

C. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH GOD UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES 4:1-16

1. How to work under oppression 4:1-3

TEXT 4:1-3

- 1 Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them.
- 2 So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living.
- 3 But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:1-3

84. What new inequity does Solomon now observe?
85. What qualifying phrase (v. 1) places the restrictions on this activity?
86. Give evidence that the oppression was severe.
87. What increased the tragedy of the oppression?
88. Did anyone comfort the oppressed?
89. Who received congratulations? Why?
90. Who is better off than either the dead or the living?
91. What qualifying phrase appears again in verse three?

PARAPHRASE 4:1-3

Then I turned to look closely at all the acts of oppression under the sun. Just as I had previously been confronted with the problem of corruption of justice, so now I see the oppression

of the helpless. I witnessed the tears of the oppressed. What compounds their tragedy is that they have no one to comfort them, and the authority is on the side of the oppressor. They themselves have no avenger. Both of these inequities were foremost in my mind, so I sang the praises of the ones already dead. I said, "Congratulations to the dead who died long ago for they are more fortunate than the living who are still alive." Then it occurred to me that the one who is truly the fortunate one is neither the dead nor the living, but the one who has never existed. He is better off than both of them because his mind has not been filled with the knowledge of the evil activities done under the sun.

COMMENT 4:1-3

v. 1 "I looked again" indicates that he is considering the same theme in this section that he was discussing in chapter three. The "again" implies that a new illustration of injustice or the inequities of life is under consideration. On two occasions the qualifying phrase "under the sun" appears in these three verses which indicates that what one observes is apart from heavenly values. The act of social injustice that now arrests Solomon's attention illustrates the vanity of all earthly things and endeavors.

One is confronted with a very basic problem that is common to all men of every age: Why is it that wicked men prosper and often have the authority on their side, while the righteous are often poor and suffer oppression? Since this is often the situation, and it appears to be so in Israel at this time, one is lead to the erroneous conclusion that wickedness pays profitable dividends while godliness results in poverty and affliction. If one interprets the meaning apart from the "heavenly values," the conclusions could indeed be very dismal. The extreme statements of the Preacher in these three verses must be understood in this light. If one fails to interpret his observations in the light of the "under the sun" restrictions, he finds the

Preacher contradicting himself later on in his message. However, Solomon knew what we know about the justice of God. He knew that God is patient, long-suffering and correct in all of His dealing with men. It is from this vantage point that he writes, "Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God" (8:12, 13).

Because of similar circumstances today, one of the most difficult things is for the Christian to keep his priorities in order. There are certain values which belong within the inner circle, next to the heart, in one's life. At the same time, there are "things" which must be kept on the periphery, and constantly challenged to keep them from eroding the truer values or invading the inner circle where "things" have no claim. Yet, how many people do you know who are living purposeless lives simply because they have allowed themselves to be deceived by the riches of this world, or the pleasures derived from participation in such evil deeds of injustice that meet the Preacher's searching eyes in our text? The extreme observations of verses two and three would be the most plausible in the world if this life were all there is to living. The young man struck down in the prime of his life; the young mother left without guardian, provider or companion; the poor, neglected and often persecuted by wicked men who grow fat from withholding what should be shared with the less-fortunate, or even at times what is rightfully theirs; they all cry out to the emptiness of living and the futility of the life that thousands must endure on the face of the earth. However, such was the situation described in detail by James (5:1-6), and in view of all that Jesus Christ means to the Christian he was able to admonish them to steadfastness and joy with the words, "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door" (James 5:8, 9).

What is the oppression? In 5:8 we are instructed again not to be "shocked" by such oppression as it may very well be commonplace among us. In any system where men govern men, authority is often corrupted. It may be that in carrying out the necessary instructions of the king in accomplishing his great works (cf. 2:1-11), that the result was that which the Preacher now observes. There were many areas where authority could be violated and the process of graft take place. With a king so obsessed with the desire for personal pleasure, many such violations of justice could go unnoticed throughout the land.

The intensity, and perhaps widespread influence, of the oppression was evident in the actual tears of the poor. If they only had a just man who was in an authoritative position to plead their cause. But no! The authority is on the side of those who are persecuting them. They might turn to one another for some word of encouragement, but this would be hurt turning to hurt. They needed healing. Yet, there was no one to heal them.

It is not a picture of a merciless tyrant holding all the people under the authority of his rule. It is rather the picture of a thoughtless king who has only his own interest at heart and closes his eyes to the cries of the innocent who are trampled in his pursuit of pleasure and personal satisfaction. Perhaps enough people in the land were enjoying the superfluity, or overflow, of the king's wealth. In this case those who suffered were not numerous enough to mount any meaningful rebellion against the wickedness of those in high places.

v. 2 When the Preacher contemplated such a sight, he quickly decided that the fortunate ones were those who have already died and do not have to share in this travesty of justice. Congratulating the dead is a rather dramatic, picturesque description demonstrating that such behaviour would actually be humorous if it were not so serious.

v. 3 Upon more serious contemplation, he decided that there is one who is better off than either the living or the dead, and that is the individual who has never been born! He is not

speaking of abortion in order to shut out the life of one before he sees the light of day, but rather the one never conceived or possibly miscarried (6:3). Such a one will never have to feast his eyes upon the evil activities taking place in the midst of what has once been a nation noted for her justice and righteousness.

FACT QUESTIONS 4:1-3

154. What does "I looked again" indicate?
155. Does he consider his observations in the light of heavenly values? Discuss.
156. What "basic problem" is under consideration here?
157. What truth, shared by the Christian, does Solomon explain in 8:12, 13?
158. Write out a priority list for yourself as you are living life today? Would it be arranged differently if all "things" were removed from the top?
159. What does James teach us that motivates toward steadfastness?
160. What is the oppression spoken of in verse one?
161. How could such oppression be explained in the time of Solomon?
162. Why could not the oppressed people organize their forces to protest the evil?
163. Did the oppressed have even one just man to plead their cause?
164. Who had the authority?
165. Who were the truly fortunate ones? (Cf. v. 2)
166. Is abortion recommended by Solomon in verse three?
167. What evil thing will never be witnessed by the unborn?

2. Keep your motive for work pure. 4:4-6

TEXT 4:4-6

- 4 And I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.
- 5 The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.
- 6 One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:4-6

92. What motivates the labor and the development of skill?
93. When one labors and develops skills for this reason, it is all what?
94. The fool in this case is a fool because he is what?
95. He actually tries to live off of what?
96. If verse six is the statement of the lazy fool, what is he actually saying?
97. If verse six is the observation and conclusion of Solomon, what is he saying?

PARAPHRASE 4:4-6

I noticed something else that is empty and just like striving after the wind. There is a man jealous over the success in this world of his fellow man. He will practically kill himself to keep up with his neighbor. He works and develops his skills, and is motivated solely by the desire to keep up or surpass his neighbor's success. This type of rivalry is futile. On the other hand, there is the foolish, lazy man who lies down, folds his hands and lives off his own flesh. I said, "It is better to have a quiet moment and one handful of rest than to have two handfuls if it is acquired by such futile rivalry as I have seen."

COMMENT 4:4-6

Another example of the futility of life now comes into the Preacher's view. Is the goal of life to become the most successful person in your community? Many today would say yes. At least their activities betray that desire. Human nature hasn't changed. The clear-cut picture of rivalry serving as the motivating factor for work evidently possessed the hearts of men in Solomon's day as it does today.

v. 4 It has been asked, "If the motive is tainted, how can the fruit actually satisfy?" This is the case here. Since it stems from a jealous spirit, and a desire to excel one's neighbor that the individual labors, he discovers that his accomplishment is unrewarding. Once he can honestly say, "I have accomplished more, and gathered and collected more than those around me," what does it really mean? The satisfaction is very fleeting. The term "skill" suggests that one spends hours in developing the ability to produce something that will bring an earthly profit. He is willing to labor tirelessly and become expert in his affairs, but since it was motivated by an unworthy desire, it accomplishes nothing.

v. 5 By "fool" we are to understand a sluggard or stupid person. He is in contrast to the individual who works skillfully as the fool does not have the wisdom to develop expertise in any area. His slothfulness, that leads him to the comfort of the couch, and causes him to fold his hands and sleep during the day-light hours, is despicable, but he concludes that he isn't any worse off than the wise man who is improperly motivated to such extreme industry. "Consumes his own flesh" is not a reference to cannibalistic practices, but the excess energy of his body is consumed through indolence rather than productive work.

v. 6 The problem confronted in this verse is not one of translation, but rather to whom should the statement be attributed? Is it spoken by the fool or the one writing the book? If it is the testimony of the fool, he is actually saying that he will not become conspirator in such folly as driving himself

to working day and night just to keep pace with his neighbor! On the other hand, if the Preacher is making the remark (cf. the Paraphrase, v. 6), then the statement is to be interpreted as somewhat of a compromise between the two extremes and is more in harmony with the stated conclusions of the book (cf. 3:12, 22). The fool has not chosen the wiser way as both men under consideration reach the same conclusion. Slothfulness and improperly motivated industry are both unrewarding and vain. "One hand full of rest" could easily be understood as saying, "Don't get on the treadmill. Just take life day-by-day and rejoice and do good in your lifetime."

FACT QUESTIONS 4:4-6

168. What motivated the man to labor and develop his skills?
169. Is the fruit of one's life satisfying if the motivation is tainted? Discuss.
170. What does "skill" suggest that is not suggested by labor?
171. Why could not the fool be skillful?
172. How should one explain the statement, "consumes his own flesh?"
173. What is the problem in understanding verse six?
174. If it is the fool who is speaking in this verse, what is he saying?
175. If the verse is to be understood as another conclusion of Solomon, which is in harmony with his former conclusions, what is Solomon saying? Discuss.

3. Attain your riches for practical good. 4:7-12

TEXT 4:7-12

- 7 Then I looked again at vanity under the sun.
- 8 There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his

labor. Indeed his eyes were not satisfied with riches and he never asked, "And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?" This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.

- 9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.
- 10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.
- 11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?
- 12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:7-12

98. Solomon calls the man's labor what?
99. What motivated the man to labor so tirelessly?
100. What did he fail to ask?
101. Were his eyes ever satisfied with his riches?
102. In what kind of a task was he involved?
103. What important thing did he deprive himself of because of his labor?
104. List the four advantages given in this section of companionship.
105. What is the lesson taught by the "cord of three strands?"
106. Do you think loneliness is an appropriate theme for this section? Discuss.

PARAPHRASE 4:7-12

I saw still another example of futility and unrewarding labor under the sun. I saw a man who lived a solitary life as he did not have a family. He had neither son nor brother. Yet, he labored endlessly and was never satisfied with the wealth he

accumulated. He never stopped and asked of himself, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of contentment?" His life was lonely, empty and miserable. He experienced the affliction of the grievous task which God allows to come to men who so labor under the sun.

Two are better than one because they prove in many different ways to be an advantage to each other. One reward for laboring together is obvious: if either one falls, his companion will help him up. But consider the tragedy of the one who falls and has no one to help him up. Will his riches come to his rescue? Consider another example. If two sleep together, they keep warm; but what of the lonely man who has no wife? Can one be warm alone? In many situations where one may be overpowered by adversaries, it would be possible for two to resist such and escape unharmed. Common sense teaches that a cord of three strands is not broken quickly.

COMMENT 4:7-12

Although we suggest here that the theme is that riches should be used for practical good, there is also the theme that friends or companions may be of much greater value than wealth. These two ideas run concurrently through these verses. It is obvious that money will not bring comfort, warmth, protection, companionship, or personal satisfaction. Yet, men have always faced the temptation to accumulate wealth for wealth's sake. This illustration is justifiable in the Preacher's mind as it represents a major area of concern in every age. It was typical of those who lived when Jesus was on the earth in the flesh. Indeed it was Jesus who taught us that riches are deceitful (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19). They will lead one to believe that they bring lasting fulfillment and satisfaction, while in reality no amount of riches will do that. In addition, Jesus taught that they may have an adverse effect and not only fail to satisfy but shut out or "choke" the very means by which one can find personal enjoyment. As the reader shall

see, much of what Solomon says in the following two chapters simply amplifies this same theme.

v. 7 It is noteworthy that he labels such concern for wealth "vanity." He knows. He was not one to take opinion polls or inquire of rich friends what such a desire for money and possessions did to their lives. He wanted first-hand information. He wanted to speak authoritatively on the subject so he became the richest man of his day. Yet, he calls it unfulfilling and empty. Of course, there is the ever-present safeguard for his observation. He is talking from the "under the sun" viewpoint. There is neither virtue in poverty nor evil in wealth. It is the attitude one has toward riches that becomes the issue.

v. 8 Note the improper attitudes of the one he describes. (1) He was not gathering a fortune with a view to the security of an heir or companion. (2) There was no end to his labor. His sole purpose in life was to collect more and more riches. (3) He became exceedingly wealthy, and yet he was never satisfied with the amount he had collected. (4) He deprived himself of what might have been meaningful pleasures to him. Money appears to satisfy because it seems to be saying that it is the answer to every problem, but perhaps this is the very deceitfulness that Jesus was talking about. Rather than finding that it resolves one's problems, it becomes the very entanglement that produces loneliness, jealousy, frustration, worry and distrust. Numerous present-day examples of extremely wealthy men could easily be given as vivid illustrations of this very truth. The man never stopped and asked himself, "And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?" His attitude was not one of compassionate, benevolent concern. It rather spoke to selfishness and greed. Thus, it is truly empty and a grievous task.

v. 9 It appears that Solomon has now turned to the value of companionship rather than riches. However, he is only illustrating that riches are of value if they are properly acquired and subsequently shared with a friend. In verse nine the idea of "a good return" suggests a profit. This is the basic question before him. Since the accumulation of wealth, regardless of

how much, does not bring satisfaction or produce a profit when it is collected with the improper attitude, what does? A friend does. As a matter of fact, wealth is an improper choice to make if it robs you of your friends. There are many choices in life which are based on choosing between two things when it is obvious that one cannot have both simultaneously. He cannot isolate himself with his riches thinking this will bring him enjoyment and at the same time divide his riches with a friend. Life is just that way. In his hour of need, the rich man turns to his fortune for help only to realize what James meant when he wrote: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire" (James 5:1-3). But it is different with a friend. While it is true that two would have a greater return for their labor than one, this is obviously not the intent of the statement. One can use only so much wealth and then everything beyond this becomes excessive. The rich man of verse eight was undoubtedly past this point. It moves the idea of profit or "return" into the area of the spiritual or emotional where one shares in the value of a personal friend.

v. 10 Undoubtedly the intention is to refer back to the miser with the statement—"But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up." In what sense does he fall? The most obvious is a physical fall which could occur on the dangerous and narrow roads of Palestine. In such a case, to have a companion to assist would be of great value. The idea may just as well be applied to moral falls and thus one would have a friend indeed if he encouraged and led one back to repentance (James 5:19, 20). The idea, however, which seems to best fit the context would be a "financial collapse." When one sees his fortune slip from his hands quickly, which occurs often without warning, then it is important to have a friend come to the rescue. Many men have experienced the loss of financial security and terminated their own lives because

no friend was standing close by with a helping hand. When a man purposely shuts out close friends because he has no time to cultivate them, or he intentionally remains aloof of meeting needs or ministering to those in lesser circumstances than himself, he has made the choice of a fool. Jesus recognized the wisdom of choosing the better part when he sent his followers out "two by two" instructing them that they should not be concerned for the physical things of life (Luke 10:1, 4).

v. 11 Once again the miser is in the center of the stage. How can "one" be warm alone? It is obvious that he has sufficient resources to purchase warm coverings for his bed, but this doesn't seem to be the implication of the verse. There is an inner warmth that comes because of close friendship. One shares in kindred goals and intents of the heart. It is possible that Solomon could have reference to poor circulation in old age and the warmth of a physical body stimulates circulation and produces some comfort in such circumstances. Solomon knew of his father's experience with Abishag who was selected purposely to attend the king and lie with David to keep him warm (I Kings 1:1-4).

v. 12 The term "alone" appears again to indicate that the rich man who stands by himself is the common denominator for this illustration too. The implication of the "threefold cord" is that if one friend is of greater value than riches, then there is truly great strength in having two genuine, trusted friends. Many things may overpower an individual, but in like manner those who willingly come to our rescue may deliver us from many different kinds of circumstances. Endless examples could be given to illustrate this truth. The tragedy here is that regardless of the opposition or the adversary, the man doesn't have a single friend to assist him in his need. Even when the dust of battle clears and you know you and your friends have lost, there is often warmth and inner peace in realizing that you had those who cared and personally sacrificed of themselves or possessions to defend you. Any such allusion in this verse to the Godhead or the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by the reference to the threefold cord would be out of harmony

with the context and purpose of the book. It cannot be denied that if God is for us, no one can stand against us (Romans 8:31), and we have no greater friend than Jesus (John 15:14, 15), but these are New Testament applications which are only based on principles that are taught in this text. Of course, the Christian rejoices and thanks God for the truth!

It is obvious that each of the verses in this section is related. The miser is the principle character and the vanity of riches is the central theme. Much is said for true friendship. It is a simple matter once again of a proper arrangement of one's priorities in life. Many people are obsessed with money and other forms of riches. Nearly everyone wants more than he presently possesses. It is an important lesson that overrides the examples and observations, and it is a lesson that will appear many times before the Preacher is completed with his message. One should be impressed with the threat a wrong attitude toward wealth is to the soul. A prayer of thanksgiving should be offered to God for constantly placing the signposts before our eyes to keep us from the deceitfulness of riches and forewarning us that they may easily choke out the Word of life.

FACT QUESTIONS 4:7-12

176. Identify the two themes which are developed concurrently in this passage?
177. In what way are riches deceitful?
178. What is meant by the statement that "there is neither virtue in poverty nor evil in wealth?"
179. What four improper attitudes did the miser possess?
180. What will riches produce when they are improperly collected?
181. What is Solomon illustrating in verse nine?
182. What does the rich man turn to in his hour of need? Will he find comfort?
183. What is most likely meant by "return" in verse nine? Why is money not intended?

184. Identify who is intended by "one who falls"?
185. What three possibilities could be meant by "falls"?
186. Which one do you think best answers the context? Discuss.
187. Name the three ways one may be kept warm.
188. What is the real tragedy of the man who stands alone?
189. Is the "threefold cord" intended to be an allusion to the Godhead? Discuss.
190. Who is the principal character in this section?
191. What is the central theme?
192. For what should a Christian constantly thank God?

4. Keep in mind that prestigious positions will soon be forgotten. 4:13-16

TEXT 4:13-16

- 13 A poor, yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction.
- 14 For he has come out of prison to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.
- 15 I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him.
- 16 There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is vanity and striving after wind.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:13-16

107. What adjectives describe the "lad"? In contrast, how is the king described?
108. What has the king lost the ability to do?
109. Under what circumstances was the lad born?
110. Where did he come from to become king?
111. To whom did the "throng" give allegiance?
112. What will happen to the popularity of the lad who became

king?

113. Such an experience is described in what two ways (v. 16)?

PARAPHRASE 4:13-16

A young man, poor in earthly treasures but rich in wisdom, is better than a king, if the king is old and foolish and will no longer listen to reason or heed the warning of his counselors. Not only does the young lad rise from poverty to become king in the very land where he was born, but he comes out of prison to assume the highest position in the land. The young man's popularity was great. As successor to the throne, he drew multitudes to his side. He now stands in the former king's stead and his name is praised throughout the land. As great as he was in the eyes of his followers, and as many as sang his praises in his hour of triumph, there is tragedy which befell him too. The next generation will not rejoice in him. They will care nothing about him. I view this as another example of futility and grasping at the wind.

COMMENT 4:13-16

Although the subject changes from the deceitfulness of riches to the fleeting popularity of even a king, the same general lesson is pursued. Solomon is setting forth argument after argument to substantiate the fact that life lived under the sun is futile. The example is of the poor lad who assumes leadership of the land and is first praised and then forgotten. Solomon explains it once again in detail and then identifies such activity as "vanity and striving after wind." The example not only reveals the lack of personal fulfillment on the part of the former king and the lad who became king, but it also reveals the fickle attitude of citizens of the kingdom. One is immediately reminded of the behaviour of the Jews in the days of Jesus when at one moment they are proclaiming Him as "the Son of David,"

and the one who comes "in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9), and shortly after the same people are crying for his blood (Matthew 26:66).

Many have interpreted this section as prophetic, stating that the fulfillment came upon Solomon's death and the coming of Jeroboam to reign over the ten tribes to the north. (Cf. discussion on 2:18) While the parallel is evident and one would not want to argue strenuously against such an interpretation, the important lesson in this section should not be overlooked. Of course, if Solomon is the king who is old and foolish, and Jeroboam is the one who comes out of prison (figurative for his exile in Egypt), then the futility of the entire experience becomes much more exasperating to Solomon. It would not take much imagination to hear him declare, "Vanity! Vanity! Vanity!"

v. 13 The two extremes are clearly stated. The lad is poor, in prison, yet wise. The king is old, foolish and set in his ways. The country will be better served by the lad than the king. It is possible that the situation could be an historical one unknown to us today but clearly seen by those in the days of Solomon. A neighboring country could have just experienced such a change of rule. But neither is this important to the understanding of the text.

The present king will no longer accept advice or counsel. Undoubtedly he began his rule humbly which is typical of many in the early days of control. However he has grown self-sufficient and no longer will he entertain ideas or suggestions. The term "kesil" (foolish) actually means he proved himself to be a stupid fool. Although there are three words in the Hebrew translated "fool" in our language, this particular one is used some 24 times in Proverbs alone. It is not a complimentary term as one may conclude by reading the references where it is used in Ecclesiastes: 2:14, 15, 16; 4:5, 13; 6:8; 7:6; 10:12, 15.

It does not necessarily follow that it is because of the wisdom on the part of the young man, through crafty and cunning ways, that he became king. It is just that the land is better

off with such a lad who is wise than a king who has become foolish.

v. 14 It is important to Solomon's conclusion that he demonstrate the extremes. In this verse he pictures the lad as having been shut up in prison. One wonders if the king saw him as a threat to his throne and had him imprisoned. On the other hand, he was born in the most unlikely home to ascend to the throne. He was born a citizen of the land, but in very poor circumstances. To realize that one can rise from unlikely circumstances to become king, to supplant one who already has control, demonstrates the lack of security of life even in the highest office of the land. This is what Solomon intended to communicate to his readers.

v. 15 For a little while the new king will bask in the moment of triumph. He may have dreams of enduring, being remembered and his name proclaimed throughout the land for the remainder of his days, but such a dream will not become a reality under the sun! His success, like the miser's money, glistens only when the sun shines. Once the fleeting moment of success is past and the multitudes realize that what they have is another human being like themselves, his popularity will be a thing of the past.

v. 16 So typical of the word vanity is this verse. In one short breath one reads of the multitude thronging to his side, singing his praises and leading him to believe that he is indeed their redeemer. In the same short verse, however, the scene has changed completely and we picture the very next generation asking, "Who is he?" They do not have the same respect for him and are no longer happy or satisfied with his rule. The final utterance of the Preacher in this section is the oft-repeated conclusion of all matters experienced under the sun. He declares, "This too is vanity!"

FACT QUESTIONS 4:13-16

193. What general lesson does the example of the "lad" teach us?

194. Why did the citizens of the country accept the young lad? Why later was he rejected?
195. Why was the first king rejected?
196. How does Solomon identify this whole affair?
197. If the lad who came "out of prison" is to be understood in a prophetic sense, who would he be, and where did he come from? Discuss.
198. How would this same verse be explained if it were interpreted historically?
199. What is the meaning of the Hebrew term "kesil"?
200. In the text, on whom does this term reflect?
201. What demonstrates the insecurity of the king's office?
202. The miser's money and the young lad's success have what in common?
203. What is Solomon's final comment in this section?

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE WORK OF WORSHIP 5:1-9

1. Watch your step in God's house. 5:1a

TEXT 5:1a

1a Guard your steps as you go to the house of God,

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:1a

114. Since vanity is still under consideration, where are we now to guard against it?
115. What would the house of God be in Solomon's day?
116. Why should one guard his steps when going to the temple?

PARAPHRASE 5:1a

Watch your step when you come to the temple. Remember it is God's house.