

Ecclesiastes 5:18-19 and 9:7-12

Many people think enjoy life in general is opposite of work hard. You might ask “how do you define enjoy life and work hard?”, and each one might have a different answer. I was able to enjoy life and work hard at the same time for many years now since I truly understood the Bible’s teaching on this subject years ago.

1.) Enjoy life

a. **Material enjoyment**

Ecc. 5:18-19 and Ecc. 9:7 stated you can enjoy what you have worked for. Material blessing is a gift of God. This includes enjoyment of food, drink, material possessions, etc. These verses are about you can enjoy from the result of your work, and not just enjoyment without work.

Ecc. 9:8 stated “always be clothed in white and always anoint your head with oil”. It is comfortable for people to wear white and have oil on head due to the hot climate in the middle east region. Also, wear white often refers to the type of clothing worn in a joyful occasion, and people often anoint oil on their heads in a festival occasion. Enjoyment includes nice clothing and comfort treatments besides foods and drinks.

b. **Family and friends**

Ecc. 9:9 refers to enjoy life with your spouse. Similar saying on Eph 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”. This idea can extend to family members like grandparents and children as well as friends. Another example of enjoyment with people can be over a meal.

A Jewish family at that time often begin the day with an early snack, and then have a light lunch. They will not eat together again until after sunset. The whole family gathered for the main meal of the day after a whole day of work. That simple late meal eaten together, often called breaking bread (meal with bread and simple vegetables and has no meat), was a family time of enjoyment and sharing in love. Solomon in Proverbs 15:17 reflects this same point: “Better a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred.”

c. **Enjoy with a thankful heart**

Chapter 9 of Ecc. was written in the worldly perspective that the author believes one shall enjoy today before you die (that's the only choice).

God's children have a different perspective. Christians know they have eternity with God, and thus enjoyment does not end with death of physical life. Christians have the hope and joy from God that they know God provides all their needs as shown on Matthew 6:25-34, 7:11 and Phil. 4:19. They can enjoy life while sharing with others and give thanks to God. Bible verses in 2-Cor. 9:11-12 stated "You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God."

2) Work Hard

God is a creator. He worked during the creation. God intended for people to work as stated in Gen. 2:15 and Gen. 3:17-19. Solomon in chapter 9 (Ecc. 9:9) indicated one has to work in order to have enjoyment from the reward of his/her labor. In addition, Ecc. 9:10 indicated one shall perform his/her tasks the best one can. Based on the later part of verse 10, Solomon believed that work can involve physical labor, planning and using knowledge and wisdom which work might result in personal satisfaction.

a. **Attitude**

Work hard does not mean most volume produced (products generated) nor greatest accomplishment achieved. Ecc. 9:11-12 showed that success might not belong to the one that is strongest or wisest. Work hard is an attitude. It is a "do your best" frame of mind at all time. God's children have a purpose in mind when we "do our best" on whatever we do. This is given in Col. 3:23 "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters". God is our "boss" and he is the authority of all our works, plus he is fair and understanding. Human boss might not be so. Bible verse Col. 3:17 further expands the meaning of working for the Lord that is our work and attitude during work represents God in us. Similar idea is presented in Phil. 2:14-15.

b. **Enjoy life while working hard**

Working hard becomes easy when we have God in our work. Phil. 4:13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Matt 11:28-30 stated God can give us rest when we depend on Him, and He can make our tasks light and easy. Working hard includes having a balanced life with proper rest as God rested on the 7th day and commanded us to rest properly. We can enjoy life in good time and bad time knowing God is with us. We can enjoy every moment of our life, at work, leisure or with family and friends, because we have peace, joy, hope and strength from God.