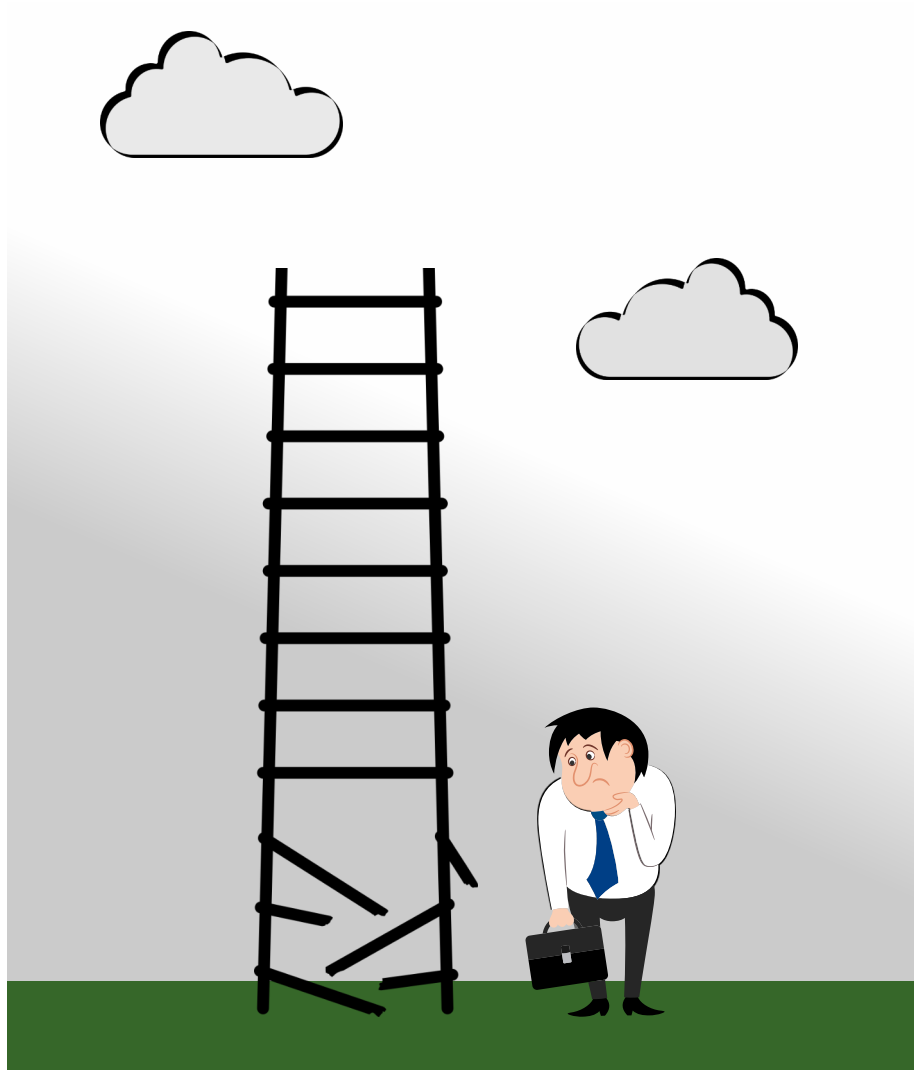


# THE GRIEVOUS EVIL OF FAILED EXPECTATIONS

(GETTING TO THE TOP OF YOUR LADDER ONLY TO REALIZE THAT YOUR LADDER DOESN'T GO TO THE TOP)



## VICTORY OVER FAILED EXPECTATIONS THROUGH JESUS SON OF GOD

FOR EVERY CHILD OF GOD DEFEATS THIS EVIL WORLD, AND WE ACHIEVE THIS VICTORY THROUGH OUR FAITH. AND WHO CAN WIN THIS BATTLE AGAINST THE WORLD? ONLY THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.

(1 John 5:4-5 NLT)

(NO LADDER REQUIRED)

## OUTLINE ... (Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 ESV)

### 1. *It is a grievous evil* when fulfilled desires “under the sun” end without joy and leave a person filled with emptiness and damage to the soul, 6:1-2.

- (Ecclesiastes 6:1–2 ESV) There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: 2 a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that **he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them**, but a stranger enjoys them. **This is vanity; it is a grievous evil.**

This grievous evil is a common affliction—a widespread evil—of those who live under the sun. It wounds and weakens the soul of the person who finally “gets everything he always wanted and dreamed of” but is unable to enjoy these things.

***The facts of the matter ...*** God blesses people with wealth, possessions and honor.

- (James 1:17a ESV) **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above**, coming down from the Father of lights.

***The baffling nature of the matter ...*** To some God gives the power to enjoy these things and to some he does not.

- (Ecclesiastes 5:19 ESV) Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions **and power to enjoy them**, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—**this is the gift** of God.

***In summary of the matter ...*** it is a common affliction on the children of men that some have all the good things in life that should bring meaning and joy ... but meaning and joy remain an empty promise. And now a stranger enjoys what he had hoped would bring him joy. This is a sickening tragedy—a grievous evil.

### EXCURSUS: WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

Ultimate joy—*abundant life*—is promised only through Jesus Christ to the redeemed. In his providence God may bless both the saved and the unsaved with the abundance of this earth by his common grace. We might say that we live on one of two life tracks “under the sun” ... we live on the “creation” track or we live on the “redemption” track ...

### I. LIFE ON THE “CREATION” TRACK ... *THE REALM OF THE UNSAVED* ...

- A. The person on the creation track lives **only** “under the sun”—apart from God and under his condemnation.
- B. This person qualifies only for the blessings of God which come to a person by virtue of his or her being a human who lives on the planet—common grace.
  - (Matthew 5:45 ESV) [God] ... **makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

#### **LIFE ON THE CREATION TRACK ...**

Most of us taste the blessings of God every day in the beauty of this earth and in the daily provision of food, housing, entertainment, physical activity, friendships, jobs and family. In fact, with many of us, even as Christians, the good stuff is so good, so satisfying, that we overlook God’s best. And even though grass and plants and trees are great, they are merely part of God’s provision, the part we can enjoy on earth whether we know God or not.

I call this “life on the creation track” and “life on the creation track” can be absolutely wonderful—the joy of being on the water in the summer, camping in the mountains, the newest album by your favorite group, the latest 3-D movie experience, sitting under the backyard trees drinking a glass of sun tea listening to the birds, watching the squirrels and the rabbits, enjoying a weekend fishing outing with the boys, smelling freshly cut grass, driving your convertible with the top down, family and friends, intimate moments with your spouse. The list of things to enjoy on the creation track is very, very long and God is responsible for it all.

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- C. A person on the creation track may at some point get everything he wants in life, but he will never find true joy or satisfaction for his soul.
- D. The only hope for this person is for God to transfer him from the creation track to the redemption track.

This person is lost in the universe and will never find his way to joy. His only hope is for God to intervene—to find him and to rescue him from his lost state. He has no way of knowing what truly brings joy and satisfies the soul ... and that his ultimate purpose at creation was the glory of God.

## II. LIFE ON THE "REDEMPTION" TRACK ... THE REALM OF THE SAVED ...

A. A person living on the redemption track has been transferred from the creation track and qualifies for everything God has to offer now and forever.

- (Colossians 1:12–14 ESV) Giving thanks to the Father, **who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.** 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and **transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,** 14 **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**
- (Ephesians 1:3 ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.**

### ETERNAL LIFE ON THE REDEMPTION TRACK ...

Even the best case scenario for life on the creation track ends in a fiery crash. We will see that the really good stuff—lasting hope and the blessing of living forever with God—comes on the redemption track. The redemption track stands in stark contrast to the creation track, as access to the redemption track requires the saving work of Jesus Christ due to the sin problem that Adam and Eve introduced to the world in Eden. Their sin brought spiritual death (separation from God), so since the time of the rebellion in Eden, people need an ambassador, a go-between for access to God. We need someone who can bridge the gap and make a way for us to once again taste God's best, to not be afraid in his presence, to not face condemnation. We needed someone who could lead us beyond our limitations and our pretense to capture and live God's original purpose.

We needed a Savior, a Shepherd. So God sent himself in human form. You may have heard of him? His name is Jesus.

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B. Those who live on the redemption track have been given access to the holy words of God that reveal the path to joy.

- (Psalm 16:11 ESV) **You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy;** at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

C. Those living on the redemption track have been

given the ability to receive and live by these words.

D. The holy words reveal what is good for a person and what will happen after he is gone.

E. The holy words of God teach us that at creation we were designed to "want" God above all else—to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength.

- (Deuteronomy 6:5–6 ESV) **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.** 6 And these words that I command you today **shall be on your heart.**
- (Mark 12:28–30 ESV) And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 **And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.**'"

F. So when we obey the holy words and love God first and foremost we find our heart's desire as we delight ourselves in the LORD.

- (Psalm 37:4 ESV) Delight yourself in the LORD, **and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

G. Those on the redemption track find our true treasure in and through the holy words of God.

- (Matthew 6:19–21 NLT) **Don't store up treasures here on earth,** where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 **Store your treasures in heaven,** where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 21 **Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.**
- (Psalm 1:1–2 ESV) Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 **but his delight is in the law of the LORD,** and on his law he meditates day and night.
- (Psalm 37:23 NIV) **The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him.**
- (Psalm 119:24 ESV) **Your testimonies are my delight;** they are my counselors.

- (Psalm 119:35–37 ESV) **Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.** 36 Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! 37 **Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.**
- (Psalm 119:140–143 NIV) Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them. 141 Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget your precepts. 142 Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true. 143 **Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands give me delight.**

#### H. Traveling on the redemption track we find great joy.

- (Isaiah 29:19 NLT) **The humble will be filled with fresh joy from the LORD.** The poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
- (John 17:13 ESV) But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, **that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.**
- (Romans 14:17 ESV) For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking **but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**
- (Romans 15:13 ESV) **May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,** so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
- (Galatians 5:22a ESV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.**
- (Jude 24–25 ESV) Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling **and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,** 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
- (1 Peter 1:6–8 ESV) **In this you rejoice,** though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 **Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.**

2. ***It is a grievous evil* that what many regard as the chief joys of life—children and long life—neither satisfy nor provide rest for the soul, 6:3-6.**

- (Ecclesiastes 6:3–6 ESV) If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, **but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things,** and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. 5 Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. 6 Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, **yet enjoy no good**—do not all go to the one place?

3. ***It is a grievous evil* that a person labors and toils to satisfy the insatiable, unquenchable human appetite, 6:7-9.**

- (Ecclesiastes 6:7–9 ESV) All the toil of man is for his mouth, **yet his appetite is not satisfied.** 8 For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? 9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

4. ***It is a grievous evil* to succumb to the weight of defeat against the immovable ways and established patterns of life on earth, 6:10-12.**

- (Ecclesiastes 6:10–12 ESV) Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. 11 The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man? 12 **For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?**