

Ecclesiastes 9:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

Analysis

This verse offers a striking affirmation of enjoying life's simple pleasures. The imperative 'Go thy way' (lek) is a command to action and purpose. The paired commands 'eat thy bread with joy' (ekhol besimchah lachmeka) and 'drink thy wine with a merry heart' (usheteh vleyv-tov yeneka) emphasize wholehearted enjoyment of basic provisions. The Hebrew simchah (joy) and leyv-tov (good/merry heart) indicate genuine gladness, not mere physical satisfaction. The phrase 'with a merry heart' literally means 'with a good heart,' suggesting inner contentment and peace. The crucial justification follows: 'for God now accepteth thy works' (ki khevar ratsah ha'Elohim et-ma'asekha). The word khevar means 'already' or 'long ago'—God has already accepted your works. This isn't earning divine favor through merit, but recognizing that God's prior acceptance frees us to enjoy His gifts without guilt. The verse teaches that legitimate pleasure in God's provisions is appropriate when we walk in His ways, as our works have already found divine acceptance.

Historical Context

Solomon (or the Qoheleth figure) wrote Ecclesiastes around 935 BC, reflecting on life's meaning through the lens of vast experience and wisdom. The book addresses the futility of life 'under the sun' (without God's perspective), but punctuates this with calls to enjoy God's gifts. This verse comes after discussing death, time, and divine sovereignty. In ancient Israel, bread and wine were staple elements representing sustenance and celebration. Wine was not forbidden but

rather seen as a gift from God that 'maketh glad the heart of man' (Psalm 104:15). The call to eat and drink with joy countered both ascetic tendencies that rejected pleasure and hedonistic excess that made pleasure an idol. The phrase 'God now accepteth thy works' reflects the covenant relationship where obedience leads to blessing and divine approval. This balanced view of pleasure within God's will was countercultural in a world that often swung between extreme asceticism and unbridled indulgence.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this verse balance enjoying life's pleasures with spiritual devotion?
2. What does it mean that God 'now accepteth thy works' in relation to enjoying His gifts?
3. How can we distinguish between legitimate enjoyment and sinful indulgence?
4. Why would Solomon emphasize joy in eating and drinking after discussing life's vanity?
5. What role does divine acceptance play in our freedom to enjoy God's material blessings?

Interlinear Text

ט וֹב	בְּלֵב	וְשָׂתֵה	לֶחֶם בָּ	בְּשִׂמְחָה	אֵכֶל ל	לֵךְ
with a merry	heart	and drink	thy bread	with joy	eat	Go thy way
H2896	H3820	H8354	H3899	H8057	H398	H3212
מַעֲשֵׂיךָ:	אֵת	הָאֱלֹהִים יִם	רָצָה	כָּבֹד ר	כִּי י	יַיִן בָּ
thy works	for God	accepteth	now	thy wine		
H4639	H430	H7521	H3528	H3196	H3588	

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 10:19 (Parallel theme): A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.

Deuteronomy 12:7 (References God): And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

Ecclesiastes 8:15 (References God): 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.

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.

Acts 10:35 (Parallel theme): But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.