

A WAY | PATH FORWARD ECC 4:4-6

Deuteronomy 5:32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Deuteronomy 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

This is not about the golden mean or a via media ...
It is a way forward of obedience & following Christ → **although** very difficult

1. The ditch of **comparison** &/ **competition**

Ecclesiastes 4:4 Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. **This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.**

Basics:

- This man works
- He **more than** works – he travails / toils / wears himself out
- He does the right work
- Or, he does the work rightly - in the right way
- Yet he does so out of:

Envy

Jealousy

Covetousness

Greed

Keeping up with the Joneses | one step ahead of the Joneses

Exodus 20:17 **Thou shalt not covet** thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is **thy neighbour's**.

Proverbs 14:20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: But the rich hath many friends.

Our neighborhood has

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Ecclesiastes 4:4 Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. **This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.**

2. The ditch of **complacency**

Ecclesiastes 4:5 The fool **foldeth** his hands together, and **eateth** his own flesh.

To avoid the one ditch **some** – maybe **all** simply give up & run into the other ditch

In my understanding:

The road is narrow

With lot of potholes to avoid

Easy to drift & drive into the other ditch

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; Consider her ways, and be wise: **Proverbs 6:7** Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, **Proverbs 6:8** Provideth her meat in the summer, And gathereth her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 6:9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Proverbs 6:10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep:

Proverbs 6:11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, And thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 26:13 The slothful man saith, **There is a lion in the way: A lion is in the streets.**

Proverbs 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, So doth the slothful upon his bed.

Proverbs 26:15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; It grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

Proverbs 26:16 **The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit Than seven men that can render a reason.**

Solomon is not kind:

- The other ditch is the ditch of fools
- Fools fold their hands
- Fools, if they cannot win...& win easily, quit!
- Fools self-destruct → eat themselves from the inside
- Fools quickly learn that they are not the smartest, fastest, quickest, strongest, best looking...& simply quit

3. The driveway forward of **contentment!**

Ecclesiastes 4:6 **Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.**

Proverbs 15:16 **Better is little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and trouble therewith.**

Proverbs 15:17 **Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.**

Proverbs 16:8 **Better is a little with righteousness Than great revenues without right.**

Proverbs 17:1 **Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, Than an house full of sacrifices with strife.**

Proverbs 21:9 **It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, Than with a brawling woman in a wide house.**

Proverbs 21:19 **It is better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and an angry woman.**

Proverbs 25:24 **It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, Than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.**

Proverbs 28:6 **Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, Than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.**

Avarice ←-----→apathy

Comparison ←-----→ complacency
/ Competition