**"Sacrifice Of Fools”**

**Ecclesiastes 5:1-7**

 ***Overview***

 The way we approach God says a lot about what we believe about Him. For some God is primarily a holy, fearsome authority in our lives. For others He is more of a close friend and companion through life.



For many, the Shepherd and Friend is our preferred image of God. Thinking of Him in this way makes Him much more approachable and welcoming. We feel secure in the knowledge that He cares for us with a love that will not fail.

But sometimes we need to be reminded that God is also not to be trifled with, disrespected or taken for granted. His majesty demands respect and reverence, attitudes we will want to be sure are reflected in our worship and our words.

 ***Getting Started*** *Awe and Wonder*



1. Where, or under what circumstances, do you most easily feel a sense of awe and reverence for God?

2. What is one of the highest or greatest compliments you could give to another person?

3. Do you have a regular prayer time with God? What does that time look like?

 ***The Text***

**5**  Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.



2Do not be quick with your mouth,

 do not be hasty in your heart

 to utter anything before God.

 God is in heaven

 and you are on earth,

 so let your words be few.

 3A dream comes when there are many cares,

 and many words mark the speech of a fool.

4When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. 5It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it. 6Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, “My vow was a mistake.” Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? 7Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.

 Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 (NIV)

 ***The Video (optional)*** *“Sacrifice of Fools” – Eccl. 5:1-7* - by Kyle Corbin, May 31/20 (view at www.immanuelonline.ca)



 NOTES:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 ***Understanding***

 1. The “house of God” in vs. 1 would have referred to the temple (the focal point of devotion and meditation for the Israelite). What does the writer instruct people to do as they approach the temple? What are the two attitudes of approach contrasted in this verse (consider also Luke 8:16-18)?



 2. What practice or attitude are we to guard against in prayer (vs. 2)? Why is it important for us to avoid this practice according to this verse? Consider also Eccl. 7:9, Psalm 73:1-17.

 3. What does the abundance of words before God indicate about our inner character and heart (vs. 3,7)? What does it say about what we believe about God?

 4. What relationship does the writer see between our dreams and our words (vs. 3,7)?

 5. According to verses 4-6, what mistakes should we avoid when making vows or promises before God? How does God react to an inappropriate or unfulfilled vow?

 6. Does God care about the words we use? Why? Check out Matt. 5:22, 34-37, 12:34-37; Luke 12:10; Eph. 4:29; 5:4, James 3:1-12.

 ***Applying***

 1. How do you prepare yourself to approach God? Have you found it harder or easier to enter into worship during this time of COVID? What are the kinds of things we could do to approach Him with the proper attitude?



 2. How do you listen to God?

 3. Would you say you are “quick with your mouth” (vs. 2) when it comes to speaking to God? Or are you slow to speak to Him? How might you adjust your practice of prayer after reading this verse?

 4. Does verse 3 suggest that we should avoid extended periods of time speaking to God in prayer? What does this verse tell us about the way we should pray?

 5. How might the practice of making a vow be abused or implemented inappropriately? In what situations might we be tempted to make hasty and/or inappropriate vows to God?

 6. Has this passage challenged, comforted or convicted you? Explain.

***Memory Verse(s)***

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.



 Ecclesiastes 5:1 (NIV)

***Extra Resources***



* *“Sacrifice Of Fools” – Eccl. 5:1-7* – by Pastor Kyle Corbin (“Immanuel Church” website, May 31, 2020). Pastor Kyle helps us understand the nature of worship that is pleasing to God.
* *"Listening Prayer”* by Leanne Payne (Baker Books, 1999). Check this book out for some challenging and practical teaching on enriching your prayer life.
* *“The Heart of Worship”* by John Piper (from [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org), sermon given on Aug. 6, 2009). Piper defends the idea that we worship best when we are satisfied with God.