

THE CLUTTERED LIFE

Labor Day

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

In a "Peanuts" comic strip, there was a conversation between Lucy and Charlie Brown. Lucy said that life is like a lounge chair on your deck. Some place it so they can see where they are going; some place it so they can see where they have been; and some place it so they can see where they are at present. Charlie Brown's reply: "I can't even get mine unfolded."

Life can sometimes become complicated and cluttered. The rushing here and there, this appointment, that meeting, activities centered around kids, friends, and self that never cease, work, and family, it all begins to resemble that junk drawer, closet or room that we so haphazardly throw things in. becoming cluttered and over whelming to us.

If our lives seem cluttered let us learn from the life of Solomon, whose life had come to a point of clutter.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLUTTERED LIFE

I. THE CLUTTERED LIFE IS FILLED WITH UNNECESSARY BUSYNESS (2:4)

The first characteristic of a cluttered life is unnecessary activity or busyness. When our activity results in neglected relationships with our spouse, family, friends, and God, it is wrong. Unfortunately, people who are constantly busy think they have not done enough.

A. Solomon was a busy man!

- He searched (3)
- He made (4,5,6)
- He built (4)
- He planted (4,5)
- He acquired (7)
- He gathered (8)

Living with the idea that "**the busier the better,**" is simply not true!

II. THE CLUTTERED LIFE IS MOTIVATED BY THE CONSTANT PURSUIT OF GAIN (2:7,8,9)

I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well-- the delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

- 1. The cluttered life is often consumed with the pursuit of gaining more and more.** We like to think that if we can gain then we can justify the busyness.
- Solomon gained:
 - Houses & vineyards
 - Gardens, orchards

- Silver, gold & special treasures
- Singers & musical instruments

3. He gained so much that he was "greater" than all before him

J.D. Rockefeller was asked how much it would take to really satisfy him. He answered, "*Just a little bit more.*"

4. "Just a little bit more," is a sure sign of a cluttered life.

III. THE CLUTTERED LIFE IS A LIFE OUT OF CONTROL (2:10)

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor.

When busyness leads to being more busy, and gaining leads to just a little bit more, we are out of control.

The end result of our busyness and need to gain is not what motivates us.

- a. We cannot be still.
- b. We must always be doing and gaining, no matter what we have!
- c. There is no discipline in this cluttered life.

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF THE CLUTTERED LIFE (2:11).

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

- A. Many consequences come from living in a cluttered life.**

Physical, spiritual and emotional loss or physical, spiritual and emotional destruction will come.

- B. Solomon speaks of a great consequence; a meaningless life.**

"When I surveyed . . . what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless."

- C. The cluttered life does not focus on the meaning of life. For life in all of its busyness and pursuit of gain has become meaningless.**

- D. The word for meaningless in the KJV is VANITY = (heh'-bel) emptiness, unsatisfactory, vain**

1. Our work becomes meaningless
2. Our possessions become meaningless
3. Our relationships become meaningless

III. CAUSE OF THE CLUTTERED LIFE

- A. The cause behind the cluttered life resides in the heart.**

The heart that has pushed God aside and has placed self on the throne will end up cluttered with useless rewards.

B. Solomon in this passage uses the pronouns "I" 26 times, and "me, mine & myself" 24 times.

C Spiritual self-control in non-existent, "self" has taken control.

D. "The cluttered life leaves no room for God."

- Have we smothered God out of our lives with busyness?
- Are we gaining the world, but losing our soul?
- Is God and His Son just another aspect of your cluttered world?

IV. CURE FOR THE CLUTTERED LIFE

The cluttered life does not have to be. Like that drawer or closet, we need simply to begin to clean and straighten our life up. I advise a three-fold cure.

A. TAKE TIME FOR SOLITUDE
(Ask everyone to be quiet!)

1. We must begin to guard our hearts with times of solitude.

- Flee the noise

- Flee the distractions
- Flee the interruptions
- Hear the voice of God.

2. We need to learn, "If you don't come apart, you will come apart."

God says, "be still and know that I am God." (Psalms 46:10)

B. EXERCISE PROPER STEWARDSHIP

1. We must come to the understanding of stewardship.

Stewardship is not just about money. The world wants us to believe we own everything or at least we can try to own everything. The truth is, God own it all. We are managers. We may posses much, but we own nothing.

B. LEARN TO MAKE SERVICE A PART OF OUR LIVES.

We must learn to give ourselves to others for God. Our major purpose in life is not to accumulate possessions for life, but people for eternity.

CONCLUSION

Life can become cluttered, and we know it. So what might be a proper conclusion to such a message. We started with the words of Solomon, let us end with them.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

- 13 *Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole
[duty] of man.*
- 14 *For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every
hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*