

How to Have a Meaningful Life in the Midst of the Mundane

ECLESIASTES 8: 1-17

Who is like the wise?

And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
and the hardness of his face is changed.

² I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. ³ Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. ⁴ For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him, "What are you doing?" ⁵ Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing, and the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. ⁶ For there is a time and a way for everything, although man's trouble lies heavy on him. ⁷ For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be? ⁸ No man has power to retain the spirit, or power over the day of death. There is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. ⁹ All this I observed while applying my heart to all that is done under the sun, when man had power over man to his hurt.

¹⁰ Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. ¹¹ Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. ¹² Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. ¹³ But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

¹⁴ There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. ¹⁵ And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

¹⁶ When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how neither day nor night do one's eyes see sleep, ¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

ECCLESIASTES 8

¹⁴ There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. ¹⁵ So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

¹⁶ When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night—¹⁷ then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN FUN...

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN KNOWLEDGE

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN WORK AND CAREER...

Ecclesiastes 1: 2

Vanity of vanities...all is vanity... says the preacher.

Solomon's ultimate purpose in the book of Ecclesiastes is to lead those who are wise to yearn for another kind of life that is the substantial reality of the One who created the sun. This was foreshadowed in the sacrifices of the Old Testament and is now, for Christians, completed in the table of the Eucharistic sacrifice (AUGUSTINE).

COLOSSIANS 3

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

TWO BIG IDEAS:**THE JOB: Set my mind on things of heaven, not things of earth...**

“...focus on the new, heavenly dimension of reality that has dawned with the coming of Christ” Dr. Douglas Moo

THE OUTCOME: What is hidden about life will one day be revealed...