

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

December 16, 2007

The tyranny of stuff

by David King

"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep" (Eccl. 5:10-12).

In this simple commentary on wealth, Solomon gives three reasons why prosperity is not all it's cracked up to be.

First, **the more we have, the less satisfied we are with what we have** (v. 10). Like any addiction, the accumulation of material wealth only feeds an insatiable lust for more. Once "getting more" becomes our goal, we've become hooked on a behavior that is as destructive as any drug.

Second, **the more we have, the more we must spend** — not "get" to spend, but "must" spend (v. 11). Think of taxes, security, maintenance, insurance, repairs, and so on — not to mention the time that must be devoted to all these activities. Oh, and don't forget all the hangers-on who now see us as a good "friend" — especially when they need a loan.

Finally, **the more we have, the more we worry** (v. 12). The pressures that come with maintaining such a lifestyle of abundance make it difficult to enjoy it. Derek Kidner comments on this verse by pointing to our modern obsession with health clubs and exercise equipment: "It is one of our human absurdities to pour out money and effort just to undo the damage of

money and ease" (*A Time to Mourn and a Time to Dance*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1976).

Many years after Solomon penned his commentary on wealth, Jesus summarized the message even more succinctly: "One's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Lk. 12:15). No matter how much we may wish it so, or how hard we try to make it so, our possessions will never define who we are. In fact, in many cases, our possessions will feed behaviors that harm our character, not help it. We become slaves to the tyranny of our stuff, no longer in control of our own destiny.

Recognizing this danger, some argue for a lifestyle of minimalism, getting by with only the barest essentials in life. There is certainly a biblical precedent for that approach — Jesus Himself offers a good example. But such drastic measures are not required of us. What God does require is a fundamental shift in **thinking** about our possessions, an attitude of detachment that views our possessions not as an end unto themselves, but as tools for serving others. "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (1 Tim. 6:17-18).

Adopting such an attitude will result in decisions that likely will simplify our lives. But more importantly, it will free us from our bondage to all the junk we have allowed to dominate our lives. It will allow us to see the world—and ourselves—in a clearer light.