

# Spending the Good Life

"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."<sup>2</sup> What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?<sup>3</sup> Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever.<sup>4</sup> The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.<sup>5</sup> The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.<sup>6</sup> All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.<sup>7</sup> All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.<sup>8</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:2-8

## You are not the center of the universe!

Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.<sup>10</sup> As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them?<sup>11</sup> The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.<sup>12</sup> I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner,<sup>13</sup> or wealth lost through some misfortune, so that when he has a son there is nothing left for him.<sup>14</sup> Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand.<sup>15</sup> This too is a grievous evil: As a man comes, so he departs, and what does he gain, since he toils for the wind?<sup>16</sup> All his days he eats in darkness, with great frustration, affliction and anger.<sup>17</sup> Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him—for this is his lot.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work—this is a gift of God.<sup>19</sup> He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.<sup>20</sup> Ecclesiastes 5:10-20

## 2. Enjoy the simple pleasures of life.

"Can money buy happiness? A large body of cross-sectional survey research has demonstrated that income has a reliable, but surprisingly weak, effect on happiness within nations, particularly once basic needs are met. Indeed, although real incomes have surged dramatically in recent decades, happiness levels have remained largely flat within developed countries across time. One of the most intriguing explanations for this counterintuitive finding is that people often pour their increased wealth into pursuits that provide little in the way of lasting happiness, such as purchasing costly consumer goods. An emerging challenge, then, is to identify whether and how disposable income might be used to increase happiness. Ironically, the potential for money to increase happiness may be subverted by the kinds of choices that thinking about money promotes; the mere thought of having money makes people less likely to help acquaintances, to donate to charity, or to choose to spend time with others, precisely the kinds of behaviors that are strongly associated with happiness. At the same time, although thinking about money may drive people away from prosocial behavior, money can also provide a powerful vehicle for accomplishing such prosocial goals. We suggest that using money in this fashion – investing income in others rather than oneself – may have measurable benefits for one's own happiness."  
-sciencemag.org March 21 2008 "Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness"

Light is sweet, and it pleases the eyes to see the sun.<sup>7</sup> However many years a man may live, let him enjoy them all. But let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything to come is meaningless.<sup>8</sup> Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment.<sup>9</sup> So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigor are meaningless.<sup>10</sup> Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them".<sup>11</sup> Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:1

## Spend your life on things that last.

- What does this mean for me?
- Live in this Holy tension.
  - Get a spending plan.
  - Be Thankful.

### Resources:

Total Money Make Over. By Dave Ramsey