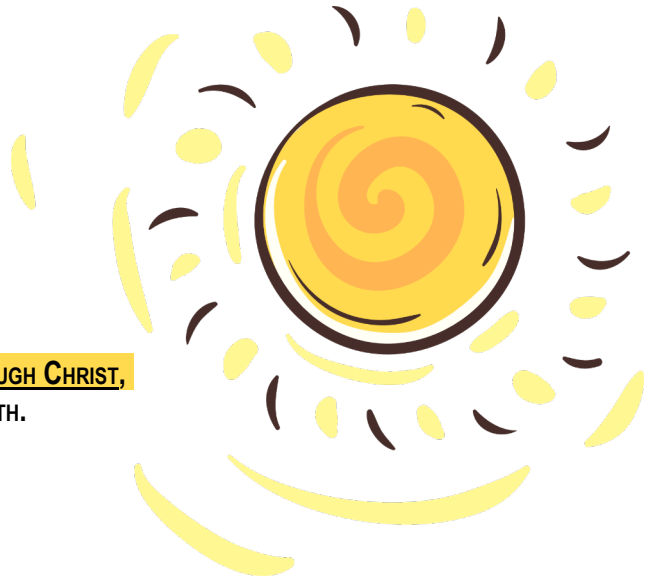
# **MAKING THE MOST OF OUR LOT IN LIFE**

**ENJOYING THE BLESSINGS OF LIFE UNDER THE SUN BY LEARNING THE SECRET OF LIVING IN EVERY SITUATION**

**I HAVE LEARNED** THE SECRET OF LIVING  
IN EVERY SITUATION.  
(PHILIPPIANS 4:12B NLT)

**I HAVE LEARNED** HOW TO BE CONTENT  
WITH WHATEVER I HAVE.  
(PHILIPPIANS 4:11B NLT)

**FOR I CAN DO EVERYTHING THROUGH CHRIST,**  
WHO GIVES ME STRENGTH.  
(PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NLT)



## PART ONE: The discontented person ...

(ECCLESIASTES 5:8-17)

*The discontented person is a dissatisfied person who lives under the wrong assumption that changing his circumstances through power and wealth will bring meaning and significance into his life. But this is an illegitimate and selfish thirst which can never be quenched because of the wrong direction of the person's heart and mind.*

### 1. To make the most of our lot in life, we must not be amazed at the reality of the inherent corruption in the authority structures of this world, 5:8.

- (Ecclesiastes 5:8 ESV) If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, **do not be amazed at the matter**, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.

If we have a biblical, realistic view of governing authorities, then we will not be shocked by these things.

Since Adam's rebellion every person is born into this world in sin—a fallen state of depravity, and even those who are redeemed in Christ contend with this defiled state of corruption until God takes us to glory.

So if all humans have been corrupted then we should expect corruption throughout every part of every system of government.

By the time of Qoheleth's writing humans had been displacing good with evil, and righteousness with sin, for three thousand years. *Oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness are not the exception but the rule.*

### 2. To make the most of our lot in life, we need to understand and accept that even a corrupt government is better than anarchy, 5:9.

- (Ecclesiastes 5:9 ESV) But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.
- (Ecclesiastes 5:9 NASB95) After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.

**Wiersbe ...** Verse 9 is difficult and major translations

do not agree. The general idea seems to be that in spite of corruption in the bureaucracy, it is better to have organized government, and a king over the land, than to have anarchy. A few dishonest people may profit from corrupt practices, but everybody benefits from organized authority. [Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Satisfied* (p. 67). Victor Books.]

## INTERLUDE: MOVING BEYOND THE SUN:

AN INTERLUDE FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN VIEW OF A SOVEREIGN, PROVIDENT GOD WHO RULES HEAVEN AND EARTH AND OVER THE AFFAIRS OF HUMANS ...

- Those who live with a view of life beyond the sun ... fully accept and **submit to** the authority of our God who rules over heaven and earth.
- Those who live with a view of life beyond the sun ... obey his command to **submit to** these corrupted authority structures believing God is God.
  - All the governments that God commands us to **submit to** are corrupt because all governments are made up of people.
    - (Romans 13:1–4 ESV) **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 **for he is God's servant for your good.** But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. **For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.**
    - (Titus 3:1–2 ESV) **Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,** 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.
    - (1 Peter 2:13–17 ESV) **Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,** whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 **For this is the will of**

God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, **but living as servants of God**. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

b. We **submit** not because the government is good but because God commands it and we trust his infinite wisdom.

- (Romans 11:33–36 ESV) Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 34 “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” 35 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
- (Psalm 147:5 ESV) Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.
- (Isaiah 40:28 ESV) Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

c. We **submit** not because the government is good but because God commands it and we trust in his sovereign, providential rule.

#### ***Nebuchadnezzar was God’s servant.***

- (Jeremiah 25:9a ESV) Behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, **and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant**, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations.

#### ***Cyrus was God’s servant.***

- (Isaiah 44:24–26a, 27– 28 ESV) Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, 25 who frustrates the signs of liars and makes fools of diviners, who turns wise men

back and makes their knowledge foolish, 26 who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers ... 27 who says to the deep, ‘Be dry; I will dry up your rivers’; 28 **who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd**, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’ ”

- (Isaiah 45:1a, 4–7 ESV) **Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped**, to subdue nations before him ... 2 “**I will** go before you and level the exalted places, **I will** break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, 3 **I will** give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. 4 For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, **I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me**. 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; **I equip you, though you do not know me**, 6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. 7 I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things.
- (Isaiah 46:10–11 ESV) Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ 11 **calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel** from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.
- d. We **submit** not because the government is good but because God is good and will fulfill all his promises.
- (Romans 8:28 ESV) **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**

**–END INTERLUDE–**

**3. To make the most of our lot in life, we must guard against the love of money and wealth, 5:10-12.**

- (Ecclesiastes 5:10–12 ESV) **He who loves money will not be satisfied with money**, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? 12 **Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much**, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.
- a. The person who loves money will not be satisfied with money because it is vanity.
- b. The laborer—in contrast to the person who loves money—enjoys sweet sleep.

**4. To make the most of our lot in life, we must guard against the false hope of riches, 5:13-17.**

- (Ecclesiastes 5:13–17 ESV) **There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun**: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, 14 and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. 15 As he came from his mother’s womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. 16 **This also is a grievous evil**: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? 17 Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.
- a. Hoarding riches is a **grievous evil—an evil that wounds and weakens the soul**.
- b. If a person hoards riches, he may lose those riches in a bad venture.
- c. This person does not live in the reality that when he dies he will be empty-handed.
- d. His coming and going with no real gain is also an **evil and wounds and weakens his soul**.
- e. Because he lives as a wounded, weakened soul, he eats in darkness and misery.

**PART TWO: The contented person ...**

(ECCLESIASTES 5:18-20)

*The contented person accepts his or her lot in life and enjoys life as a gift from the hand of a loving, sovereign Lord. The contented person trusts God and has a passion for learning how to live this life as taught by the Spirit of God according to the word of God.*

- (1 Timothy 6:6–9 ESV) But godliness with **contentment** is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 **But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.**
- (Philippians 4:11–13 NLT) Not that I was ever in need, **for I have learned how to be content** with whatever I have. 12 **I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.** 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

**5. To make the most of our lot in life, we must accept what we have as a gift of God, 5:18-20.**

- (Ecclesiastes 5:18–20 ESV) Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life **that God has given him, for this is his lot**. 19 Everyone also **to whom God has given** wealth and possessions and power **to enjoy them**, and **to accept his lot** and **rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God**. 20 For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.
- a. God by his common grace gives some the ability to eat and drink and find enjoyment in their work for the few days of their lives.
- b. God by his common grace keeps this person occupied with a joyful heart for the few days of his or her life.