

# Things Are Not What They Seem

*Ray Stedman*

## I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Ecclesiastes 6:1-7:14.
- B. Adversity is not always bad.
- C. We need a true view of good and evil.

## II. Enjoyment does not reside in increased possessions--it is a gift God must give.

- A. God withholds enjoyment because there is no enjoyment apart from Him.
- B. Faith is what pleases God.
  - 1. Gratitude is important because what we receive, we receive from God.
  - 2. This is contrary to the spirit of this age.
  - 3. Gratitude only comes when a person feels like they do not deserve something but get it anyway.
  - 4. The believer should give thanks to God in everything.
- C. Long life without enjoyment is a grievous thing.
- D. Man is incapable of finding joy by his own effort.
- E. The reason for this is that God's decree is inalterable.
  - 1. God decreed this before man was created.
  - 2. A man's life does not consist of his abundance of possessions.
  - 3. Man is not able to dispute with one stronger than God is.
- F. No man knows what is good for him.
- G. Dealing with death leads to realism.
- H. Sadness can lead to wisdom.
  - 1. Learning to be patient in spirit is one of the great lessons of adversity.
  - 2. Wisdom has advantages in life.
- I. God has given blessings and adversity.

1. Man is not in control of his destiny.
2. God is in charge, and what He sends is always intended to benefit.

**Application questions:**

1. Why is true faith dependent on an understanding that God's grace is not deserved?

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2. If possessions are not intended to fulfill a man, what is?

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3. How can it be said that adversity sent by God is intended to benefit?

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