

# Ecclesiastes 8:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

## Analysis

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**Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry**—after wrestling with delayed justice and moral inversions (vv.10-14), the Preacher advocates receiving God's gifts with joy. The Hebrew 'simchah' (סִמְחָה, mirth/joy) doesn't mean hedonistic pleasure but grateful enjoyment of daily provisions as divine gifts. The phrase 'no better thing' (ein tov, בְּאֵין טוֹב) indicates optimal response within creaturely limitations—since humans cannot control outcomes or ensure justice, they should gratefully receive present blessings.

**For that shall abide with him of his labour**—enjoyment of work's fruits represents the sustainable portion of human toil. The verb 'yilavenu' (יִלְאַבְנָה, abide/accompany) suggests that joy in daily provision accompanies people through life's hardships. This isn't resignation but wisdom: receive God's gifts gratefully rather than anxiously striving to control what only God governs.

## Historical Context

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Ancient agricultural societies understood labor's connection to daily bread—crops required planting, tending, harvesting, and preparation before providing meals. The Preacher advocates grateful reception rather than anxious accumulation. This

echoes Deuteronomy's call to rejoice in God's provision (Deuteronomy 12:7; 14:26). Jesus later taught not to worry about tomorrow but to seek first God's kingdom (Matthew 6:25-34)—similar balance between responsible labor and grateful trust. Paul commanded that those who refuse to work shouldn't eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10) while also teaching contentment with daily provision (Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-8). The Reformers emphasized vocation: common work done faithfully as service to God brings joy, while labor pursued as ultimate meaning produces anxiety.

## Related Passages

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

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does receiving your daily provision with gratitude differ from anxiously striving for security through accumulation?
2. In what ways does enjoying 'eating, drinking, and being merry' as gifts from God differ from secular hedonism?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמֶר חֶתְּנִי	וְשָׁבָת	אָנִי	אֵין	אֲשֶׁר	רַב	שְׁמַמְתַּחַת	הַאֲתָה	אָנִי	וְבָטָה
Then I commanded	H589	H853	mirth	H834	H369	hath no better thing			
	H7623		H8057		H2896				
לְאַדְםָן	לְאַדְםָן	תְּחַת	תְּחַת	הַשְּׁמֶשׁ:	הַשְּׁמֶשׁ:	אָמֵן	אָמֵן	לְאַכְלָה	לְשָׁתָה וְתַ
because a man	H120	H8478	him under the sun	H8121	H3588	H518	H398	than to eat	and to drink
									H8354
וְלִשְׁמָה וְמַ	וְלִשְׁמָה וְמַ	וְהַ וְאֵ	וְהַ וְאֵ	לְלִכְדָּן	לְלִכְדָּן	בְּעִמָּלָה	בְּעִמָּלָה	וְיָמִים	וְיָמִים
and to be merry	H8055	H1931	for that shall abide	H3867	with him of his labour	H5999		the days	H3117
תְּחַת	תְּחַת	בְּאֵלָהִים	בְּאֵלָהִים	לְזִנְתָּנוּ	לְזִנְתָּנוּ	הַשְּׁמֶשׁ:	הַשְּׁמֶשׁ:	לְאַדְמָן	לְאַדְמָן
of his life	H2416	H834	giveth	H5414	H0	which God	H430	H8478	H8121

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 2:24** (References God): There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

**Ecclesiastes 5:18** (References God): Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.

**Ecclesiastes 3:22** (Parallel theme): Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

**1 Timothy 6:17** (References God): Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

