

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Active Involvement is Always Proper

Mystery must not prevent appropriate human effort—9:11-11:6

Removing Discouragements to God's Plan—8:16-12:14

- 1) Know your ignorance regarding the possibilities—11:1-4
  - a) Not having total control over the risk in investments can paralyze you—11:1-2
    - i) Financially?—
      - (1) Make the investment—11:1 <sup>1</sup> *Send your bread upon the waters surface of the waters, for after many days you will find it.* (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 9:26-28; 10:22)
      - (2) But don't put all your grain in one ship—11:2 <sup>2</sup> *Give a portion to seven or even to eight, for you do not know what evil may happen on the earth.*
    - ii) Charity?—some interpret this verse as showing mercy to a variety of people
  - b) Not having control over some inevitabilities can paralyze you—11:3
    - i) Regarding foreseeable weather—<sup>3</sup> *If the clouds are full of rain, they will empty themselves on the earth;*
    - ii) Regarding common events in creation—*and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, wherever the tree falls, there it will lie.*
  - c) Being overly hesitant can paralyze you—11:4 <sup>4</sup> *The one paying attention to the wind will not sow, and the one observing the clouds will not harvest.* (i.e. don't bother separating your peas and carrots. Life doesn't always fit into nice categories.)
- 2) Know your ignorance of the Creator—11:5
  - a) Regarding unforeseeable weather—<sup>5</sup> *As you do not know the path of the wind* (cf. John 3:8)
  - b) Regarding pregnancy—*and how bones form in the womb of pregnant woman,* (cf. Psalm 139:13-16)
  - c) Regarding God's providence—*so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.* (cf. 8:17)
- 3) Know your ignorance of final outcomes—11:6
  - a) Do a full day's work—<sup>6</sup> *In the morning sow your seed and in the evening do not let your hand rest,* (i.e. don't lean on your shovel while praying for a hole)
  - b) Do your work in spite of your ignorance of the final results—*for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.*

**Ask ourselves:** Am I one of those paralyzed people who demand certainty of guaranteed success before I act? Being spiritual "OCD" will only lead to frustration. Solving the enigmas of life is beyond us.

N.T parallels

Matthew 25:14-30; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:9