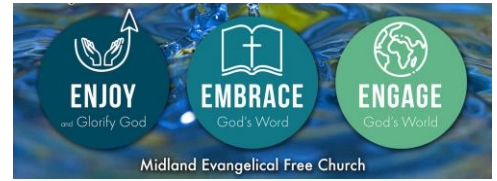




Date: October 24, 2021

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

1. Ecclesiastes 5:1 tells people to guard their steps when they go to worship God. Can you list some examples of times when people did not? What happened? (For a couple examples, please see the endnotes below).!
2. With the completion of the perfect redemptive work of Christ, we no longer need to perform elaborate cleansing rites and offer sacrifices as a symbol of our faith in God's promise to cleanse and forgive. But what does a sacrifice of worship look like today (Hebrews 12:28)?
3. Ecclesiastes 5:1 tells people to draw near to listen. What are some ways we can draw near to listen to God?
4. Ecclesiastes 5:2 tells us not to let our hearts be hasty to utter a word before God. In the context of Old Testament worship this most likely had to do with vows. In an ecstatic moment of worship, one might be tempted to offer a grand promise to God but fail to follow through when the moment fades. Do we do this today? If so, how?
5. "Before God" (Ecclesiastes 5:2) – In context, this prepositional phrase refers to temple worship. But, theologically speaking, since God is omnipresent (everywhere, all the time), is there



anything that is uttered that is not before God? How then should this influence our utterings?

6. Since God created us, He will also Judge us. How does that influence our understanding of what we say? (Ecclesiastes 5:2 – God is in Heaven; we are on earth.)
7. Ecclesiastes 5:2 encourages us to let our words be few.
 - a. Why is less more when it comes to talking?
 - b. Since we can't avoid talking entirely, what are some practical strategies we can employ to use fewer words?
8. The book of James is a virtual commentary on Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. Please see in the endnote below ⁱⁱ some "meaningful" verses from James that help us understand how to apply the wisdom of Ecclesiastes.
9. In what areas do you need to grow in how you use your words?



Entering the Holy of Holies

"We are reminded by the opening words (the equivalent of our phrase, 'Watch your step!') of the pains God took to guard His earthly threshold in early times, even by the threat of death ('lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle', [Lv. 15:31](#))"¹

¹ Derek Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes: A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance*, ed. J. Alec Motyer and Derek Tidball, *The Bible Speaks Today* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 53.

Leviticus 10:1–3 (ESV)

¹ Now **Nadab** and **Abihu**, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. ² And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. ³ Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.

1 Samuel 6:19–20 (ESV)

¹⁹ And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the LORD. He struck seventy men of them, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great blow. ²⁰ Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?"

Acts 5:1–11 (ESV)

¹ But a man named **Ananias**, with his wife **Sapphira**, sold a piece of property, ² and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." ⁵ When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. ⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹ But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they



will carry you out.” ¹⁰ Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

ii JAMES

James 1:19–21 (ESV)

¹⁹ let every person be

QUICK to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;

²⁰ for **The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**

²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and

Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James 3:17 (ESV)

the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

James 4:6–11 (ESV)

⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says,

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹ Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.

The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law.

But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

James 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

James 1:26 (ESV)

²⁶If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

James 3:2 (ESV)

²For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

James 3:3–10 (ESV)

³If we put **bits** into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

⁴Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small **rudder** wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small **fire**! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

⁷For every kind of **beast** and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,

⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

James 5:12 (ESV)

¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but **let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no**, so that you may not fall under condemnation.