

The Inscrutable Question: Human Good Offers Only Temporary Solutions, Eccl 1:14-17; Divine Good Offers the Only Permanent Solutions, Phil 4:11-13; Eccl 12:13-14

- 26- This principle is practiced daily down at Glenhaven Youth Ranch. Many of the boys come in as unbelievers. Quentin and his staff offer a helping hand immediately. But they cannot hold out their helping hands forever. The boys need a Source of strength that will sustain them through life and then into eternity.
- 27- Consequently, salvation and Bible study become top priorities in the assistance given to them, otherwise the chaotic life in which they arrive will resume as soon as they leave the Ranch.
- 28- Human good may therefore be defined as the effort exerted by an unbeliever or a carnal believer in a sincere attempt to (1) improve one's own circumstances, (2) help to improve the plight of others who are perceived to be in need of their assistance, or (3) to improve one's environment, whether politically, ecologically, socially, spiritually, or economically.
- 29- Such efforts conducted in the energy of the flesh and therefore without the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and motivation from biblical principles, are not only temporary solutions but are also considered unworthy of eternal reward.
- 30- What is the thinking, the motivation, and the method of those who become involved in human good? The thinking behind the desire to improve one's own circumstances is founded in unhappiness. The motivation for action is to replace unhappiness with happiness. The method is to subjectively determine what is causing one's unhappiness and then to either alter or destroy it.
- 31- The Scripture reveals contrasting attitudes regarding the subject of happiness and they illustrate the difference between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint. King Solomon's autobiography called Ecclesiastes is a dissertation on his frantic search for happiness, an effort he characterized as "chasing after the wind" (NIV), or "vexation of spirit" (KJV):

Ecclesiastes 1:14 - [NASB] I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.

v. 15 - What is crooked cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

v. 16 - I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge."

v. 17 - And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind.

- 32- On the other hand, Paul discovered that happiness is an inner attribute based on one's relationship with Christ and as a result it deemphasizes whatever external pressures may exist:

Philippians 4:11 - Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

v. 12 - I know how to get along with humble means, and I know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

v. 13 - I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

- 33- Solomon sought happiness externally and became frustrated as his frantic search took him into every area of sublimation and human good. Yet he concludes his book with the secret to happiness that Paul relates in Philippians:

Ecclesiastes 12:13 - The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God [**reciprocal love motivation in the right column**] and keep His commandments [**advance by means of the Grace Apparatus for Perception in the left column**].

v. 14 - For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good [**divine good**] or evil [**human good and evil**].

- 34- And therefore, the Scripture is replete with examples of the failure of human good and the success of divine good. Paul makes it clear that the believer who subordinates himself to the first husband is unable to please God:

Romans 8:8 - Those who are in the flesh [**controlled by the sinful nature**] are not able to please God.

- 35- On another occasion Paul warns Corinthian believers who were under the mistaken impression that since they were saved they could sin with impunity:

1 Corinthians 10:12 - Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

- 36- We might add to this the warning that although believers are saved without doctrine they can through sin become enmeshed in the satanic system of human good and evil. Paul warned Timothy of this danger in:

1 Timothy 6:20 - O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you [**παράθηκη, paratheke: deposit**], avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge" [**human viewpoint**]—

v. 21 - which some have professed and thus gone astray [**ἀστοχέω, astocheo: deviate, swerve, depart or miss the mark**] from the faith [**into human good and evil**].

- 37- The horrific attitudes, opinions, philosophies, religions, and isms that emerge from **astocheo** thinking fill volumes and have led to the justification of oppressive regimes and Draconian laws throughout history.