

# WISDOM FOR TRUE WORSHIP Text: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

## *How to Guard Against Vain and Insincere Worship*

Introduction:

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### **1. Pew Research Center Survey: Where People Find Meaning in Life...**

**“What makes life meaningful?” View from 17 advanced countries...**

- a. CHART... Family 38% Job/Career 25% Material Wellbeing 19% Friends/Community 18%  
Physical/Mental Health 17% Society/Institutions 14% Hobbies/Recreation 10%  
Education/Learning 5% Nature/Outdoors 5% Romantic Partner 4% Travel/New  
Experiences 3% Retirement 2% Spirituality/Faith/Religion 2% Pets 1%

### **2. The Bible gives us God’s Wisdom for the Storms of Life...**

- a. A Huge reason why we need wisdom—is because we live in a broken world  
b. We are tempted to live in degrees of denial of reality...

### **3. Ecclesiastes 5 is Wisdom for How to Live By Faith—While in a Broken World...**

- a. A Proper Attitude toward God  
b. A Proper Attitude toward Power & the Influence of Others  
c. A Proper Attitude toward Money  
d. A Proper Attitude toward Life

### **4. In Each of these are areas people tend to live in different degrees of denial...**

- a. Eventually They Lead to the Ultimate State of Denial—The Tragedy of Self-Worship  
b. Solomon begins with God First – because if we have a proper attitude toward God first,  
c. then we will be able to have a proper attitude toward all areas of life.

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## **I. WISDOM FOR TRUE WORSHIP**

### **How to Guard Against Vain and Insincere Worship...**

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#### **A. GUARD YOUR STEPS (5:1a NIV)**

##### **1. Proceed with Reverence into the house of God for worship**

- a) Not thoughtless or carelessly—but with forethought and preparation  
b) This is talking about the attitude of our heart

##### **2. Moses did this when he saw the burning bush (Ex. 3:4-5)**

**When we enter spiritual worship we are on holy ground**

- a) Not because the Bldg is Holy—but because the assembly gathered to worship God  
is "set apart" for a Holy Purpose and for His Holy Presence  
b) Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name,  
I am there in the midst of them.” (Mt 18:20)

##### **3. True worship begins with guarding your steps as you enter...**

- a) Meaning with intentional and spiritual purpose  
b) Solomon will explain HOW in the following lines...

## **B. DRAW NEAR TO GOD TO LISTEN TO HIS WORD (v.1b)**

- 1. We all have a ‘chatter box’ of internal dialog running constantly within us...**
  - a) The constant internal dialog we have with ourself...
  - b) Thinking about the worries of world... the Pressures, and distractions of the world...  
or comparing one another with the value systems of the world...
  - c) Sometimes the inner chatter box is critical, Sometimes it's self-flattering
  - d) But we must be able to turn down the volume of our inner dialog in order to listen...
- 2. WHY? Because In True Worship God the Focal Point—Not Self**
  - a) Which is Why the Word of God takes Priority over the words of men
- 3. Peter was known for talking before thinking...**
  - a) On the Mt of Transfiguration—where Jesus glory was glowing with luminescent light
  - b) And Jesus is talking with Moses and Elijah who had been dead over 1,000 yrs!  
But God is not God of the Dead—but of the Living!
  - c) Peter didn't know what to say, so he said, Lord it is good for us to be here, lets built three alters: One for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah
  - d) But While He is fumbling w/ his words—God Spoke from Heaven—and said, This is my Son, Hear Him!
- 4. Like Peter, We Must Draw Near to God in Reverent Faith to Hear His Word**
  - a) Do we believe God needs to hear from us more than we need to hear from Him?  
(Prov. 28:9)
- 5. The Idea Of Hearing Also Includes Obeying**
  - a) (Mt 7:24) <sup>24</sup> “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,  
I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

## **C. DO NOT OFFER THE SACRIFICE OF FOOLS (v.1c)**

- 1. What is the Sacrifice of Fools?**
  - a) Fools are Big Talkers who are always right in their own eyes (Prov 12:15)
  - b) Fools Are Never Wrong, So Anything That Happens to Them Has to Be Someone Else's Fault, It's Never Theirs (Prov. 16:2)
  - c) As a Result—their words and worship are empty
- 2. God is Not Impressed with Big Talkers—He is Impressed by Sincere Faith**
  - a) Jesus addressed this w/ the Pharisees (Matthew 6:7–8)
  - b) When Elijah challenged the Pagan Priests of Baal... the priests called out to Baal  
for hours and hours, yelling, shouting, cutting themselves
  - c) When Elijah Prayed, it was a short prayer and God answered his prayer of faith
- 3. Our words are a key component of our sacrifice...**
  - a) In the OT it was a thankfulness offering (Lev. 7:12; Hosea 14:2)
  - b) But In NT our thankfulness is expressed in praise (Hebrews 13:15)
  - c) This was the request of David (Psalm 51:16–17 > Ps 19:14)

## **D. GIVE PROPER THOUGHT TO YOUR WORDS AND YOUR HEART (v.2–3)**

### **1. God wants us to step out of denial into a true relationship with Him**

a) True Worship from the Heart—not Empty Worship that is vain

### **2. Vain Worship rather than True Worship... (Matthew 15:7–9)**

a) Why would We Worship God in a Vain Way?

b) I Will Worship You God—But Only the Way That Makes Me Feel Good About Myself

c) I Will Worship MY Way, Not YOUR Way!

### **3. THE PHARISEES MADE THIS MISTAKE...**

(1) They used the temple for their own benefit.

(2) They used their positions to serve themselves—rather than serving God

(3) They sought status by praying, fasting, and giving before people.

(4) They were hypocrites, behaving one way publicly but another privately.

(5) They were outwardly pure but inwardly corrupt.

(6) They were self-righteous rather than humble.

(7) They knew God's Word, but failed to obey and practice it.

(8) They oppressed the poor and weak.

(9) Worship had ceased being about God—and was more about themselves

### **4. Jesus described the hearts of the Pharisees (Matthew 23:1–12)**

**True Worship is Focused on God—not on Self**

## **E. BE FAITHFUL IN YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD (v.4–6)**

### **1. Think of a Vow as a Promise... In the OT a Vows was...**

a) Asking for a Blessing with Promise of Return (Num 21:2) —Israel made a vow to God

b) A Promise Made out of Gratitude or Thankfulness (Jonah 2:9) —Jonah to be saved

c) A Dedication of a Child (1 Sam. 1:11) —As Hannah did w/ Samuel

d) A Promise of Allegiance or Commitment (Gen 28:20-22) —Jacob made vow to God

e) A Free-will Offering Based on a Past Vow (Lev. 22:18)

f) Vows were not commanded in the Law, but were Voluntary.

However Regulations Were Given in the Law If a Vow is Offered (Leviticus 27)

### **2. In NT we make Vows to God as well...**

a) **A Marriage Vow is Made Before God** — to be Faithful to our spouse for life

(1) Wasn't it To love and protect? In Sickness and in Health? Poverty or Wealth?

(2) Even if she burns the toast? and wears that old blue bathrobe?

(3) And he doesn't like yard work?

b) **Becoming a Christian is a Also Vow** — a Promise to Follow God

(1) Even when we are tired, or discouraged, or have hurt feelings

### **3. God is Faithful to His Promises—and He wants us to be Faithful to Ours**

a) I Heard of a man who had developed a large property in Florida in early 1900's

- b) He sold parcels of land w/ a money back guarantee if they were not satisfied.
- c) Many people bought land and put in Orange groves that did very well.
- d) But one year was a terrible freeze. The worst freeze on record.
- e) That night the sound of splintering wood broke the silence.
- f) By morning, it wasn't just a loss of one year of crop, All the Orange Trees died.
- g) It takes a lot of \$ to replant entire orchards, and years for them to grow
- h) A lot of people asked for their money back...
- i) He could've declared Bankruptcy... He could've said he didn't have the money...
- j) He decided to be faithful to his vow—and even though he was in his 60's he went back to work for 10 years to pay everyone off

#### **4. Be Faithful to Your Vows and Devotion to God**

- a) Well, I'll Be Faithful God, But I'm Not Going to be Happy About it
- b) I'll Go to Church if I Feel Like it — I'll Read My Bible if I Feel Like it
- c) I'll Stay Married because I Have to—But I Don't Have To Be Nice
- d) But If I Need Anything I'm Asking for it Right Away
- e) I Expect God to Hear My Prayers Right Now

#### **5. God will not be mocked and God will not be used**

### **F. FEAR GOD WITH REVERENCE AND RESPECT (v.7)**

#### **1. v.7a For in the Multitude of many dreams and many words is vanity**

“people are prone to carry their illusions with them while they worship and also to talk without thinking. If a vow is made this way, the worshipper is treading on dangerous ground. The remedy is to fear God.” (Eaton)

#### **2. ‘People are prone to carry their illusions with them while they worship...’**

- a) Like the Pharisee and the Tax Collector **(Luke 18:9–14)**

#### **3. Whether we carry our illusions w/ us consciously or unconsciously...**

- a) We might Worship God in a way that Pleases Us Rather than Pleases God

#### **4. Some Can Reach a Degree of Self-Deception that Leads to the Tragedy of Self-Worship Rather than the True Worship of God!**

- a) Just as Jesus Warned About... **(Mt 7:21-23)**

*Augustine: for Christ to say, “I never knew you,” is only another way of saying, “You never knew me.”*

#### **5. The Instruction, the Answer, the Remedy is to FEAR GOD**

- a) This includes the idea of fearing God's judgement...
- b) But the Hebrew word includes the idea of Reverence, Respect, and Honor

#### **6. To Honor God with Deep Reverence and Sincere Respect**

### **CONCLUSION:**

- I. God is Not Impressed with Big Talkers—He is Impressed by Deep Faith**
- II. He Wants us to Step Out of Our Denial—and Into the Light of His Glory!**

**Psalm 89:6–7 NKJ**