



SEIZE THE DAY

**THE BOOK OF
ECCLESIASTES**

**sermon notes and
study questions**

October 2023

ECCLESIASTES 1

WHY SHOULD I?



1. Do you tend toward 'overthinking' or 'underthinking'?

2. Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11. What is the mood of the writer?

3. Sum up the writers teaching on:-

Work:

Progress:

Satisfaction:

4. 'Secularism' derives meaning from the material and temporal world (rather than theological revelation). How could this passage be a correction to secularism?

5. Compare this passage to Mark 8:36.

6. Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18. In what ways is the writer arrogant? In what ways is he humble?

7. Why would wisdom lead to 'sorrow' and 'grief'?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. What is the problem with human wisdom?

9. When searching for true godly wisdom, how should a philosopher think about herself ?

10. What happens when we act without thinking?

ECCLESIASTES 3

WHEN SHOULD I?



1. Do you find time working for you or against you?

2. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. What does the poem paint about the human experience?

3. Which parts of the poem resonate with you most?

4. Read Ecclesiastes 3:9-15. What is it about life which renders it burdensome? (See also Ecclesiastes 1:3, 2:23, 2:26)

5. How does God's work contrast with human work?

6. How does reorienting our life to the Creator change the way we work?

7. Read Ecclesiastes 3:16-22. How is time a factor in God's response to wicked works? (See also 2 Peter 3:8-9)

8. What ultimately bursts our inflated view of self?

9. How can we live well in the present, given the nature of reality?

10. How does this passage shape our prayers in the good times? And in the bad times?

ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7

HOW SHOULD I
APPROACH GOD?



1. Discuss a time when you wish you had kept your mouth shut.

2. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-3. What is considered the most important way to relate to God. Why?

3. What should be avoided when relating to God? Why?

4. Read Isaiah 6:1-7. Why was Isaiah unprepared to meet with the LORD? How did the LORD solve it?

5. Read Proverbs 17:28. Discuss the power of silence.

6. Read Ecclesiastes 5:4-7. Why do people make vows and promises? Are they necessary?

7. Read Matthew 5:33-37. How does Jesus model reliability in speech?

8. What is the role of 'humility' when listening to God? (Proverbs 3:5-6)

9. How should we approach God? (Heb 10:19-22)

10. Assess the Teacher's search for wisdom. What tools is he using? Is he getting closer? What is helpful? What is unhelpful?

ECCLESIASTES 7:1-8:1

WHO SHOULD I
LISTEN TO?



1. Share a piece of advice you have received about life.

2. Read Ecclesiastes 7:1-12. Is the Teacher simply being morbid and gloomy talking about death? What wisdom is he promoting?

3. In what context is laughter not wholesome?

4. Why is it better to live with the end in mind?

5. Read Ecclesiastes 7:13-29. What limitations are there to the search and possession of wisdom?

6. How is avoiding excessive righteousness and excessive wickedness compatible with the fear of God?

7. What does this passage teach us about God and His ways? (See also Romans 11:33)

8. How should we avoid overstepping the mark in our pursuit of wisdom? (See also 1 Corinthians 1:17-21)

9. How is Christ himself the power of God and the wisdom of God? (See 1 Corinthians 1:24)

10. How does knowing Christ guard us from being disillusioned with life?

ECCLESIASTES 9:1-12

WHAT IS MY
DESTINY?



1. 'Empiricism' is a branch of philosophy that depends on observation and experience to uncover the truth of reality. Discuss the limitations of such discovery.

2. Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-2. How does this make you feel?

3. According to this passage which is better - to be righteous or wicked? Are you surprised by this?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-10. How is Paul's perspective different? How can he know?

5. Read Ecclesiastes 9:3-6. According to the Teacher, should we fear death?

6. How is death an equalizer?

7. Is 'death' often spoken and thought about? How does the Teacher go to a place where most people fear to tread?

8. Read 1 Peter 2:24. What is achieved by death?

9. Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-10. Sum up the Teacher's advice? How would he view wasted time and opportunity?

10. Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-25. How has God made the wise foolish? What role does 'faith' play in obtaining wisdom?

ECCLESIASTES 9:13-10:20

WHAT IS WISE?



1) Contrast worldly wisdom to heavenly wisdom.

2) Read Ecclesiastes 9:13-18. Why did the example of wisdom impress the writer?

3) What are the limitations and irony of the wisdom that has been discussed?

4) Read Ecclesiastes 10:1-7. How does the metaphor of a fly ruining the perfumer's oil apply to the influence of folly in a person's life?

5) Give examples of foolish mistakes that have had significant impacts on our lives (or other's lives) as we "have walked along the road" v.3?

6) Elaborate on the foolishness in high places v.4-7. How do we respond to difficult foolish rulers?

7) Read Ecclesiastes 10:8-15. Describe the unpredictability of life. Does foolishness play a role?

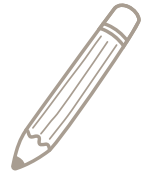
8) Contrast the words of the wise to the words of the fools.

9) Read Ecclesiastes 10:16-20. How does folly and wisdom affect the condition of a country?

10) How can we ensure that we value and remember wisdom in a world that often forgets?

ECCLESIASTES 12:6-14

WHAT WILL MAKE
A DIFFERENCE?



1. Re-read Ecclesiastes 1:1–2. Do you think people today would agree or disagree with this statement? In what ways might people try to “escape” from this observation?

2. Read Ecclesiastes 12:1–8. The Teacher uses a long list of metaphors in these verses. What do you think each image is trying to convey? What is “the big picture” of v2–7?

3. After everything the Teacher has searched out and sought to understand, in 12:8 how does his investigation finish?

4. If Ecclesiastes finished at this point, what would be the main point of the book?

5. Read Ecclesiastes 12:9–14. Although the Teacher is said to be wise (v9), where does he say true wisdom comes from?


6. Where does the world today look for wisdom? How should we be different?


7. Read John 10:7–18. The Teacher has observed that life is a repetitive, meaningless cycle resulting in old-age and death. How does Jesus—“the good shepherd”—speak into this bleak reality?

8. In what ways might you be tempted to arrive at the “worldly” conclusion of Ecclesiastes 12:8? How can you remind a) yourself, and b) others, of the ultimate reality found in the Wise Shepherd?

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