

## “Enjoying Toil and Investing in the Future”

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Barry Noll

11:1 Cast your bread upon the waters,

for you will find it after many days.

2 Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,

for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

3 If the clouds are full of rain,

they empty themselves on the earth,

and if a tree falls to the south or to the north,

in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.

4 He who observes the wind will not sow,

and he who regards the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

6 In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good. (ESV)

### For Further Reflection:

1. Why does Solomon urge his readers to be risky in their generosity (vv. 1-2)? What rewards or benefits does Scripture promise you for taking a risk in generosity toward others (Deut. 15:10; Prov. 19:17; Matt. 10:42; Lk. 14:14; 2 Cor. 9:8; 1 Tim. 6:18-19; Heb. 6:10)?
2. What is the cost for not taking risks in generosity toward others (vs. 2; Lk. 16:9; 12:13-21; Eph. 5:16)? How much of your life is shaped by confident predictions about the future?
3. What are the ways that you shield yourself from failure and uncertainty (vv. 3-4)? How does the gospel change you from living for your own self-preservation to becoming a risky in your generosity toward others (Mk. 8:34-35; Jn. 12:24-25)?
4. What are the ways that Solomon illustrates the limits of human knowledge and the sovereignty of God (vs. 5; 3:11; 8:17; 9:12)? How does living life backwards from God's sovereignty over all things enable you to steward the knowledge and resources which God gives you (Gen. 50:20; Deut. 31:31; Acts 2:22-23; Phil. 2:12-13)?
5. What reason does Solomon give for sowing in the morning and evening (vs. 6)? How does this sowing correlate to the impact that your generosity may have on others and the next generation (2 Cor. 9:6-9; Gal. 6: 7-10)?