

## WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: FACTOR TWO

### We Reap What We Sow: The Consequence/Chapter Three: Life's Futility

Life isn't always fair. Some people literally or figuratively "get away with murder." Others are never properly rewarded for their faithful and diligent efforts. The inequities and injustices of this present earthly life are undeniable. They can confuse and frustrate us, at times weighing us down with frustration and despair. Yet we are told in the Word of God that "we reap what we sow." Why does it seem as if this principle is so often out of order? One of the wisest men who ever lived, King Solomon, tried to make sense of it all, eloquently stating his opinions and conclusions in the book of Ecclesiastes.

As Solomon considered the nature of this present life, his overall observation was, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." In other words, even for someone as wise as Solomon, life didn't make sense. It was meaningless. Yet this wise man didn't arrive at such a verdict in a casual and detached manner. He tells us in Ecclesiastes 1:13 that he made it his goal, his personal priority, to understand the nature of our current earthly life. It meant plunging himself into the pursuit of material success and sensual pleasure, as well as becoming as wise as he could possibly be. The impact this pursuit had upon him is recorded in Ecclesiastes 2:17 –

**"So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind."**

Simply put, King Solomon's conclusion was that even life at its best, which he certainly experienced, is of no lasting value (2:11). Solomon gained this profound insight as he came to grips with two elements of our fallen existence that undermine the rule of reaping what we sow. First, as he attempts to comprehend and cope with the dysfunctional world in which he lived, Solomon is overwhelmed by the *reality of death*. In addition, he finds himself frustrated with the *necessity of delay*. Both factors have an adverse effect on how the reap/sow dynamic functions in our present world, which only intensifies the suffering that each of us must face. He establishes this connection between death and the "meaninglessness of life," in Ecclesiastes 9:2-3 –

**"It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead."**

Solomon's point is clear. Death has a subversive effect on the connection between our behavior and the consequences which emerge from it. Death wipes away the distinctions that would naturally result from people fully reaping what they sow. How? Everyone ends up dead! So why should it matter how we live? Why exert the extra effort to do what is good and right? Let's just eat and drink for tomorrow we die. The *reality of death* does seem to make our present life dysfunctional and void of any lasting value or meaning. Especially when it is coupled with the *necessity of delay*, which we will consider next.