

# Ecclesiastes 5:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.

## Analysis

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**For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities**—the Hebrew harbeh (הַרְבָּה, multitude) modifies both chalomot (חֲלֹמוֹת, dreams) and devarim (דְּבָרִים, words). Dreams could claim divine origin (Joel 2:28), but most were mere mental wanderings. Similarly, verbose prayers (Matthew 6:7) and lengthy religious discourse often mask empty devotion. The phrase havalim harbeh (הַבְּלִים הַרְבָּה, many vanities) indicates multiplied futility—more words and dreams don't produce more substance, just more emptiness (hevel, הַבְּלָה, vapor/breath).

**But fear thou God**—this succinct conclusion (et-ha'Elohim yera', אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא, fear/reverence)—cuts through the verbosity. True religion centers on yir'ah (ירָא, fear/reverence)—humble, obedient worship of the sovereign God. The contrast is stark: human religion multiplies words, dreams, and rituals; true faith fears God and obeys simply. This anticipates Ecclesiastes' final conclusion: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern religion featured dream interpretation (Genesis 41; Daniel 2), and false prophets often claimed divine dreams (Jeremiah 23:25-32). Israel had to discern true from false revelations. Lengthy prayers characterized pagan religion—attempting to manipulate gods through repetition (1 Kings 18:26-29). Jesus condemned such prayers: "Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do"

(Matthew 6:7). The Pharisees made long prayers for show (Matthew 23:14). Paul warned against "oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20)—verbose speculation masquerading as wisdom. The Reformers emphasized Scripture's sufficiency against tradition's multiplied regulations. Simple fear of God and obedience to His Word trumps elaborate religious systems.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. In what ways do you substitute religious activity, lengthy prayers, or spiritual experiences for simple obedience to God?
2. How does "fear God" function as the antidote to empty religious verbosity and experience-seeking?

## Interlinear Text

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בָּרָבָרִים	בְּרִבּוֹת	לִבְנָה	וְלִבְנָה	וְלִבְנָה
H3588	For in the multitude	of dreams	there are also divers vanities	words
	H7230	H2472	H1892	H1697
וְלִבְנָה	וְלִבְנָה	וְלִבְנָה	וְלִבְנָה	וְלִבְנָה
and many	H3588	H853	thou God	but fear
	H7235		H430	H3372

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 12:13** (Word): Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

**Matthew 12:36** (Word): But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

**Ecclesiastes 8:12** (References God): Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

**Proverbs 23:17** (Parallel theme): Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

**Ecclesiastes 5:3** (Word): For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

**Ecclesiastes 3:14** (References God): I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

**Ecclesiastes 7:18** (References God): It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

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