

Week #1- Under the Sun- “Meaningless”

Ecclesiastes 1

Accountability

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply the truth revealed through this study in Ecclesiastes.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passage listed above)*

1. “Everything is Meaningless”...what are some reasons the author provides in chapter 1 to support this statement?
2. What are some ways, in today’s society, people try to find meaning in life. What does John 10:10 & 2 Corinthians 5:17 teach us?
3. The word “meaningless” can mean “vapor.” What point is being made by the author (read Psalm 144:4)? How does this affect your relationship with God and other people?
4. What does the author mean by “under the sun”?
5. How does a relationship with Jesus infuse “life under the sun” with meaning (2 Cor. 5:17, Rev. 21:5, 1 Cor. 15:58)? How could you use the message found in Ecclesiastes to share Jesus with someone?
6. Why do people become proud? What evidence, according to God’s word, can you offer to prove that this attitude is foolish?
7. How do things like the sun, wind and rain prove the greatness of God? What should be our proper attitude towards God?
8. What is the meaning of life? According to the bible, where does it come from?
9. Read Psalm 104 and compare it with Ecclesiastes chapter 1. What does the Psalmist say about the greatness of God and the weakness of people? What can we learn from the study of nature?
10. Compare Ecclesiastes 1:16-18 with Proverbs 2:1-11. Explain the difference between human wisdom and the wisdom that comes from God. Read James 1:5. How can we have the right kind of wisdom?

What’s the “Big Idea” from God’s word that we need to make sure we wrestle with today? What will you do this week in response to it?

Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #2- Under the Sun- Testing

Ecclesiastes 2

Accountability

- In what areas of your life are you living detached from God? In what areas of your life do you sense God's presence and purpose? How is God inviting you to live life from above? Write down any important discoveries and share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passage listed above)*

1. Today, we have more possessions, more entertainment, more information, more travel options. We can communicate instantly and globally. We have better healthcare, better education, better technology, and better food. And yet, none of this seems to satisfy us. Many people, in fact, feel empty and depressed. Why?
2. Does God desire for you to have enjoyment in this life (I Tim. 6:17, Rom. 8:28, Prov. 3:5-6)?
3. How do you please God (Heb. 11:6)?
4. Read Ephesians 2:10 and share how that verse, from another perspective, addresses meaning in life.
5. Read 1 Kings 7:1-8. Why did Solomon carry out all these great works? And what did he consider that he had accomplished at the end?
6. What kinds of pleasures or projects have you tried to find fulfillment from in life? Why are so many people lured by possessions? Why do so many try to find fulfillment here? How does the author support his thesis that life is meaningless in vs. 12-16? Read Matt. 6:19-24, 33. Where does Jesus say we are to find fulfillment?
7. What can we expect to achieve by our work? Why do these things often fail to satisfy us even for a temporary period? How can people achieve real satisfaction that lasts?
8. What reasons for the fear of death appear in Ecclesiastes chapter 2? What other reasons are there? Read Hebrews 2:14. What did Jesus do to deal with the fear of death? And who benefits from what he did?
9. Read Romans 4:1-8. Why does the Bible teach that people cannot save themselves by their own works? According to the bible, how can a person get into a right relationship with God? How can Solomon's experience help us to understand and apply these things to our lives?
10. What contrast is found in Eccl. 2:24-26? Discuss with your CSG.

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #3- Under the Sun- Time

Ecclesiastes 3

Accountability

- If someone was to observe your life these past few weeks, what would they say your treasure is? In what ways is God inviting you to find ultimate fulfillment in Him?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What does it mean to fear or revere the Lord? How does that play out in the Christian life?
2. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 says that there is a proper time for every human activity. But is there also a proper time to know God? Read Ecclesiastes 12:1 and compare it with 2 Corinthians 6:2. When is the proper time to know God?
3. Look at Eccl. 3:1-8. Is the author describing what is or what one should do?
4. Read Eccl 3:11. What does it mean that God has set eternity in the human heart? The point of Eccl. 3:1-15 is that God is sovereign. What does sovereignty mean? Do you think God controls everything?
5. How does trusting that God is sovereign impact the way you live and view life? Read Eccl. 3:17-18. What worries the author in light of God's sovereignty? What brings the author comfort? How do you view this tension in the world?
6. Compare the judgments that judges make in this world with the judgment of God. How is God's work as a judge similar to their work? How is it different?
7. After reading Eccl. 3:9-14, what are three ways God enriches our lives?
8. What does it mean to please God? How does God bring satisfaction to work? How is God inviting you to find satisfaction in your work? Give an example. Look at Col. 3:22-24. What is Paul's perspective on how one should work? What would "working for the Lord" look like in your current job? As a Christian, how can you stand out by the way you work?
9. What do you think C.S. Lewis meant when he said, "Our Heavenly Father has provided many delightful inns for us along our journey, but he takes great care to see that we do not mistake any of them for home." (Eccl 3:11)

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #4- Under the Sun- Unfair

Ecclesiastes 4

Accountability

- This week set aside some time to prayerfully consider some of the pain you have encountered in life. How has the experience of pain and grief impacted your view of God?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. What two extremes are presented in Eccl. 4:4-5? What is the solution in v.6? How balanced are you between work and rest? Do you need to make any changes?
2. As a Christian, why do you work (Luke 12:13-21, Galatians 6:10, Philippians 2:4)?
3. We live in a world of connection. There are roughly 2.27 billion active Facebook users. The average Facebook user has roughly 245 friends. It is easier to make connections today than any other time in human history. But why is it that so many feel disconnected and isolated?
4. When have you felt alone in life? Share with your CSG. Would you consider yourself to be more of an independent or dependent person? Explain. When has a friend's presence or assistance been exactly what you need?
5. What type of person is described in Eccl. 4:7-8? What is missing in his life? Are there any important relationships being neglected in your life? If so, why? What relational benefits are being described in v.9? Have you experienced this? What relational benefits are being described in v.10, 11, and 12? Discuss with your CSG. How easy or difficult is it for you to accept assistance from another person? Why? How available are you to help a friend in need? How often does this happen?
6. Read Micah 2:1-4 and Isaiah 1:21-28. What is God's attitude when people deal cruelly with other people? How can a God of love allow bad things to happen (John 17:3)?
7. What does the Bible teach about jealous attitudes? See Exodus 20:17.
8. Compare Ecclesiastes 4:8 with Matthew 6:19-21. What does God consider valuable? How can we prepare now for heaven?
9. For what reasons does Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 encourage friendship? For what reasons does 1 John 4:19-21 encourage friendship? Read Mark 10:43-45 and John 15:13. For what reasons did Jesus show friendship?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #5- Under the Sun- Money

Ecclesiastes 5 & 6

Accountability

- Did you set aside some time to prayerfully consider the quality of community in your life? Who is in a position to offer you help when you need it? Who are you available to support in a time of need? Have you thanked God for the friendships in your life?

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. Most of us have an insatiable appetite for more. We want more stuff and we want better stuff. But the quantity and quality of our stuff never seems to satisfy. Most of us are left just wanting more. All of this is fueled by a general lack of contentment with our circumstances. When we lack contentment we also lack enjoyment. Why is this?
2. What is one pleasure in life you wish you had more time to enjoy? Have you ever made a purchase that has caused you more trouble? Share. What is one item that you've wanted to buy lately? How will this item benefit you?
3. What is the right attitude for people to have with regard to money?
4. Examine Eccl. 5:1-7. The focus is now relationship with God. What stands out? How are we to approach God? What is the problem with the fool's approach? Do you think our culture takes God too lightly? Are you guilty of this in your life?
5. Should people be afraid of God? Why? What should that fear cause a person to do? Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What has God done so that people may pray to him with confidence?
6. What causes people to love money? Compare Ecclesiastes 5:10 with 1 Timothy 6:9-10 and Matthew 6:24. How can the love of money ruin a person's relationship with God? What lesson about money can we learn from Luke 12:16-20?
7. What do people consider to be a successful life? Read Matthew 16:26. What is a successful life in God's opinion?
8. At death, do all people go to the same place (Ecclesiastes 6:6)? Read what the Book of Ecclesiastes says about the place of God's judgment in Ecclesiastes 3:16-17, Ecclesiastes 12:7, and Ecclesiastes 12:14. What did the author mean by 'the same place' in Ecclesiastes 6:6? Read Luke 16:19-31 and Revelation 20:11 to 21:4. What happens after God's judgment?
9. Who knows what is good for people during their lives (Ecclesiastes 6:12)? Read Ecclesiastes 12:14 and Psalm 1. Why did God give his commands (Deut. 6:20-25 and Gal 5:14)

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Community Small Group Discussion Questions

Week #6- Under the Sun- Affliction

Ecclesiastes 7

Accountability

- During this past week, what were some ways you relied on God, given the challenges of life, and what ways were you relying on yourself or others? Read Prov. 3:5-6 and James 1:5.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. How can sorrow, grief, adversity, and pain lead to gladness and wisdom? How can difficult times in life provide instruction and growth for future living? When has a painful time in life produced positive change or growth for you? Share with your CSG.
2. Study Eccl. 7:1-6. Are these comparisons surprising? What's the point?
3. What are the warnings found Eccl. 7:7-14. ? What role does God play? Compared to living in the past or future, how much do you live in the present? Have you ever been frustrated that God didn't intervene to help in a situation?
4. What are the biblical truths about suffering in a Christian's life (2 Cor. 4:8-9 & 17-18, Gal. 6:2, Job 2:9-10, 2 Cor. 1:4)?
5. How are the verses 15-18 countering traditional wisdom? Have you ever tried to secure God's blessing in your life by living a certain way?
6. How does fearing God (v.18b) play into this discussion?
7. What does the author share with us about the value and source of wisdom towards the end of this chapter? What do you think the difference is between knowledge and wisdom? How does the idea that God possesses wisdom shape your pursuit of wisdom? When you have a problem in life, where do you go for advice or direction?
8. If God created men and women to be perfect (Ecclesiastes 7:29), then why are there so many troubles in this world? Discuss what Ecclesiastes 7:11-14 tells us about troubles. Then discuss what Psalm 46:1-3 says. Can we trust God to protect us?
9. In what ways is God's judgment better than human judgments? Read Ecclesiastes 7:20 and 7:29. Is God's judgment better for us (Rom. 3:23, Isaiah 53:6)? Do we want a judge who knows everything?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Week #7- Under the Sun- Priority

Ecclesiastes 8-10

Accountability

- This week, prayerfully consider all the important areas of your life—your family, your friends, your job, and so on. Surrender each area one at a time to God’s direction and purpose. Were there any areas of resistance? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. Christians have a problem with priorities today like in no other time. There are so many things that are demanding our attention and many of them are good things. But none of us have unlimited time. We are all given the same 24 hours in a day. The difference comes down to how we choose to spend our time. Because we can’t do everything, we have to make choices and make sacrifices according to what is the most important. What should be the top priorities in a Christian’s life (Matt. 6:33, Matt. 22:36-38, Acts. 5:29, Exodus 20:2-3, Luke 12: 29-31)?
2. What are some ways we can put God first in our lives?
3. Read Proverbs 3:5-7 and Job 28:27-28. What does it really mean to be wise? And how can we become wise?
4. Read Proverbs 22:13, Proverbs 23:19-21 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13. For what reasons do people become lazy? What effect can this have on a person’s relationship with God?
5. Read Ecclesiastes 10:16-17. How do a leader’s attitudes affect the people whom he leads? What qualities should a church leader have?
6. Read Ecclesiastes 10:12-14 and James 3:1-12. How can we learn to say the right things?
7. Prepare a list of the dangers that Ecclesiastes chapter 10 mentions. How does the chapter say that we can avoid those dangers? What is the right attitude for Christians to have towards possible dangers?

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Prayer Request and Reports:

Community Small Group Discussion Questions
Week #8- Under the Sun- Remember
Ecclesiastes 11 & 12

Accountability

- What are some things you've learned and applied to your life as a result of studying Ecclesiastes? Share with your CSG.

Understanding and Applying the Passage *(read the passages listed above)*

1. Compare Ecclesiastes 11:9 with the advice in Psalm 119:9. Read some of the Bible's accounts of how young men have behaved, for example 1 Samuel 16:18-23; Proverbs 7:6-23; Luke 2:41-52; 1 Timothy 4:12. How does the Bible encourage young people to behave? What, therefore, is the meaning of Ecclesiastes 11:9?
2. What does the author mean by the 'days of darkness' in Ecclesiastes 11:8? What effect will it have on a person's life to remember them? Compare this verse with Ecclesiastes 12:1. What does the author mean by the instruction to 'remember'?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 and Hebrews 12:1-4. How should Christians prepare for their troubles? And how should they behave when troubles happen?
4. Compare Ecclesiastes 12:7 with Genesis 3:19 and Ecclesiastes 12:14. What happens to a person's body and spirit at death?
5. Read Acts 3:19 and Ecclesiastes 12:1. How can we receive a right relationship with God? How will that prepare us for death? How will it prepare us for the rest of our lives?
6. Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-13 and Romans 15:4. Which are the best books, and how can we find them?
7. Compare Ecclesiastes 7:20, Ecclesiastes 7:29 and Ecclesiastes 12:14. As all people are guilty, how can anyone be ready for God's judgment? Read Peter's answer to this question in Acts 2:22-41, and Paul's answer in Romans 4:1-8. How can we be ready?

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Prayer Request and Reports: