

Ecclesiastes 5:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.

Analysis

Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth (גם כל-בָּאָדָם אֲשֶׁר) gam kol-ha'adam asher natan-lo ha'elohim osher unekhasim)—recognizing God as the source of material blessings, not personal achievement. **And hath given him power to eat thereof** (וְהִשְׁלִיטוּ לְאֶכֶל מִמְּנָנוּ) vehishlito le'ekhol mimmennu)—literally 'empowered him to eat from it,' acknowledging that enjoyment capacity itself is divinely granted. **This is the gift of God** (מִתְּחַת אֱלֹהִים הִיא) matat elohim hi)—the emphatic conclusion.

Verse 19 nuances verse 18: wealth isn't automatically evil, but only blessing when:

1. recognized as God's gift, not personal achievement
2. enjoyed rather than hoarded,
3. received with contentment as one's chelqo (portion).

The phrase 'power to eat thereof' is crucial—wealth without the ability to enjoy it is the 'sore evil' of verses 13-17, but wealth received gratefully becomes matat elohim (God's gift). This anticipates James 1:17: 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.' The key difference isn't amount but attitude—stewardship versus ownership, gratitude versus entitlement.

Historical Context

This reflects Torah theology where God grants wealth as covenant blessing (Deuteronomy 8:18), yet warns against forgetting Him as the source (Deuteronomy 8:11-14). Solomon's own wealth was explicitly God-given (1 Kings 3:13), yet he failed to maintain proper perspective.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does viewing wealth as God's gift rather than personal achievement change your relationship to possessions?
2. In what ways might you possess 'riches' but lack the 'power to eat thereof'—the capacity for contentment?
3. What would it look like to steward whatever wealth you have as 'gift of God' rather than personal achievement or entitlement?

Interlinear Text

עַשְׂרֵה יְמִינָה אֱלֹהִים כָּל גַּם
H1571 H3605 Every man H834 hath given H0 also to whom God H6239
H120 H5414 H430
וְנִכְסֵס יְמִינָה וְהַשְׁלִיט וְלֹא כַּל מִמְּנָה אֶלְשֶׁת אֶת
and wealth and hath given him power to eat thereof and to take
H5233 H7980 H398 H4480 H5375
אֶת אֶת סָלַק וְוְלִשְׁמָה וְבַעֲמָל וְמִתְּהִזְׁבָּח אֱלֹהִים
his portion and to rejoice in his labour this is the gift also to whom God
H853 H2506 H8055 H5999 H2090 H4991 H430

חִיא:

H1931

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 8:18 (References God): But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Ecclesiastes 3:13 (References God): And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

Ecclesiastes 6:2 (References God): A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

2 Chronicles 1:12 (Parallel theme): Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

1 Kings 3:13 (Parallel theme): And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

