

# Ecclesiastes 8:14-15

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/eccl/eccl-8/ecclesiastes-814-15/>

*Although life is mysterious, Solomon has discovered by submitting to the God of Mystery, rather than trying to make sense of the world through human experience, he can enjoy and appreciate the best life has to offer.*

Solomon has yet another example of *futility*, the Hebrew word “hebel.” “Hebel” literally means “vaporous;” we try to grasp it but as we clench our fist, it slips through our fingers. Life does not make complete sense. It is enigmatic. A mystery. This is a classic example: *the righteous to whom it happens according to the wicked and the evil men to whom it happens according to the righteous*. In other words, sometimes the *righteous* get what the *wicked* deserve and the *wicked* get what the *righteous* deserve. It doesn't seem that it should be this way, but it sometimes is.

So what should we do? Solomon says he *commended pleasure*. Solomon has already explored pleasure in Chapter 2 and found it to be unsatisfactory. But here he uses the word *commend*, “shabach,” which has a root meaning of, “address in a loud tone.” It can also mean, “pacify.” As discussed in [Ecclesiastes 2:1](#) and [Ecclesiastes 3:12](#) the translation “*pleasure*” suggests an enjoyable feeling or experience that could have either a good or evil source. When our entire earthly experience (*life under the sun*) is taken into account, there is nothing better (*good*) for a *man* than to *eat* and to *drink* and to be *merry* (better, “rejoice”).

Solomon set out to discover if pleasure would provide meaning to life, but found it wanting. Pleasure is an insufficient foundation for life. But that doesn't mean it isn't good. Solomon *commended pleasure*, stating there is *nothing better*. Since life is *vanity*, *we should embrace pleasure*. *To eat, drink, and be merry* is the best we are going to get in this life. But we can only truly enjoy these pleasures through the lens of fearing God and trusting Him by faith.

Pleasure *will stand by him in his toils*. Pleasure is a reward for work. This is similar to [Ecclesiastes 3:9](#) where Solomon asked, “What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?” Then answered in [Ecclesiastes 3:12](#), “I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime.”

Solomon adds here that *pleasure* is an aid to help, to provide comfort in a confusing and troublesome world.

In [1 Timothy 6:17](#), Paul says something similar to this—God “richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.” Paul exhorts wealthy believers to be generous and share. Similar to [Ecclesiastes 3:12](#). The reality is that if we don’t do so, money ends up owning us instead of us owning it, as Solomon pointed out in [Ecclesiastes 5:10](#). But Paul also exhorts us to enjoy all that God has richly supplied. Life will have plenty of challenges and difficulties. But we shouldn’t spend time worrying about what might go wrong. Instead we should spend time enjoying the days we have.

Solomon reminds us that *God has given* these *days*. They are not meaningless; we are just unable to fully comprehend it all. And we are not to give up on seeking God. Even though frustrated in his exhaustive efforts to reconcile all the events—good and bad, just and unjust—of man’s earthly experience, Solomon concludes that he must still *enjoy* life as a good gift *God has given*.

#### **Biblical Text:**

**<sup>14</sup>There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.<sup>15</sup> So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.**