Men's Study – Ecclesiastes 5 – The Man of Integrity

1. **What do you think men like to talk most about to other men?**

2. **What do you think they like to outdo each other about in their conversations?**

Read Ecclesiastes 5: 1-7

3. **Go back over verses 1-3. What is the conclusion that the writer comes to?**

What follows on from here is a distinct quality of a fool:

4. **Discuss verse 3 and the quality or qualities are?**

Read verses 4-7

5. **What is the problem of the fool of many boasts in verse 4?**

The writer explains what the implications of exaggerating ideas or dreams are. When a fool boasts , he blows things out of proportion to elevate himself over others. What were once realistic goals now become tall tales and fantacies which he can never fulfil.

6. **Read verses 5 and 6 again and identify the problem raised here for the fool?**

7. **What is the danger of living this way? (v6b)**

8. **Looking at verse 7, discuss how vanity occurs and how it is related to God's judgment. (Look at the sentences beginning with 'for' and 'but' for the clue).**

The chasing after the acceptance of the world fuels much of our boasting. The need to prove ourselves to peers, family, even friends, our own children and even our spouses is sometimes hard to resist. This is against God's law of wisdom, which is motivated by a desire to please only Him. It is God in the end who we must fear and we are to be very careful about how we speak and the promises which come from our lips.
This is called integrity. It is doing what you say you will do. Yet even the best of us struggle with sin that undercuts our integrity. When we lack integrity we know deep inside that we've failed God and this inevitably effects our faith and godliness. We walk without purpose and conviction.

9. **Spend some time now committing to each other what sin and vanities you have hidden from others. Remember as we build accountability to each other to start small. Think about an accountability partner with whom you can share deeper, more intimate burdens and sins with.**

It is the process of honest and transparent living which creates a life of integrity. A sober reality is created when others know your real struggles and this creates an environment of integrity. We become the people we say we are because our words, although with humble acknowledgment of our struggles to begin with, begin to match up with who we really are. When integrity starts here we set a pattern of wisdom living which God desires. This is the beginning of changed lives for God.

10. **Pray together.**