

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11
Searching for Joy
Embrace God's plan of man's inability—1:1-2:26 (part 3)

- 1) The emotion of joy—2:1-8
 - a) Joy and laughter—2:1-2 *I spoke in my heart, "Come now, I will test you in joy. So enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was illusory.* ² *Of laughter I said, "It is insanity," and about joy, "What does it accomplish?"*
 - b) Maybe alcohol and foolishness will satisfy—2:3 *I carefully examined in my heart how to cheer my body with wine while guiding my heart in wisdom, and how to embrace folly, until I could see what was good for the sons of Adam to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.*
 - c) Architecture and gardening—2:4-6 *I increased my accomplishments: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself.* ⁵ *I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.* ⁶ *I made pools of water for myself from which to irrigate a grove of growing trees.*
 - i) Taking 13 years just to build his own house (cf. 1st Kings 7:1-51; 9:10; 2nd Chronicles 8:3-6)
 - d) Workers and livestock—2:7 *I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I also abundantly possessed more livestock, both herds and flocks, than any who were in Jerusalem before me.*
 - e) Wealth—2:8a *I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and the provinces.* (cf. 1st Kings 10:14-29)
 - f) Pleasure, both musical and sexual—2:8b *I acquired for myself male singers and female singers, and the pleasures of the sons of Adam—a harem.* (cf. 1st Kings 11:3)
- 2) Unrestrained self-indulgence and its results—2:9-11
 - a) Prosperity and objectivity—2:9 *So I became great and increased more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom stood for me.*
 - i) His pursuit was not conducted with a lack of self-restraint or reckless abandon.
 - b) I earned it!—2:10 *And whatever my eyes desired I did not withhold from them. I did not withhold my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my toil and this was my reward from all my toil.*
 - i) Cf. 1st Kings 4:20-23
 - c) All of this did not satisfy Solomon's soul—2:11 *Then I considered all my works that my hands had done, and the toil with which I had toiled in doing it, and behold, all was illusory and striving after wind. And there was no advantage (cf. 1:3) under the sun.*

Take-home truth: True, lasting joy neither originates within us nor with the things we possess.