

Just a Breath | Drawing Near

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

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He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income...

—Ecclesiastes 5:10a

I. Our lives consist of various habits, and those habits shape most of our life.

II. The Habit of Drawing Near (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7)

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

—John 17:3

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God.

—Ecclesiastes 5:1a

a. Be prayerful and careful when drawing near to God (5:1)

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil.

—Ecclesiastes 5:1

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. 2 Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few. 3 For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.

—Ecclesiastes 5:1-3

Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.

—Ecclesiastes 5:2

c. Listen more than you speak. (5:1-3)

“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

—Matthew 6:7-8

Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool.

—Ecclesiastes 5:3

Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God...

—Ecclesiastes 5:2a

When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. 5It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. 6Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

—Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

...Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

—Ecclesiastes 5:6b

d. Approach God with appropriate reverence and awe. (5:5-7)

...let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth.

—Ecclesiastes 5:2b

...God is the one you must fear.

—Ecclesiastes 5:7b

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

—Proverbs 9:10

III. Final Thoughts on Drawing Near

1. Only the Gospel makes this possible. (Heb. 4:14-16)
2. We can typically fool others, but we can never fool God. (Eccl. 5:2)
3. Grace is opposed to earning, not effort. (James 4:8)

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you...

—James 4:8a

Study Questions

1. Take a few minutes to identify some of the habits you practice every day. Think about those habits you've consciously established, as well as those that might be unconscious. Consider your spiritual habits. What would be considered your most important spiritual habit? Explain. Also, discuss why spiritual habits are so necessary if we're to grow in our intimacy with God.

1. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. Spend a few minutes discussing Solomon's instruction to "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God". Why do you think it's important that we're prayerful and careful when drawing near to God? Explain. What might be some of the dangers if we rush into God's presence without giving much thought to our hearts, motives, and even potential hypocrisies? Consider what it might mean for you to 'guard your steps' before drawing near to God (either corporately with other believers or personally in your alone time with God).
2. Solomon begins Ecclesiastes 5 by instructing us to 'Guard our steps' (v1); he then concludes this section (v7) with 'but God is the one you must fear'. How might our view of God (and thus fear of God) encourage us to be more intentional to guard our steps as we draw near to God? Explain. Also, what are some 'next steps' you might need to take to begin developing (and/or

maintaining) the healthy habit of regularly drawing near to God?
Be specific. Be sure to commit to pray for one another on these things.