Ecclesiastes last edit 3/10/2022

These lessons were used for Sunday School class at Calvary Temple / Full Life Assembly of God in Fremont, NE, taught by Greg Clements in 2008 and 1997. I am only including the pages I used as the leader of the class. The pages passed out to the class are in separate files on my computer hard drive backup.

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The first 3 lessons were used in 2008. After them follow 10 lessons used in 1997. ( I copied the leaders pages from lessons 2 through 10 into this file in March 2022.)

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I think most of the verses are taken from the NET.

Leader 5/4/2008 Ecclesiastes A View of Life For Those Without God

If your Bible has notes, what do they say about the author, the meaning of word Ecclesiastes, and purpose of this book?

Ecclesiastes is the Greek equivalent of Preacher. “The word is connected with qahal, the public assembly, and it suggests the kind of wisdom delivered by the speaker to those in the outer court,…” …(those who don’t know God). “Qoheleth is addressing the general public whose view is bounded by the horizons of this world…” This book is “a critique of secularism and of secularized religion.” “The eyes of Ecclesiastes are fully open to the vanity and the corruption to which the creation is subject (Romans 8:20ff.), and the whole book has been aptly described as an exposition of the curse of the Fall (Genesis 3:17-19).” “In order that men may be able to find the true happiness, he destroys with merciless blows the false happiness which they continually seek in the world and which yields them only unhappiness.” “The New Bible Commentary Revised” D. Guthrie and J. Motyer eds. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (1970) pages 570-571

Resource books: (DB) Ecclesiastes, God’s Wisdom For Evangelism by Dee Brestin;

(DH) The Art of Staying Off Dead-End Streets by Richard De Haan;

(CS) Living on the Ragged Edge by Chuck Swindoll

(WYC) The Wycliffe Bible Commentary (NBD) New Bible Dictionary

Read Genesis 3:17-19 3:17 But to Adam he said, “Because you obeyed your wife

and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(cursed) is the ground thanks to you; in painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 3:18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, but you will eat the grain of the field. 3:19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat food until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you will return.”

Read Romans 8:18-25 **8:18** For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us. **8:19** For the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God. **8:20** For the creation was subjected to futility – not willingly but because of God who subjected it – in hope **8:21** that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children. **8:22** For we know that the whole creation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (groans) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (suffers) together until now. **8:23** Not only this, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await our adoption, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (redemption) of our bodies. **8:24** For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? **8:25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with endurance.

Survey of the book

The book alternates between an earthly view of life and a heavenly view.

Read selected passages from Ecclesiastes:

Earthly view 1:2, &2:22,23 5:10, 6:1,2, 8:14

Heavenly view 2:24,25 5:19,20, 7:13,14 11:5

What is hard for non-Christians as they live in the world?

What advantages do Christians have as they live in the world?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-14 **12:9** Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also taught knowledge to the people; he carefully evaluated and arranged many proverbs. **12:10** The Teacher sought to find delightful words, and to write accurately truthful sayings. **12:11** The words of the sages are like prods, and the collected sayings are like firmly fixed nails; they are given by one shepherd.

**12:12** Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. There is no end to the making of many books, and much study is exhausting to the body. **12:13** Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Fear) God and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (keep) his commandments, because this is the whole \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (duty) of man. **12:14** For God will evaluate every deed, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

How would you paraphrase this set of verses?

What do these verses teach you about the purpose of the book of Ecclesiastes?

(NBD) The phrase vanity of vanities is a verdict upon the misguided human endeavor to treat the created world as an end in itself.

(NBD) The book seeks to dispel all false hopes from the minds of men

(DH) Solomon was goaded by the thoughts of the brevity of life and nature’s aimlessness as he ignored the scriptures and looked for God in nature.

(DH) goads are the wisdom of man – his best thoughts as he confronts life’s problems

(DH) nails are the collected sayings, scripture

We need to decide if we want a deeper appreciation for the meaning for living. We also should develop a humble attitude before God.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-2 in more than one version. Who is the author?

Scan verses 3 – 11 What are some meaningless things?

Have you ever had this outlook on life?

What is the solution to this outlook?

Read Psalm 39:4-7 **39:4** “O Lord, help me understand my mortality and the brevity of life! Let me realize how quickly my life will pass! **39:5** Look, you make my days short-lived, and my life span is nothing from your perspective. Surely all people, even those who seem secure, are nothing but vapor. **39:6** Surely people go through life as mere ghosts. Surely they accumulate worthless wealth without knowing who will eventually haul it away.” **39:7** But now, O Lord, upon what am I relying? You are my only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (hope)!

Read these verses and decide what is meaningless and what is valuable.

Luke 12:16 – 21 **12:16** He then told them a parable: “The land of a certain rich man produced an abundant crop, **12:17** so he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ **12:18** Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **12:19** And I will say to myself, “You have plenty of goods stored up for many years; relax, eat, drink, celebrate!”’ **12:20** But God said to him, ‘You \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fool)! This very night your life will be demanded back from you, but who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ **12:21** So it is with the one who stores up riches for himself, but is not rich toward God.”

1 Peter 1:22-25 **1:22** You have purified your souls by obeying the truth in order to show sincere mutual love. So love one another earnestly from a pure heart. **1:23** You have been born anew, not from perishable but from imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. **1:24** For all flesh is like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (grass) and all its glory like the flower of the grass; the grass withers and the flower falls off, 1:25 but the word of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (endures) forever. And this is the word that was proclaimed to you.

John 6:27 **6:27** Do not work for the food that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (disappears), but for the food that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (remains) to eternal life – the food which the Son of Man will give to you. For God the Father has put his seal of approval on him.”

The following was not on class sheet … skip unless led to share this John 6:41-51 **6:41** Then the Jews who were hostile to Jesus began complaining about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven,” **6:42** and they said, “Isn’t this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’?” **6:43** Jesus replied, “Do not complain about me to one another. **6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. **6:45** It is written in the prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who hears and learns from the Father comes to me. **6:46** (Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God – he has seen the Father.) **6:47** I tell you the solemn truth, the one who believes has eternal life. **6:48** I am the bread of life. **6:49** Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **6:50** This is the bread that has come down from heaven, so that a person may eat from it and not die. **6:51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats from this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

2 Corinthians 4:17- 18 **4:17** For our momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison **4:18** because we are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (temporary), but what cannot be seen is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (eternal).

Matthew 6:19-21 **6:19** “Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. **6:20** But accumulate for yourselves treasures in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (heaven), where moth and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. **6:21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 16:24-26 **16:24** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. **16:25** For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **16:26** For what does it benefit a person if he gains the whole \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (world) but forfeits his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (life)? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life?

Psalm 49:10-15 **49:10** Surely one sees that even wise people die; fools and spiritually insensitive people all pass away and leave their wealth to others. **49:11** Their grave becomes their permanent residence, their eternal dwelling place. They name their lands after themselves, **49:12** but, despite their wealth, people do not last, they are like animals that perish. **49:13** This is the destiny of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fools), and of those who approve of their philosophy. (Selah) **49:14** They will travel to Sheol like sheep, with death as their shepherd. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (godly) will rule over them when the day of vindication dawns; Sheol will consume their bodies and they will no longer live in impressive houses. **49:15** But God will rescue my life from the power of Sheol; certainly he will pull me to safety. (Selah)

Why do some people think that work is meaningless? Does your work have meaning?

Colossians 1:9-14 **1:9** For this reason we also, from the day we heard about you, have not ceased praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **1:10** so that you may live \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (worthily) of the Lord and please him in all respects – bearing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fruit) in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God, **1:11** being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully **1:12** giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints’ inheritance in the light. **1:13** He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, **1:14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 3:23 - 25 **3:23** Whatever you are doing, work at it with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (enthusiasm), as to the Lord and not for people, **3:24** because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ. **3:25** For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions.

The unsaved perhaps would ask to see something new under the sun.

2 Corinthians 5:15-18 **5:15** And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised. **5:16** So then from now on we acknowledge no one from an outward human point of view. Even though we have known Christ from such a human point of view, now we do not know him in that way any longer. **5:17** So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (new) creation; what is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (old) has passed away – look, what is new has come! **5:18** And all these things are from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and who has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Revelation 21:1-5 **21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had ceased to exist, and the sea existed no more. **21:2** And I saw the holy city – the new Jerusalem – descending out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. **21:3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: “Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. **21:4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more – or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist.” **21:5** And the one seated on the throne said: “Look! I am making all things \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (new)!” Then he said to me, “Write it down, because these words are reliable and true.”

John 14:27 **14:27** “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or lacking in courage.

John 16:32-33 **16:32** Look, a time is coming – and has come – when you will be scattered, each one to his own home, and I will be left alone. Yet I am not alone, because my Father is with me. **16:33** I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (world) you have trouble and suffering, but take \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (courage) – I have conquered the world.”

What is your outlook for life?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

Memorize Ecclesiastes 12:13

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Leader May 11, 2008 Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

Quiz: Ecclesiastes 12:13 Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Fear) God and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(keep) his commandments, because this is the whole \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(duty) of man.

Review of the first lesson from Ecclesiastes: Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

1. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Seasons) to Life

The word “time:” Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament” M. Unger and W White, Jr. eds. Thomas Nelson Publishers (1980) pages 429,430 “appropriate or suitable time” for a given activity in life.

Genesis 1:14 God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (seasons) and days and years,

…just as the earth goes through season, we go through seasons

Ecclesiastes 8:4-6 Surely the king’s authority is absolute; no one can say to him, “What are you doing?” 8:5 Whoever obeys his command will not experience harm, and a wise person knows the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(proper) time and procedure. 8:6 For there is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (proper) time and procedure for every matter, for the oppression of the king is severe upon his victim.

Galatians 6:7-10 Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows, 6:8 because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 6:9 So we must not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up. 6:10 So then, whenever we have an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (opportunity), let us do good to all people, and especially to those who belong to the family of faith.

Glc Suppose a farmer works hard preparing the field and planting the crop. Then the farmer does not tend the weeds, etc. What might happen to the crop?

Suppose the farmer plants corn in early November. It sprouts and then … freezes. Not the right time.

2. What does verse 1 mean to you?

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(Glc) every thing, and every event, has a proper time to take place

3. Verses 2 – 8 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Examples).

In verses 2- 8 how do the activities in these verses connect to each other?

…Hebrew poetry …opposites used to emphasize a point

Do these verses describe what the world, and your world, is actually like?

..yes we all experience things we don’t like.

Do we have “seasons” in our lives? Name some activities in your life that go in cycles; that come and go.

Some aspects of our lives follow the earthly seasons … type of activities (indoor, outdoor) clothes (warm, cool) … school, vacation

Do you want the world, your world, to be “good” all the time?

…could it get boring? Could we get complacent?

What do verses 2 – 8 mean to you?

(Glc) It is OK for things to change. It is OK to have beginnings and endings.

(Glc) To understand one you need to think about or experience the other.

4. God is in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (control)

Daniel 2:19-22 Then in a night vision the mystery was revealed to Daniel. So Daniel praised the God of heaven, 2:20 saying, “Let the name of God be praised forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to him. 2:21 He changes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (times) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (seasons), deposing some kings and establishing others. He gives wisdom to the wise; he imparts knowledge to those with understanding; 2:22 he reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light resides with him.

2 Corinthians: 1:3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 1:4 who comforts us in all our troubles so that we may be able to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (comfort) those experiencing any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Mark 13:30-33 I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 13:31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. 13:32 “But as for that day or hour no one knows it – neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son – except the Father. 13:33 Watch out! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Stay alert)! For you do not know when the time will come.

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Recognize) the Time

1 Timothy 2:5-6 For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, 2:6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God’s purpose at his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (appointed) time.

Why is it important to recognize the right time for events to take place?

Luke 12:54-56 Jesus also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, ‘A rainstorm is coming,’ and it does. 12:55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and there is. 12:56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but how can you not know how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (interpret) the present time?

1 Thessalonians 5:1 Now on the topic of times and seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you. 5:2 For you know quite well that the day of the Lord will come in the same way as a thief in the night. 5:3 Now when they are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will surely not escape. 5:4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the darkness for the day to overtake you like a thief would. 5:5 For you all are sons of the light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of the darkness. 5:6 So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must stay \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(alert) and sober.

1 Peter 5:6-7 And God will exalt you in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (due time), if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand 5:7 by casting all your cares on him because he cares for you.

Just for possible use … not on students pages

Hosea 10:12 it is time to seek the Lord (written to rebellious ones)

Matthew 26:18 my time is at hand

Mark 1:14,15 Jesus came saying “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand …”

John 7:5-9 my time has not yet fully come

Acts 1:6,7 It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.

2 Peter 3:8 with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day

Revelation 1:3 the time is near

Discuss the verses 2-8.

How does God fit into these events? Does God have a plan?

If God has a plan, does this give us any \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(encouragement)?

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(good) for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose, 8:29 because those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters..

Psalm 62:7-9 God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(delivers) me and exalts me; God is my strong protector and my shelter. 62:8 Trust in him at all times, you people! Pour out your hearts before him! God is our shelter! (Selah) 62:9 Men are nothing but a mere breath; human beings are unreliable. When they are weighed in the scales, all of them together are lighter than air.

3. Read v 9 – 15 God has made everything \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(fit) beautifully in its appropriate time, but he has also placed ignorance in the human heart so that people cannot discover what God has ordained, from the beginning to the end of their lives.

Isaiah 55:8 55:8 “Indeed, my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (plans) are not like your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (plans), and my deeds are not like your deeds, 55:9 for just as the sky is higher than the earth, so my deeds are superior to your deeds and my plans superior to your plans.

4. Read verses 16-22 The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(righteous) and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (wicked)

Do you ever see people cut in line? Cheat? Are there unsolved crimes? Corruption by people in power?

Do people have a curiosity about tomorrow?

Can we plan ahead for eternity?

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was created by him, but the world did not recognize him. 1:11 He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him. 1:12 But to all who have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (received) him – those who believe in his name – he has given the right to become God’s children 1:13 – children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband’s decision, but by God.

How should we view the good things in our lives?

James 1:17 All generous giving and every perfect gift is from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (above), coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or the slightest hint of change. 1:18 By his sovereign plan he gave us birth through the message of truth, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Is God in control in your life?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Judgment)

Matthew 25:31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 25:32 All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (separate) people one from another like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 25:33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. 25:34 Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 25:36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

Summarize Ecclesiastes 3

Next Time Ecclesiastes 12

Memorize Ecclesiastes 12:13

Not used:

1 Timothy 1:17 to the King eternal, immortal, invisible … be honor and glory forever and ever

2. What is time?

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God …

Isaiah 25:6,7 He will swallow up death for all time

Matthew 2:7 Herod ascertained from them the time the star appeared

Hebrews 10:12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God

V2 Hebrews 9:27 man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment

???Psalm 39:1,2 that I may not sin with my tongue

Revelation 8:1 And when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour

1 Peter 4:17 for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God

Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God – the one who is, and who was, and who is still to come – the All-Powerful!

(Glc) alpha is A in Greek alphabet; omega is “Z”

Romans 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

V7 How does this relate to witnessing to non-Christians?

Amos 5:12,13 at such a time the prudent person keeps silent, for it is an evil time

Acts 18:9,10 Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent

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# **Leader May 18, 2008 Ecclesiastes Chapter 12**

Quiz Write Ecclesiastes 12:13 on the back of this page.

Do some enjoy their lives? Do some just endure life without fulfillment?

Think About \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (God)

Read Ecclesiastes **12:1-5** So remember your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Creator) in the days of your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (youth) – before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”;

v1 What does it mean to “remember your Creator?”

..think about God … acknowledge him as creator, as authority

..think and take action, make your thoughts effective

Why is there an admonition to young people to remember God?

…make your life fulfilling, it can be easy to ignore God when things seem to be going well with health, activities, etc.

What is the problem with finding pleasure in the days when you are young and then seeking God when you are older?

(Glc) you don’t have as good a life when you are young then

(Glc) you disobey and dishonor God

Read Deuteronomy **6:20-25** When your children ask you later on, “What are the stipulations, statutes, and ordinances that the Lord our God commanded you?” **6:21** you must say to them, “We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt in a powerful way. **6:22** And he brought signs and great, devastating wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh, and on his whole family before our very eyes. **6:23** He delivered us from there so that he could give us the land he had promised our ancestors. **6:24** The Lord commanded us to obey all these statutes and to revere him so that it may always go well for us and he may preserve us, as he has to this day. **6:25** We will be innocent if we carefully keep all these commandments before the Lord our God, just as he demands.”

2. Think About \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Growing Old)

What is being described in verses 2 – 5a?

..v2 loss of eyesight ..even not seeing the blue sky after rain?

..v3 trembling hands, weak back? ..loss of teeth .. dim eyesight

..v4 end loss of hearing

..v5 dizzy? Difficulty walking, loss of desires, death

3. Think About \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Death) verses 5b-8

Read verses 5b - 8

**12:6** before the silver cord is removed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the well, or the water wheel is broken at the cistern – **12:7** and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the life’s breath returns to God who gave it. **12:8** “Absolutely \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(futile)!” laments the Teacher, “All of these things are futile!”

“The New Bible Commentary Revised” D. Guthrie and J. Motyer eds. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (1970) page 577 “The ‘problem of youth’ which bulks so large in our time is in great measure the consequence of a false perspective, a blurring of the horizons, the playing of blind man’s bluff with death, which is one of the chief follies of the age.”

Glc V6 things falling apart, coming to an end

Glc v7 Genesis 2:7 2:7 The Lord God formed the man from the soil of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

V8 Is everything meaningless?

Some other verses in Ecclesiastes that speak to futile things.

**1:14** I reflected on everything that is accomplished by man on earth,

and I concluded: Everything he has accomplished is futile – like chasing the wind!

**2:1** I thought to myself, “Come now, I will try self-indulgent pleasure to see if it is worthwhile.” But I found that it also is futile. **2:2** I said of partying, “It is folly,” and of self-indulgent pleasure, “It accomplishes nothing!”

**5:10** The one who loves money will never be satisfied with money, he who loves wealth will never be satisfied with his income. This also is futile.

**6:9** It is better to be content with what the eyes can see than for one’s heart always to crave more. This continual longing is futile – like chasing the wind.

Is it easier for Christians to go through old age than non-Christians?

**Psalm 92:12-15** The godly grow like a palm tree; they grow high like a cedar in Lebanon. **92:13** Planted in the Lord’s house, they grow in the courts of our God. **92:14** They bear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fruit) even when they are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (old); they are filled with vitality and have many leaves. **92:15** So they proclaim that the Lord, my protector, is just and never unfair.

# (Glc) the fruit is the praise to God

Isaiah **46:3** “Listen to me, O family of Jacob, all you who are left from the family of Israel, you who have been carried from birth, you who have been supported from the time you left the womb. **46:4** Even when you are old, I will take care of you, even when you have gray hair, I will carry you. I made you and I will support you; I will carry you and rescue you.

(Glc) We have hope.

Acts **24:15** I have a hope in God (a hope that these men themselves accept too) that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

Romans **5:1** Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **5:2** through whom we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of God’s glory. **5:3** Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **5:4** and endurance, character, and character, hope. **5:5** And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

What are some ways that we can prepare for old age?

Is it important for us to take death seriously?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Speak) Wisely

Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-12

**12:9** Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also taught knowledge to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (people); he carefully evaluated and arranged many proverbs. **12:10** The Teacher sought to find delightful words, and to write accurately truthful sayings. **12:11** The words of the sages are like prods, and the collected sayings are like firmly fixed nails; they are given by one shepherd. **12:12** Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. There is no end to the making of many books, and much study is exhausting to the body.

How can we evaluate our speech to non-Christians?

Acts **26:22-23** I have experienced help from God to this day, and so I stand testifying to both small and great, saying nothing except what the prophets and Moses said was going to happen: **26:23** that the Christ was to suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, to proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

1 Corinthians **1:22-25** For Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks ask for wisdom, **1:23** but we preach about a crucified Christ, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. **1:24** But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. **1:25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

1 Corinthians **2:1-2** When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with superior eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed the testimony of God. **2:2** For I decided to be concerned about nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(Conclusion)

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 **12:13** Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_\_ (Fear) God and keep his commandments, because this is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (whole) duty of man. **12:14** For God will evaluate every deed, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

How do we increase our fear of God and increase our obedience to his commands?

Hebrews 4:9-13 **4:9** Consequently a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. **4:10** For the one who enters God’s rest has also rested from his works, just as God did from his own works. **4:11** Thus we must make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following the same pattern of disobedience. **4:12** For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart. **4:13** And no creature is hidden from God, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (render) an account.

2 Corinthians 5:9,10 **5:9** So then whether we are alive or away, we make it our ambition to please him. **5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil.

Ecclesiastes Summary

What is in this book that can be used in your life?

What is in this book that can speak to non-Christians?

Homework: Memorize Ecclesiastes 12:13

Not used:

James 1:2-8 **1:2** My brothers and sisters, consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials, **1:3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **1:4** And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything. **1:5** But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without reprimand, and it will be given to him. **1:6** But he must ask in faith without doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed around by the wind. **1:7** For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, **1:8** since he is a double-minded individual, unstable in all his ways.

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**the following are 10 lessons used in 1997**

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9/7/97 Ecclesiastes lesson 1

(DB)Resource books: Ecclesiastes, God’s Wisdom For Evangelism by Dee Brestin;

(DH) The Art of Staying Off Dead-End Streets by Richard De Haan;

(CS) Living on the Ragged Edge by Chuck Swindoll

(WYC) The Wycliffe Bible Commentary

(NBD) New Bible Dictionary

The name of the book can be translated as “the preacher” or “gatherer”.

(NBD) The book is for the general public whose view is limited by the horizon.

(NBD) The book is a good description of the result of the fall of man and thus the world

Genesis 3:17-19. 17Then to Adam He said, «Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; 19By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.»

Romans 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now

(NBD) The phrase vanity of vanities is a verdict upon the misguided human endeavour to treat the created world as an end in itself.

(NBD) The book seeks to dispel all false hopes from the minds of men

(NBD) The writer may not have been Solomon but instead a person who labeled the book this way to indicate the type of literature contained in the book. The label is not intended to deceive anyone.

Survey of the book

The book alternates between an earthly view of life and a heavenly view.

Earthly view begins at 1:2, 3:16, 5:8, 6:1, 8:14

Heavenly view at 2:24, 5:1, 5:18, 7:1, 9:17

Ecclesiastes 12:8-14 the conclusion gives us insight into the book’s purpose

What is the difference between a goad and a nail?

(DH) a goad is a prod, a nail is an anchor

(NDB) a goad is a long-handled, pointed instrument used to urge on the oxen while plowing. A nail is a metal nail or pin for driving into wood or other material to hold objects together or left projecting to suspend objects

(DH) Solomon was goaded by the thoughts of the brevity of life and nature’s aimlessness as he ignored the scriptures and looked for God in nature.

(DH) goads are the wisdom of man – his best thoughts as he confronts life’s problems

(DH) nails are the collected sayings, scripture

Look for goads and nails in the book of Ecclesiastes.

We need to decide if we want a deeper appreciation for the meaning for living. We also should develop a humble attitude before God.

Read 1:1-2 in more than one version. Who is the author? How is the reader brought to attention?

(DB) Hebrew for vanity = vapor, breath, (Isaiah 57:13, Proverbs 21:6) something which is transitory, passing swiftly away

Isa 57:13 When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you. But the wind will carry all of them up, And a breath will take them away. But he who takes refuge in Me will inherit the land And will possess My holy mountain.»

Prov 21:6 The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue Is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.

(WYC) the repetition stresses the vanity, almost shouts it

Read 1:3-11 Have you ever had the view of life that it was a boring, meaningless experience? What caused that view?

Read these passages and identify what is vapor and what is permanent.

Luke 12:19 – 21 And I will say to my soul, «Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.»' 20«But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

21«So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.»

# **1 Peter 1:24,25** For, «all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. the grass withers, and the flower falls off, 25but the word of the lord endures forever.» And this is the word which was preached to you.

John 6:27; 27«Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal

John 6:48-50 I am the bread of life. 49«Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50«This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

2 Corinthians 4:17- 5:1 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5:1 FOR we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Matthew 6:19-20 «Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20«But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Psalm 49:11 For he sees that even wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others. 11Their inner thought is that their houses are forever And their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names. 12But man in his pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish. 13This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. 14As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. 15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. 16Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; 17For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. 18Though while he lives he congratulates himself -- And though men praise you when you do well for yourself -- 19He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. 20Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish.

Online Bible cross ref for verse 3

Pr 23:5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven. {set...: Heb. cause thine eyes to fly upon}

Isa 55:2 Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. {spend: Heb. weigh}

Hab 2:13 Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? {for...: or, in vain?}

Hab 2:18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? {maker of...: Heb. fashioner of his fashion}

Mt 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mr 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Mr 8:37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. {Labour not: or, Work not}

(WYC) man comes and goes but the earth remains

(WYC) Hebrew for profit = advantage

What is the meaning of the phrase under the sun ?

What goads do you see in this section?

(DH) brevity of life, aimlessness of nature

(DH) you can’t find God in (the behavior of) nature if you bypass scripture … go to church, not outdoors on Sunday

(DH) the contrast between sunny days and tornado destruction confuses the unsaved, they don’t see God in these extremes of nature … God is revealed in nature Romans 1:20, Psalm 19:1-3 but the view of God through nature is clouded. The creations is under a curse due to the fall and man is blinded by his sinfulness.

Romans 1: 20-22 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Psalm 19:1-3 THE heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. 3There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.

Are there any nails in this section?

(DH) No but the New Testament has nails

Do you have a view of life that extends beyond the horizon?

Why do some people think that work is meaningless?

Does your work have meaning?

Colossians 1:9,10 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Colossians 3:17,23 - 25 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. 23Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

1 Corinthians 15:14,17 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; 14and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. 15Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.

Does your life have a purpose?

Does history repeat itself?

(NBD) crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind repeat there is progress followed by regress

The unsaved perhaps would ask to see something new under the sun.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Revelation 21:3-5 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, «Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.» 5And He who sits on the throne said, «Behold, I am making all things new.» And He said, «Write, for these words are faithful and true.»

What has become new in your life?

Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 Why do people say “ignorance is bliss”?

What goad do you see in this section?

(DH) the bankruptcy of human wisdom

Can human wisdom come up with true meaning for life?

(DH) the nail of truth is found in 1 Cor

Read portions of 1 Corinthians 1 and 2

1 Corinthians 1:18-23, 26-29, 30 18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is written, «I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.» 20Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29so that no man may boast before God. 30But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31so that, just as it is written, «LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.»

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 AND when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

Is God’s wisdom more satisfying than man’s wisdom? Explain.

See also Acts 17:18 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. 18And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, What would this idle babbler wish to say?» Others, «He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,» -- because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

V 13,14 God has placed a heavy burden on men

(WYC) v15 what is crooked = life is full of paradoxes and anomalies that cannot be solved v18 the search for life’s meaning proves frustrating and brings mental and spiritual pain. There does not seem to be any consistent standard for life upon which one may base his conduct

V 15 there are unsolvable problems

(DH) The more Solomon searched for answers the more questions he came up with. As his knowledge increased so did his despair. Man has failed to create utopia.

(NBC) man’s wisdom has a hole at the center which needs God’s wisdom

James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy

1 Corinthians 2:7 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

Does Jesus give peace?

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.»

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lesson 2 (I copied lessons 2 through 10 from original word files to here in 2022)

# **September 14, 1997 Ecclesiastes**

Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

The Preacher tries to find fulfillment in other areas after not finding it in wisdom (at the end of chapter 1).

What is wrong with pleasure?

QUEST It does not give meaning to life. It is short-lived and superficial It is just an anesthetic for life

What are the pleasures which were sought out?

V2-3 laughter, wine, folly

V4-6 great projects, houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, water works

V7 male and female slaves large herds and flocks

V8 amassed silver and gold, treasure, men and women singers, a harem

V9 greatness

V10a denied himself nothing his eyes desired

In what ways do non-Christians and Christians seek pleasure today?

Put verse 11 into your own words.

Was the Preacher successful in finding fulfillment? Why or Why not.

V11

Can a Christian have a joyful life?

What would you say to the non-Christian who says “My life isn’t accomplishing anything.”

What would you say to the Christian who says “My life isn’t accomplishing anything.”

Are our accomplishments for our glory or God’s glory?

Read Ecclesiastes 3:13

Read Philippians 3:19

How does the lifestyle of a Christian contrast with this lifestyle?

What leads to true happiness?

See Romans 8

Romans 8:5

What is “living according to the Spirit?”

How can we set our mind on the things of the Spirit?

What suggestions would you make for leading a conversation with a non-Christian towards a discussion of the pursuit of pleasure.

Could you paraphrase Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 for a non-Christian?

Read Ecclesiastes 2:12-17

What “vanities” are described in this section?

Is wisdom better than folly?

What do the wise non-Christians and the foolish non-Christians have in common?

Why do some people want to be famous?

Is this something that we should strive towards?

V16 Does death make everything in life insignificant?

QUEST Not when Jesus has triumphed over death.

Read Ecclesiastes 2:18-23

Who are you working for?

Have you ever seen verse 19 in action in this world?

Has something that you spent a lot of time and money on ever turned out to be “vanity?”

What is the price of striving?

Can we strive for anything?

Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

Is this passage a goad or a nail?

NAIL of divine truth

Psalms 1

Matthew 6:11

Colossians 3:22-24

Proverbs 1:7 the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord

How can labor be good?

How does being a Christian change our attitude regarding work?

QUEST Contentment comes through a life of faith and obedience.

How does God direct the sinner?

Proverbs 11:4,7

Proverbs 13:9,21-22

Is it true that some rich and famous people are not really in control of their lives?

Faith brings wisdom and joy

Eccl 2:26

Gal 5:22-23

James 1:5-8

Proverbs 3:5-6

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lesson 3  **September 28, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 3**

CS Chuck Swindoll Book Ragged Edge

NBD New Bible Dictionary

1. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

2. What is time?

CS book “an interval in which things happen” something that always keeps moving forward

Something that means more to people than it means to God

Something that God steps into as necessary

CS we need to invest in time wisely and find ways to enjoy it while it is ours to claim

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God …

Genesis 1:14,15 let them be for signs and for seasons, for days and for years

Isaiah 25:6,7 He will swallow up death for all time

Hosea 10:12 it is time to seek the Lord (written to rebellious ones)

Matthew 2:7 Herod ascertained from them the time the star appeared

Matthew 24:45,46 Who is the faithful slave whom his master put in charge to give them their food at the proper time?

Matthew 26:18 my time is at hand

Mark 1:14,15 Jesus came saying “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand …”

Mark 13:30-32 But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone

John 7:5-9 my time has not yet fully come

Acts 1:6,7 It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.

Galatians 6:9 in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary

1 Timothy 1:17 to the King eternal, immortal, invisible … be honor and glory forever and ever

1 Timothy 2:5,6who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time

Hebrews 10:12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God

1 Peter 4:17 for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God

2 Peter 3:8 with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day

Revelation 1:3 the time is near

4. What does verse 1 mean to you?

NBD People view cycles of time, cycle theory of Big Bang

God has a linear view of time, moving to a conclusion of events

5. Verses 2 – 8 Do these verses tell what life should be like or what it is actually like?

QUEST What it is actually like.

6. Does man have much control over the timing of events?

GLC maybe we are close to the end time because man is trying to change the timing of some of these events … playing God

V2 Hebrews 9:27 man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment

7. V7 How does this relate to witnessing to non-Christians?

Amos 5:12,13 at such a time the prudent person keeps silent, for it is an evil time

Psalm 39:1,2 that I may not sin with my tongue

Revelation 8:1 And when he broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour

Acts 18:9,10 Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent

8. Discuss other verses How does God fit into these events? Does God have a plan?

9. If God has a plan, does this give us any consolation?

Romans 8:28 God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

10. Read v 9 – 11

Isaiah 55:8 my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways

11. V11 Is it important to you that God has made everything appropriate in its time?

12. Do people have a curiosity about tomorrow?

CS Can we handle life before we are ready to face death?

13. Can we plan ahead for eternity?

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name.

14. Read v 12 – 15

Is this a goad or a nail? How should we view the good things in our lives?

James 1:17 Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above

15. Is God in control in your life?

16. Read v 16 – 22

V 16 Is this a goad or a nail?

Do you ever see people cut in line? Cheat? Are there unsolved crimes? Corruption by people in power?

17. V 17 Is this a goad or a nail?

Matthew 25:31-46 when the Son of Man comes in his glory he will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left

18. V 18 - 22 Are we just beasts?

Genesis 1:27 And God created man in his own image

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lesson 4  **October 5, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 4**

Finish Chapter 3

16. Read v 16 – 22 V 16 Is this a goad or a nail?

Do you ever see examples of this?

17. V 17 Is this a goad or a nail?

Matthew 25:31-46 the Son of Man … will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left

18. V 18 - 22 Are we just beasts? Genesis 1:27 And God created man in his own image

Read Chapter 4: 1 – 3

What does it take to see the tears of the oppressed?

\*\* get close to them

Why did no one comfort them?

\*\* afraid of the powerful oppressors? Glc

Have you ever received comfort from another person or from God?

\*\* John 14:16 he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever

\*\* John 14:26-27 the comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, … Peace I leave with you …

What does it take to see oppression in our world today?

What should our response be?

\*\* as you have received comfort, comfort one another

What do unbelievers think about oppression and conditions in the world today?

As a Christian, what can you tell them?

1 Peter 4:19 let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right

Why were the dead congratulated?

\*\* glc they were no longer under oppression

\*\* The one who has never existed is better off than the dead and those still living since the unborn have not yet seen the evil in the world.

Read Chapter 4: 4 – 8

What is seen as a motivation for work? Does this motivation exist today?

What should our motivation for work be?

V5 this is a reference to starving

Put verse 6 into your own words.

# **Why is too much work vanity?**

\*\* glc prevents you from enjoying living

Proverbs 15:16,17 Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil

Ps 37:16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

Do you think any of this applies to a single non-Christian?

What advice is here for single Chrisitans?

Read Chapter 4: 9 – 12

What are the advantages of having a friend or companion?

DeHaan .. 1) rocky uneven roads, long robes would get tangled in your feet when you fell

2) cold nights in the desert, no heat in sleeping quarters, huddle together for warmth, 3) when traveling with another you are less likely to be robbed

DeHaan a group of people working together is more effective than people doing separate things

Was Adam complete before Eve was created? Genesis 2:20

Later read 1 Corinthians 12 the church body is made of many parts, working together

Genesis 2:18 it is not good for man to be alone

Read Chapter 4:13 – 16

Why is the poor, wise lad better than the old, foolish king?

\*\* glc the king has chosen a bad path and will likely finish his life this way but the lad has opportunity for better choices. Also, v15, the people abandon the king and give their attention to the lad

What will happen to the lad (verse 16)?

\*\* glc the people who come later will not like him

Have you ever been popular or wanted to be popular?

What is true about popularity?

\*\* it disappears quickly

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lesson 5 October 19, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 5

# 1. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

What does “guard your steps as you go to the house of God” tell us?

Glc be careful in your actions, listen rather than talk a lot, let your words be few

Glc be humble

Ex 3:5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy ground.

Jos 5:15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

2Ch 26:16 ¶ But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

Ps 89:7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.

Isa 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? {to appear: Heb. to be seen}

Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting. {iniquity: or, grief}

Isa 1:14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

Isa 1:15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. {make...: Heb. multiply prayer} {blood: Heb. bloods}

Isa 1:16 ¶ Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Isa 1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. {relieve: or, righten}

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Isa 1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

Isa 1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

1Co 11:22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. {have not: or, are poor?}

Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: {let...: or, let us hold fast}

Heb 12:29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Ge 4:3 ¶ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. {in process...: Heb. at the end of days}

Ge 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: {flock: Heb. sheep, or, goats}

Ge 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Pr 15:8 ¶ The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.

Pr 15:8 ¶ The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.

Later..read Psalm 50

Mt 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Swindoll prepare for worship, don’t carry on small talk conversations for a long time, quiet your heart before the service

Swindoll Psalm 46:10 cease, stop striving and know that I am God

Why should we show reverence for God?

Glc v 2 God is in heaven and you are on the earth

Isa 55:9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Do we ever fail to show reverence for God?

Read Matthew 15:7-9 These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me

De Haan repeating the same words over and over without giving any thought to the words

GLC are some choruses and hymns too familiar ? do we daydream during the singing instead of focusing on God? Do we give offerings casually without thanking God for provision? Without viewing it as an offering to God?

How could you help a non Christian in thinking about reverence for God?

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-6 pray on behalf of all men … God desires all men to be saved

There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

Read 1 Samuel 15:3,10 – 23 Saul disobeys God regarding destroying the Amalekites

From God’s view, what is the difference between a fool and someone who is not a fool?

Glc fools disobey, talk a lot, rationalize their actions those who are not fools listen and obey,

Glc Saul did not think correctly and recognize the sin that he was doing before Samuel confronted

Is it important to listen to God before we serve him?

Glc we need to know how he wants us to serve him

2. What is a vow?

Read Deuteronomy 23:21-23 whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do

When do many vows get made?

DeHaan in times of crisis … and then they are forgotten after the crisis

Have you ever made a vow before God?

Glc wedding, promise God to do something or not to do something

Life Ap Bible page 401

Rash vows Genesis 28:20 Judges 11:30,31 1 Samuel 1:9-11 1 Samuel 14:24-45

2 Samuel 9:7 2 Samuel 15:21 1 Kings 22:14 Job 27:2 Mark 6:22,23 Acts 18:18

Ge 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

Ge 28:22 And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Nu 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. {break: Heb. profane}

Nu 30:3 ¶ If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, *being* in her father's house in her youth;

Nu 30:4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

Nu 30:5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.

Jud 11:30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

De 23:21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

De 23:22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.

De 23:23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; *even* a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

Ps 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

Ps 76:11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared. {unto him...: Heb. to fear}

Matthew 5:33-37 let your statement be Yes or No and anything beyond these is of evil

Glc trying to put God’s authority into your statement

Swindoll have commitments that you keep God doesn’t forget our vows

Jonah 2:2-10 That which I have vowed I will pay then the Lord commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land … Jonah was going to keep a vow he had made earlier … perhaps to be God’s prophet and go anywhere God sent him

3. Read Ecclesiastes 5:8,9 oppression of the poor, denial of justice

Does corruption still take place today? Why?

DeHaan wealth can destroy character

4. Read Ecclesiastes 5:10 – 17 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money … vanity

Why can’t money satisfy?

DeHaan people think that “happiness is” being just a little higher on the ladder of success than others

Swindoll the problem is in loving money, not in possessing money

Mt 6:19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Mt 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Lu 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Luke 12:16-21 the rich man planned to build bigger barns .. God said to him “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you …” So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God

Describe the problems than excess money can cause.

Glc v10. No satisfaction v11 consumption increases v12 can’t sleep v13 hoarding hurts the owner v14 riches lost by bad investments v16 toiling for the wind v17 eats in darkeness, vexed, angry, sick DeHaan great disappointment when great riches are lost ..

Glc people have been known to jump out of windows 1929

DeHaan people become slaves to the quest for money

Swindoll the rich have so much on their minds that they have a hard time sleeping there is so much to do!

Glc And be careful of hanging around a rich man and becoming dependent, if he falls and you depend on him you are in trouble

Ps 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Ps 127:2 *It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: *for* so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Pr 3:24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

Jer 31:26 Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

Read 1 Timothy 6:3-11 godliness is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment

…those who want to get rich fall into temptation … foolish and harmful desires .. the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil … some have wandered from the faith … pursue righteousness

Is it foolish to hoard wealth?

How should excess money be used?

5. Now we come to a nail. Read Ecclesiates 5:18-20 Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting .. enjoy labor For every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God

How should Christians view wealth and possessions?

Brestin: pursuit of wealth is foolish, yet wealth itself is not wrong .. it is a gift from God

Swindoll enjoy life, don’t put top priority on making more just to be making more

Laugh more, find pleasure in simple things Claim the gift of fulfillment in your work Claim the gift of contentment in your heart look for ways to discover contentment.

Matthew 6:33 but seek first his kingdom … and all this shall be added unto you

1Ti 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; {uncertain...: Gr. uncertainty of riches}

De 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

Ps 37:16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

De 28:8 The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. {storehouses: or, barns}

De 28:9 The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

De 28:10 And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

De 28:11 And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. {in goods: or, for good} {body: Heb. belly}

De 28:12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

De 28:47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*;

Ps 4:6 ¶ *There be* many that say, Who will shew us *any* good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

Ps 4:7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

Isa 64:5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, *those that* remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

Isa 65:13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

Isa 65:14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. {vexation: Heb. breaking}

Isa 65:21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

Isa 65:22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. {shall long...: Heb. shall make them continue long, or, shall wear out}

Isa 65:23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

Isa 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Should Christians feel guilty if they are blessed with wealth?

Martin Luther: the proper (attitude) is that of the man who lives his life in the midst of these things and yet is not carried away by his affection for them

Does God want us to enjoy the earth and the things in it?

How does a person avoid having a wrong attitude concerning money and wealth?

Job 1:20-22 The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

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lesson 6 October 26, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 6 and 7

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Job 1:20-22 The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

2. Read Chapter 6: 1 – 9 Does wealth guarantee enjoyment of life?

Is the pursuit of wealth a virtue? Is wealth pursued today?

Is it possible for a Christian to be enslaved to material things?

What are some symptoms of being enslaved to material things? What are some solutions?

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-8 godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing we will be content with that”

Read Luke 12:13-15 Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.

Quest: Eccl 6:3 in OT times a good burial was a witness to a good life

What complications do material things add to our lives?

When does someone have too many things?

Glc maybe when he cant really enjoy them … not enough time or money to use them rightly

And if they become distractions from God or family or people

Quest Eccl 6:9 a roving appetite is not satisfied with what is at hand Proverbs 17:24 the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth (a bird in the hand is worth 2 in the bush)

Does generosity and living a contented life become a witness to non-Christians?

3. Read Chapter 6: 10 – 12 who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile life?

How would you answer this question?

Wycliffe it is useless to try to change things, and to wish for more than one has. Submission to the fixed order is best, since God has determined things the way they are

Quest apart from God there is no meaning

4. Read Chapter 7:1 – 9 What things are “better” ? Explain why each is better.

Brestin: overall theme live realistically see what is really important in the shole scope of life and death

V1 Good name (good reputation) at the end of life you know you have made something out of life

Read Proverbs 3:1-4 do not forget my teaching … let your heart keep my commandments … do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is to be more desired than great riches

V 2 – 4 Right attitude about life as opposed to levity… understanding of sorrow and death gives one a proper appreciation of life … funerals remind one of the need for wise living

V5 – 7 the rebuke of the wise

Proverbs 13:18 poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored

Proverbs 15:32 he who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding

DeHaan V6 there is not lasting, useful heat in the bushes under the pot .. merriment does not provide long term solutions

V8a the end of a matter is better than its beginning

V8b – 9 Patience anger resides in the bosom of fools

Gal 5:25,26 do not be envious of each other

Ephesians 4:1-3 be humble and gentle

DeHaan patience has a long term view, anger a short term reaction to a situation

V10 – 12 not the “good old days”

Quest: there has always been sin in the world

DeHaan: God has not changed

Brestin: Don’t yearn for the past, deal with the present

Wisdom plus money is a double blessing

V 13 – 14 Consider the work of God In the day of prosperity be happy But in the day of adversity consider .. God has made the one as well as the other so that man may not discover anything that will be after him

Brestin: the wise man knows how to act in the good and bad times

Job 2:10 shall we accept good from God and not trouble?

No Sunday School lesson next week. The adults will tour the children’s Sunday School rooms to learn about missions.

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lesson 7 November 16, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 7:15 – 8

Read Ecclesiastes 7:15 – 18

V15 perhaps it is not a reward for a man to live long in his wickedness

What wrong conclusions might we draw from seeing the righteous die young and the wicked living a long life?

Answer ... v16 and v17 1. Self-righteousness 2) choosing to live a wicked life

If a righteous person dies young does that mean that the person offended God?

Glc Enoch and Elijah were taken up by God

If we conclude that is the case how do we prevent it from happening in our life?

.. strict adherence to religious traditions? Following man made religious laws?

DeHaan ... pharisees

Read Matthew 23:23,24 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites

QUEST we can’t be too righteous if our righteousness comes from God

Brestin Does excessive “religion” displease God?

Brestin What does he want from us?

V17 If we are not overly wicked is it OK to be a little bit wicked?

V18 avoid extremes

Brestin In what areas do you feel moderation is important for a Christian?

Jer 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. {from them: Heb. from after them}

Mal 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Lu 1:50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Read Ecclesiastes 7:19 - 22

V19 How does wisdom give power?

GLC avoids wasted time and resources

V20 there is not a righteous man on earth ... who never sins

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 5:8 while we were still sinners, Christ died for us

V21 How do you respond when people talk about you to others in a negative way?

... don’t pay attention

... recall that you have sinned in this also

... be self controlled

SWINDOL How do you respond when you are overly praised?

SWINDOL Wisdom will filter both the buttery praise and the wrong criticism.

Should servants just be “Yes” men?

Glc no honest answers are best

Proverbs faithful are the wounds of a friend

Why should the wise man be tolerant of others?

Luke 6:41,42 Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

Read Ecclesiastes 7:23 - 26

Glc Solomon had trouble being wise

DeHaan Solomon had trouble trying to solve worldly problems with worldly wisdomm

V25 Solomon tries to understand the stupidity of wickedness and the madness of folly

GLC ... wicked people aren’t thinking correctly

Folly has no logic, no plan, it doesn’t get anywhere

V26 GLC Those who are pleasing to God will escape from the immoral woman

GLC this sounds like a promise, a reward for being pleasing to God

1 Kings 11:1-6 Solomon loved many foreign women ... his wives turned his heart after other gods

Proverbs 6:20 – 7:27 warnings against adultery

Read Ecclesiastes 7:27 – 8:1

V28 I found one upright man among a thousand but not one upright woman among them all

SWINDOLL perhaps Solomon’s large harem distorted his view of women?

V29 What does the wise man realize about men and women?

Did God make us like this?

Genesis 1st three chapters ... God made man in his image

Colossians 3:5-10 put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature ... put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator

Ephesians 4:20-24 put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. {desires: Gr. wills}

Tit 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

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Tit 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

V8:1 How does God’s wisdom change the appearance of a person?

Glc the stern face beams.

Can people be too serious? Yes laughter is good once in a while

Mt 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Ac 6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Read Ecclesiastes 8:2 - 9

What authorities are there in your life?

How does the wise man respond to authority?

Quest Are some rulers beyond authority?

1 Peter 2: 13,14 and v 18 and 20

v9 how does the person in authority get hurt when he lords over others?

Glc less production from workers, poor public relations, sales etc.

Read Ecclesiastes 8:10 - 15

V10 What is futile when the wicked are buried?

V11 What can cause a sinner to increase his sins?

V12 Who is the ultimate judge?

V14 what is futile in this passge?

Glc righteous receive according to the deeds of the wicked see Sunday Paper

V15 Why would Solomon recommend eat, drink, be merry?

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, I will hope in Him

Read Ecclesiastes 8:16 - 17

Did God do a big or little work?

How can man discover the work done under the sun?

What would you tell a non-Christian scientist who is a friend of yours?

SWINDOLL admit that you are only human ... admit it daily

Admit that you cannot bring about change yourself.

Admit that you don’t understand why somethings happen and admit that you may never while on this earth understand why.

Ro 11:33 ¶ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

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lesson 8  **November 23, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 9**

Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men.

V1 we are in the hand of God … anything awaits

DeHaan From man’s perspective life does not favor good people over those who are evil.

Genesis 3:19 for you are dust and to dust you shall return

James 4:14-17 You do not know what your life will be like tomorrow

V3 the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts

Glc people make irrational choices, to their own hurt

Read Ecclesiates 9:4-6 a live dog is better than a dead lion

Swindoll dogs in Solomon’s day were despised mongrels

DeHaan At least the living have hope. To the man who ignores God’s revelation, to be dead is to be gone and forgotten. The man who does not possess the truth found in the Bible there is no evidence that moral conduct make any difference. The non-Christian are goaded by the thought that if there is a God, He does not seem to care whether people live an upright life or not.

Glc We should confront this attitude in non-Christians and explain to them what we know about God.

Phillipians 1:21-24 I have much desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-12 eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works

V7 Swindoll go on, get on with life, have a blast while you last

God is not our enemy, we are on his side if we are in Christ

We don’t have to live under guilt or lack of God’s approval

Oil is often the symbol of the Spirit of God .. live a pure and godly life, let the power of God’s Spirit flow through us

Enjoy life together with your spouse

V10 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in Victory.” … know that your toil is not in vain in the Lord

Colossians 3:23,24 do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

DeHaan When we die our opportunity for earthly service is ended. View our time in this sin-cursed world as the opportunity to offer unique service to God even though we know heaven will be far better.

John 9:1-4 a man blind from birth .. it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him … We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work

Galatians 6:7-10 God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. … let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary … let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith

V11,12 These observations can lead to feelings of fear and hopelessness. We all stand helpless before the unknown and need a source of confidence and understanding beyond ourselves.

Swindoll success is not what you think. The rat race is for empty headed rats, not intelligent clear thinking people.

Luke 34-36 Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap; .. but keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place

Read Ecclesiastes 9:13 – 18 a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

A situation like this is recorded in 2 Samuel 20

Do people sometimes fall short in giving proper thanks to others?

How would you respond if this happened to you?

Glc seek God’s praise , not the praise of men

Quest People often forget good advice after the problem has been solved.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts

Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Can you think of an example where sin of one person caused great loss?

V17,18 Joshua 7:1-26 Aachan took some of the things under the ban .. the men of Ai struck down about 36 of their men

Chp 9 Swindoll Human ability does not guarantee genuine success

Strength is more impressive but less effective than wisdom

Wise counsel is never popular, rarely obeyed and seldom remembered.

Human rulers shout out wise counselors and fools prefer the former

Read Ecclesiastes 10:1-7 Dead flies make a perfumer’s oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.

Glc A little foolishness can spoil wisdom and honor …

DeHaan Someone who begins to compromise will lose his esteem and honor

Swindoll Watergate Chappaquidick

DeHaan v2 Someone who leaves God’s way not only loses the ability to affect others for good, but will soon become a living testimonial to the foolishness of leaving the way of the Lord

Swindoll the right is the symbol of God’s way

Psalm 16:8 the Lord is at my right hand

Psalm 121:5 the Lord is your shade on your right hand

How can we be an influence for God in this world?

DeHaan avoid self confidence, avoid compromise

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Run in such a way that you may win … I buffet my body and make it my slave, … lest I should be disqualified

Proverbs 15:1 a gentle answer turns away wrath

DeHaan The man of faith is among the most blessed people on earth. 1) He lives in real joy and assurance by knowing that all his work and relationships have eternal significance; 2) he is not dismayed in times of adversity and trial

V7 When do slaves ride on horses and princes walk like slaves?

DeHaan When corruption distorts government. When the country is godless.

V7 & 8 fools = slaves rich = princes (have wisdom)

Read Ecclesiastes 10:8-11 If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success

DeHaan The slaves will not hold power indefinitely. The verses before and after these sayings are about living under wicked government. Cruel and unjust rulers put themselves in jeopardy by their very acts of tyranny. People will endure unjust condition just so long. A ruler who leaves out God is like one who uses a dull knife.

V11 Swindoll if the snake bites the onlookers they will not likely pay for the performance

Plan ahead, seek counsel before you fall

James 1:5 but if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God

Proverbs 2:1-9 treasure my commandments, make your ear attentive to wisdom

For the Lord gives wisdom … He is a shield to those who walk in integrity

Read Ecclesiastes 10:12-15 the fool multiplies words.

Who is a fool?

Psalm 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

Proverbs 14:8,9 the folly of fools is deceit, fools mock at sin

Proverbs 10:23 Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool

Proverbs 19:3 The foolishness of man suberts his way, and his heart rages against the Lord

Swindoll the fool dominates the conversation rather than receiving counsel Folly has nothing to do with IQ but has everything to do with stupidity

DeHaan The fool can’t even read road signs

Proverbs 18:2 a fool does not delight in understanding, but only in revealing his own mind

Proverbs 18:6 a fool’s lips bring strife and his mouth calls for blows

Read Ecclesiastes 10:16-20 Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time

Quest evil rulers just live for themselves. … leaders should be trained for leadership … slaves should not suddenly become leaders

V18 DeHaan Power in the hands of godless men works toward the deterioration of character, government is neglected, leaders lose their position of authority God has established moral law and He will not allow anyone to break His commandments with impunity

V19 money is the answer … this is the world’s view

DeHaan It is never right to harbor hatred against a leader, nor to make slanderous statements. The words you say get around (this even happened in Solomon’s time without electronic bugging).

Romans 13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

DeHaan 1st century Christians didn’t rebel even though they lived under persecution … they did refuse to worship Ceaser though

Proverbs 21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles

Swindoll “a little bird told me” came from this scripture

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lesson 9  **November 30, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 10:12-20 and 11**

Read Ecclesiastes 10:12-15 the fool multiplies words.

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Proverbs 18:6 a fool’s lips bring strife and his mouth calls for blows

James 1:19 everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry

Read Ecclesiastes 10:16-20 Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time

Quest evil rulers just live for themselves. … leaders should be trained for leadership … slaves should not suddenly become leaders

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DeHaan 1st century Christians didn’t rebel even though they lived under persecution … they did refuse to worship Ceaser though

NBC mere grumbling when there is no hope of action to change things is foolish

Proverbs 21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles

Swindoll “a little bird told me” came from this scripture

Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.

Why can giving to seven or eight people or ministries be better than just giving to one person or ministry?

Glc you might give more, bless more people, expand your realization of needs people have which you can help meet

Can someone share how this has had an effect in your life?

QUEST this may be a reference to investing in different business ventures If one venture fails others may succeed

NBC it may be using an example of investing to apply to Christian uncalculating charity

Swindoll book: sign along the Alaskan Highway Choose your rut carefully. You’ll be in it for the next 200 miles … don’t get in a rut, try different things, stay out of ruts, don’t settle for a drab predictable life

V1&2 DeHaan there is a danger that Christians who are in a world that lives “under the sun” may just do nothing constructive … so the Preacher gives a positive commandment

DeHaan when we give freely to others we may be sure of a bountiful return

V3 De Haan perhaps a reference that God will bring unjust kings crashing down

V4-6 When is the best time to divide your portion to seven or even to eight?

Proverbs 3:27-28 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,” when you have it with you.

Galatians 6:7-10 let us hot lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to tall men, and especiallly to those who are of the household of the faith

V4-6 DeHaan no one should fail to do the work God has given the person to do

V5 How well do you understand God’s ways?

Glc We understand the big picture, salvation we don’t understand how the details of daily living are being worked out by God

Do we understand God’s ways better than Solomon?

QUEST yes, because of Jesus we understand more about God

Hebrews 1:1-4 He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets … in these last days he has spoken to us in His Son

Read Psalm 139: 1-24 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it .. thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb

V6 Is it foolish to give money or other aid to someone when you can see that you won’t get anything back?

Glc no God will reward, the return blessing may come at unexpected times

Proverbs 21:13 He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered.

Should we walk by faith or by sight?

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 we walk by faith, not by sight

What does this mean: “walk by faith, not by sight” ?

2 Corinthians 4:17,18 we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1 Corinthians 15:58 be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully … God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed .. He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food

will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality

Luke 8:4-15 the parable of the sower

Do we always know whether the soil is good or rocky or filled with thorns etc. when we sow?

Should we sow the seed anyway?

Revelation 14:13 that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them

Chuck Swindoll: In the marines, 1958 Okinawa, he told the fellow soldier in the bunk below him that he was a Christian. The soldier told him to keep it to himself … few weeks later, Swindoll asked the person to help him review his memory verses .. He agreed but wouldn’t let Swindoll explain any verses to him … 1984 Swindoll got a phone call .. the soldier had just received Christ God brought in the harvest

The gospel song: sowing in the morning, sowing deeds of kindness, sowing in the noontime and the dewy eve

Read Ecclesiastes 11:7 – 10 If a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. … rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. Remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

What is your happiness based on?

Glc DeHaan faith in God, Jesus a living hope for eternal life knowing we have a relationship with God freedom that God gives us from sin’s domination

Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! … and the peace of God .. shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

V9,10 DeHaan God desires the young to be happy but they should view life as a whole. Our time on earth is only the prelude to eternity. Don’t just see “the here and now”. Look ahead to eternity. If one doesn’t have peace of mind regarding eternity then the pleasure of the moment is marred by the underlying realization that as a sinner you live under the sentence of death.

How should we enjoy life?

Is a Christian life just a set of restrictive rules that limit our joy in life?

Could you tell a non-Christian about the joy you have in your Christian life? What would you say?

NBC the uncertainty of the future makes the present all the more important

DeHaan You cannot fulfill the purpose for which He created you if you are alienated from the Lord.

V10 DeHaan the young should not give themselves over to sadness, and they should avoid physical distresses … these distresses will be with them as they age … consequences of sin

… the young can enjoy life without feelings of guilt if they don’t sin

Isaiah 26:1-3 The steadfast of mind thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in thee

1 Peter 5:6,7 Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you

V10 glc if you are young don’t be distressed about living for many more years in a world full of sin

Proverbs 16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives

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lesson 10  **December 7, 1997 Ecclesiastes Chapter 12**

Should we enjoy life or endure it?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-5 Remember your Creator in the days of your youth

What is wrong with “enjoying yourself” while you are young and turning to God when you are older?

Glc you don’t have as good a life when you are young then

Glc you disobey and dishonor God

Swindoll remember = Hebrew for act decisively on behalf of someone

What is being illustrated in verses 2 - 5?

Stedman …and NBC v 2 – 5 describe growing old decay of inner faculties … keepers of the house = hands strong men = legs grinders=teeth those that look through the windows=eyes

DeHaan can’t sleep well even though the hearing can’t appreciate music

DeHaan v5 almond tree = white hair grasshopper drags = old walk with shuffling steps

Desire no longer is stirred = physical desires have waned

Is it easier for a Christian or a non-Christian to face old age?

Psalm 92:12-15 the righteous … planted in the house of the Lord … they will still bear fruit in old age … proclaiming, “The Lord is upright”

Glc the fruit is the praise to God

What are some ways that we can prepare for old age?

LAB make your strength available to God when it is still yours. Don’t waste it on meaningless activities.

Read Ecclesiastes 12:6-8 Remember him

Is it important for us to take death seriously?

LAB things broken symbolize how quickly, easily, death comes to us

LAB v7,8 from the earthly point of view it is meaningless

Read Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

What is better : words of many wise men or the sayings given by one Shepherd?

NBC v11 great shepherd=God

NBC v12 warning against intellectualism

LAB v12 our life is short, spend time learning God’s truth, not men’s perception of truth

How do we increase our fear of God and increase our obedience to his commands?

LAB v13,14 Conclusion 1. Those who lack purpose in life should fear God and keep his commandments. We will not find purpose and meaning in life outside of God .. 2) Those who think life is unfair should remember that God will review every person’s life .. acknowledge the evil, foolishness and injustice in life but maintain a positive attitude and strong faith in God

DeHaan some prefer to omit the duty (it is not in the Hebrew) and give the translation as this is the whole of man , meaning that man reaches the full ideal for which God created him when he lives in the fear of God and keeps His commandments

Hebrews 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight

2 Corinthians 5:10,11a for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life Romans 10:13 whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved

Browse through the book of Ecclesiastes. Which part stands out to you? What is in this book that can be used in your life? What is in this book that can speak to non-Christians?

How can we avoid the mistakes that Solomon saw people making?

DeHaan people have two choices 1) a dead end street of a person’s own futile efforts 2) the perfect wisdom of God

Luke 12:15 be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions

James 1:2-4 consider it pure joy whenever you face trials .. the testing of your faith develops … maturity

Swindoll … don’t wait until everything is just right to enjoy life … discover joy in the struggle … happiness is for now, not when we retire

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