

# Ecclesiastes

## FOR BEGINNERS

MIKE MAZZALONGO

# STUDENT WORKBOOK

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# Ecclesiastes for Beginners

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**Mike Mazzalongo**

Ecclesiastes is the fascinating journal of a wise man's search for satisfaction and meaning without reference to God. In his life journey Solomon ultimately learns the valuable lesson that without God in one's life, that life is meaningless.



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# 1. Introduction to Ecclesiastes

In this first lesson, Mike reviews some of the basic information about this book. The class will review the life of the author, Solomon, and the circumstances surrounding the writing of this text.

## **ECCLESIASTES 1:1-18**

Setting the stage for the wisest man to have ever lived outside of Jesus, and what his life experiences allowed him to conclude. Always remember that the recorded pursuit of meaning and purpose was outside of God (above the sun).

### **Introduction – The book of Ecclesiastes is a personal journal**

a diary of one man's journey through life. It notes his loss of enthusiasm. It notes his observations searching for joy and satisfaction. It notes his conclusions from a lifetime of experiences.

This is the story of a man who “cut the cord.”

who did it all; who had every experience he could imagine then left us notes. This story is not theoreticla but from a life perspective.

## **I. Background**

### **A. Author**

Solomon: cf. King of Jerusalem 1:1; Wisest person to rule Jerusalem 1:16; Builder of projects 2:4-6; much wealth 2:8; large harem 2:8

### **B. Date**

925 BC

### **C. Theme**

Vanity a striving after the Wind. Purposelessness or meaninglessness. Without God!

The conclusion reached is that life when examined, will be found to be empty and meaningless.

Many have tried to inject meaning.

Materialism (life is about gathering and using resources); Existentialism (life is what you make it); Positivism (life is whatever works best for you); Postmodernism (life is the sum total of our history)

## II. Outline

Ecclesiastes is the journal of a man who is consciously examining his own life.

### A. Introducing the Journey - 1:1-11

Life is wearisome, with endless repetition.

### B. Pursuing the exploring - 1:12-6:9

- 1:12-18 Knowledge and Wisdom ends in grief and increasing pain

- 2:1-11 Pursuing pleasure and acquiring possessions are futile and unprofitable

- 2:12-17 Living wisely or Foolishly are equally empty since both end in death

- 2:18-3:22 Work ethic full of grief and emptiness in the end because you cannot keep what you earn

- 4:1-6:9 accumulating power and wealth unsatisfying and lead to frustration and dissatisfaction.

### C. Reflection and Summary - 6:10-12:14

- 6:10-11:6 Lasting purpose and Fulfillment only found in trusting relationship with God

- 11:7-12:8 When young remember and serve God

- 12:9-14 Fear God and keep His Commandments

## III. Introduction - 1:1-16

History Solomon lived in a time of peace where state revenue was not wasted on war but on luxury and experimentation. it allowed him the pursuits of this book.

Vs. 1-3 - Solomon states the basic premise of the book.

Life lived on a purely human level will be in the end worthless.

Vs. 4-11 – He presents various examples to support this premise.

1. The passing of the *Generations* – vs. 4

People are born then they die, nothing changes.


2. The cycles of *Nature* – vs. 5-8a

The seasons continue to change in their order, nothing changes, man cannot change that.


3. The curiosity of *Man* – vs. 8b

The seeking of answers only leads to more questions.


4. The absence of *Something New* – vs. 9-11

There is nothing new under the Sun.


Solomon's conclusions are based on the idea that for every universal, innate need of man there is an available and corresponding satisfaction. (i.e., Hunger – food; Sex – sex partner)

If a need doesn't appear to have an earthly satisfaction then it's satisfaction is beyond the earth.


In verses 12-18a, he explains how he has reached the conclusions that he's just stated.

Vs. 12-13a Solomon's wisdom was beyond common sense. It was ability to study; memorize; discern; and apply.


vs. 13b His conclusion is that it led to an unhappy business.


Vs. 14-18 He describes what this exercise has taught him

A. All lifestyles and their settings are meaningless.


B.  Nothing can be changed So many things wrong with the world,  
it cannot be numbered.


C. Even the pursuit of knowledge Is a chasing after the wind.


D. The constant desire to increase knowledge brings grief and pain.


### Summary

*Ecclesiastes* is a valuable book because it is not theoretical but based on a life  
experience.


## 2. The Pursuit of Pleasure

Solomon begins his search for happiness and contentment with the exploration of sensory pleasures and reports on his findings.

### ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11

We should learn from Solomon's journey and put earthly sensory pleasures in their proper priority and place.

#### Introduction

In his journal, Solomon details his life experience as he searches for happiness and satisfaction apart from God.

If life is not examined, one can go through life oblivious to truths about God.

He says that the examined life will be found meaningless if lived without faith and obedience to God.

cf. 2 Cor. 13:5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves...

In chapters 2 to 6 he describes 4 key pursuits that he examined:

- A. The pursuit of pleasure
- B. The pursuit of wisdom and folly
- C. The pursuit of meaningful work
- D. The pursuit of power and wealth

### I. The Pursuit of Pleasure - 2:1-11

Solomon begins where most of us would begin - the examination of sensory pleasure.

Vs. 1a "come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself"

Vs. 1b We get the conclusion before the experience. Solomon says behold this also was vanity.



Vs. 2-10 He goes on to describe several areas where he gave full vent to his desires:

1. Laughter – vs. 2 Solomon calls laughter madness (temporary insanity); and calls pleasure useless
2. Consumption of wine – vs. 3 He attempts using wine to find what was good for man to do, he tried to lay hold of folly, all by using his wisdom
3. Building projects – vs. 4-6 The satisfaction of great building projects did not sustain Solomon.
4. Sensuality – vs. 7-8 cf. 1 Kg. 11:3 Solomon had a great number of the pleasures of the sons of men and they did not sustain him.
5. The good life – vs. 9-10 whatever his eyes desired, he did. Solomon became great and surpassed all who were before him. His wisdom helped achieved his standard of living it never left him. I'd like to note that wisdom alone is no guarantee of salvation by itself. If wisdom stays worldly, so does it's rewards.

Vs. 11 – In this verse, he renders a verdict on what experiencing all of these great pleasures has taught him.

After considering all that he had done, he concluded all was vanity a striving after the wind, nothing to be gained under the sun.

## II. Summary

Seeking after sensual pleasure is the common man's treadmill.

This causes man to work too hard and die too young. Our society is bent on what feels good, instead of what is good.

Solomon learned that sensuality was a dead-end for several reasons:

A. Pursuit of pleasure promises much but delivers little. Pleasure can be false advertising, and short lived. If pleasure is illicit then it brings shame and guilt.

B. Pursuit of pleasure promises to improve our lives but rarely is life changed by sensual pleasures. We've all experienced great pleasures, like a concert, but those things don't change our lives. Illicit pleasures make our lives worse.

C. Pursuit of pleasure promises to satisfy our needs but in the end pleasure requires more of us and this leads to disillusion. Our sinful pleasures often become insatiable.

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### III. Exhortation

This is what is needed.

We need the type of satisfaction that remains with us and is accumulated throughout a lifetime.

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Things to look for are those which:

Deliver what they promise

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Make us better people

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Satisfy our most basic needs

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Solomon summarized some of these at the end of his book:

Faith and Sincere Obedience to God. This delivers in life great gifts and are a constant source of great joy that affect every part of our being.

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Two others are like the first.

1. Knowledge of Jesus Christ (a relationship with Him)
  2. Submission to the Holy Spirit
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The race for pleasure ends in disappointment.

It ends in disillusionment, dissatisfaction if pursued is a means to an end.

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The yearning for peace and joy come from the soul. Therefore spiritual things are required to deliver it. Spiritual things are eternal

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### 3. The Pursuit of Meaning Through Work

Solomon now explores the context in which a person's life and work is carried out - the framework of time.

#### ECCLESIASTES 2:12-26

613,000 Hours  
25,550 Days

Most of us fill our time with work. 70 years of life generally will be filled with: 1. Sleeping 23 years 2. Work 19 years 3. Playing 9 years

Review 4. Traveling 6 years 5. Unaccounted for 4 years 6. Dressing 2 years 7. church Activities 1 year 365 days; 8,760 hours

The pursuit of meaning, satisfaction through sensual pleasure is futile since the satisfaction gained from pleasure is not cumulative.

Church Activity in 1 year = 5.2 days  
c8. 52 Sundays 125 hours  
24 hours per week

#### I. Pursuit of wisdom and folly - 2:12-17

Pleasurable experiences cannot be accumulated in order to produce joy or satisfaction. Solomon moves to consider work

Vs. 12-14a Each man chooses his lifestyle. The wise man avoids pitfalls. The fool is always in trouble, self-inflicted problems due to carelessness, foolishness, greed, pride.

Vs. 14b-15 Death is the end of both the fool and the wise. Solomon summarizes this is vanity since foolishness or wisdom cannot defeat death.

Vs. 16-17 Both the wise and the fool are forgotten.

## II. The pursuit of meaning through work - 2:18-3:22

The fruit of one's labor - vs. 18-25 Solomon now considers the result of work.

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Vs. 18 In death the fruit of labor is left behind, no matter how bad or well you do it.

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Vs. 19 A wise man's labor can be left to a fool.

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Vs. 20-21 Solomon bemoans the work that produced wealth and then it is left to one who did not earn it.

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Vs. 22-23 Man worries about his work. Additional concern mounts due to concerns of heirs. This is vanity. This is why God needs to be in this picture.

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## III. Insights

A. Vs. 24-25 - The ability to experience joy is not related to what we do

no matter how hard we work or how great our achievements. The experiences of joy, peace, and satisfaction are gifts we receive from God.

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How does God change vanity into fulfillment and blessing?

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B. Vs. 26 -

Those who are right with God derive benefit from all they do, not just what they succeed at.

This does not mean that only Christians succeed, however, it does mean that judging by the standard of personal satisfaction, peace and joy experienced, and not only productivity or profit - the Christian enjoys and profits from what he does regardless of his margin of worldly success. Rom 8:28 "all things work together for good"

#### IV. Summary

1. No matter what you do, joy and satisfaction are available to all mankind. (and good is not a feeling)

2. Joy and Satisfaction are not the product of career, success or ability. They are a gift from God. He rains on the just and the unjust.

3. The relationship with God blesses the work. The work is not the source of blessing, God is the source. This frees man to choose what fits his talents.

# 4. A Time for Everything – Part 1

Solomon now explores the context in which a person's life and work is carried out - the framework of time.

## ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11

Solomon explores a person's life and work in the framework of time.

### Intro – Review of “Lifestyles”

1. Pursuit of sensual pleasures.
2. Wisdom of folly.
3. Meaning through work.
  - Satisfaction is a a) Inward joy and satisfaction is a gift from God and cannot be produced simply by succeeding at work.
  - Righteousness is b) When we are right with God we derive profit not only from our own work but from everyone else's work as well.
  - The meaning for work can only be derived from an eternal perspective.

### I. Meaning of Time

A. Review of concept of time the measure of events under the sun.

1. What is time? A measurable period during which events occur.

2. Why is time so important? Time measures events that are irretrievable once they pass. Time cannot be stopped.

3. When did time begin? End? Genesis 1:1 is the beginning of time. Time will end when Jesus returns

2 Peter 3:10-11.

## B. Text – vs. 1-8

### Numerology

In the following verses he will refer to 14 pairs of opposite events which occur at "appointed" times. The fact that they are mentioned in multiples of seven and that they begin with birth and death is significant. Opposites suggest the entire range of important life experiences along with everything that happens in-between these events (this is a poetic device called Merism).

Vs. 1 Time and it's cyclical nature are established in this first verse.

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### Pairs of opposites:

#### 1. Life and death – vs. 2a

The beginning and the end of life – the experiences that reduce every life to a common denominator.

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#### 2. Renewal and change – vs. 2b

This refers not only to the growing seasons of the farmer and the cycle of preparing, planting and harvest, but also to those seasons in our lifetimes when we are in stages of growth, development, learning, re-thinking old ideas and the consideration of new ones.

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#### 3. Destruction and restoration – vs. 3a

In that day and time an individual could avenge the killing of a family member (Avenger of Blood – Numbers 35:6-34). Solomon says that there was a time for this type of justice, and at other times, restoration and healing were the order of the day (e.g. Mephibosheth – Jonathan's son, crippled in both feet, and potential heir and challenger to David's throne). King David, because of an oath to his friend Jonathan, spared Mephibosheth and provided him with support all of his life.

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#### 4. Demolish and rebuild – vs. 3b

The cycle of rebuilding, remodeling and modernizing not only buildings but lives as well.

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#### 5. Sorrow and joy – vs. 4a

Life is a continuous cycle of events that create one or the other. Many times we make ourselves miserable because we try to avoid sorrow or see it as an aberration in life and thus learn nothing from it. Solomon, however, says that it is a natural part of life and has its own time and value.

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#### 6. Mourn and dance – vs. 4b

Again, the cycle of the various passages life takes us through – birth, death, marriage, divorce, success, failure etc.

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#### 7. Select and reject – vs. 5a

This could refer to the process of gathering building materials that are suitable. The idea is that there are moments when we choose our careers, friends, homes etc. and times to reject what is before us. We do not have to go through every open door or take advantage of every seeming opportunity. There is a time to consolidate and stay put as well as a time to start anew.

#### 8. Embrace and confront – vs. 5b

Some moments call for warm relationships and loving interaction while other times bring us into confrontation, rebuke and conict.

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#### 9. Search and abandon – vs. 6a

There needs to be a willingness to acknowledge when there is no longer the possibility of success in a mission, project or search. There is a time to work hard and push ahead, and then a time to say, "This is not going to work; or this is not worth the risk; or there is no longer any chance of success."

#### 10. Keep and discard – vs. 6b

This does not only refer to the "garage sale" mentality but also to our own ideas and circumstances. Paul says that he "...put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11-13) referring to the sorting out of what is valuable or useless in our lives. There are times when we need to adjust to new ideas, situations and goals in life, and this usually requires the letting go of attitudes and beliefs that are either no longer true or no longer protable for our emotional and spiritual development.

#### 11. Grief and resolution – vs. 7a

The tearing apart could refer to the custom "rending" one's clothing done to signify grief and mourning over the loss of loved ones, dignity, health etc. Sewing the torn clothing was a sign that the period of grieving was over. In life, it is normal that we eventually experience both stages. Not to do so restricts our emotional development.

#### 12. Silence and speaking out – vs. 7b

There are legitimate times to voice our concerns and stand up for what is right; at other times it may be best and loving to remain quiet.

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#### 13. Love and hate – vs. 8a

In life we experience both times of friendship, love, warmth as well as periods of injustice, oppression and prejudice.

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#### 14. War and peace – vs. 8b

Again, this world continues in a cycle of conicts and wars followed by periods of peace. These were present in Solomon's day and will continue until the end of time. The only dierence from one time to the next is the intensity and duration of either period.

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## II. The Main Question – vs. 9

Solomon reviews the whole of man's experience in the context of time and seeks to find out what all of these experiences mean or lead to. The answer (implied) is that there is no point or point. The sum total of man's experiences measured in the time of his life amount to nothing more than a cycle of events common to all people (e.g. Everybody lives and dies; loves and hates etc.).

## III. The Main Conclusion – vs. 10-11

Time only makes sense in eternity.

If there is no point to the sum of man's experiences in time then what is the point of it all? The point that Solomon discovers is that meaning can only be found beyond man's experience or point of view. Human experience in time is fully understood only within a divine context, not a human one. In other words, time only makes sense when considered within an eternal framework.

1. God made everything appropriate in its time. \_\_\_\_\_

There is order in the seasons as well as in our lives. From the eternal perspective every event and experience in time works for God's purpose and is appropriate because of that reason. Only when we see these events from a limited time perspective do they become chaotic or meaningless. Seen from an eternal viewpoint, however, time (and what takes place in time) finally takes on meaning.

2. God has put eternity into our hearts. We exist in the image of an eternal being.

This vision of eternity is what fuels our curiosity about tomorrow. However, our discoveries about tomorrow or the universe can never give meaning to the whole without reference to God. When put together, All parts of life do not equal something meaningful. You must add the domain or Person outside of time to have meaning. Our yearning for eternity and eternal life can only be satisfied by the Person, the work, and the salvation in Jesus Christ. (Col 1:15-17).

3. We cannot discover God's total work. \_\_\_\_\_

Even though we have a sense of eternity built into our nature, and God reveals His ultimate plan for us (salvation through Christ), we are still and will always be, less than He is. This means that we will never know Him completely and never know all that He has done. This should immediately humble us without reservation forever. This humility, however, will enable us to grasp the full meaning of our own life found and experienced in Jesus Christ (Matthew 8:8-13).

## 5. A Time for Everything – Part 2

In his journal, Solomon has described the various ways he has sought for satisfaction and joy apart from God. In the balance of this chapter he provides some final thoughts on the search for meaning in the events of one's life here on earth.

### ECCLESIASTES 3:11-22

All things in time are made purposeful and meaningful to those who love God.

#### Intro – Review of Pursuits

Increased wisdom brings increased pain and grief.

Pleasure is empty.

The Prudent and Foolish life end in death.

Work is not always profitable and you cannot take it beyond the grave.

“God has created us with a God-shaped vacuum that only God can fill.” Swindoll

Man must learn how to take the eternal view of life in order to find meaning, purpose and happiness.

#### I. Vertical View – vs. 11-15

God makes sense from chaos – vs. 11 *It is in eternity where God can correct temporal wrongs, and temporal events in time.*

God enables us to enjoy life – vs. 12-13 *It is God's presence that allows man to overcome his temporal state. God's presence allows sustained joy in any season of life.*

God provokes us to worship Him – vs. 14-15 *The more we learn it should become evident that God is greater than His creation. This knowledge should provoke us to worship Him.*

## II. Horizontal View - vs. 16-22

Cynicism - vs. 16 A horizontal view which is under the sun leads to cynicism. There appears to be wickedness overtakes justice and righteousness. c.s. 4:1-3; 5:8; 8:9

Solutions to Cynicism - vs. 17-21

A vertical view of is a solution to cynicism. This is a view above the sun. This view is eternal not temporal.

Injustice is temporary - vs. 17 God will execute justice one day. No one escapes God's justice. Justice can only be delayed, therefore turn your hurts and offences to God.

Injustice condemns - vs. 18-21 because man who acts like a beast will find his soul delivered up to God where his beast like actions will condemn him.

Hope Beyond Cynicism With a vertical eternal perspective we can live beyond cynicism because we know God will work all things to good for those who are called by His name.

Hopeless cynicism is hopeful realism.

We may not be able to alter our lot in life but we can alter our response to it.

1. What is your disadvantage?

Yes, be realistic about your disadvantages in life, do not exaggerate. To exaggerate is to take the horizontal view. Change your perspective and overcome with God.

2. When are you going to change?

A key to change is to begin. Replace self-pity with active courage.

3. How can God use you?

Seek ways for your disadvantage to be God's advantage. He can use your pain, your failure, even your struggle to bring about good.

## 6. A View from the Top

Solomon examines one final area of life (the pursuit of wealth and power) in order to find contentment apart from God.

### ECCLESIASTES 4:1-8

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#### Intro - Background on Solomon

In the pursuit of wealth and power, "what you see is not necessarily what you get."

Solomon's own rise to power would have been good background for his observations to come.

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#### I. The View from the Top

Solomon, who is no stranger to the struggles of being on top, affords us a view from there

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#### A. Oppression - vs. 1-3

Vs. 1 Both oppressor and oppressed have no one to comfort them.

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Vs. 2 Solomon congratulates the dead because they have escaped oppression. This is a strictly carnal point of view.

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Vs. 3 Solomon doubles down and claims those who have never born better off than both living and dead because they haven't dealt with evil.

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#### B. Envy - vs. 4-6

Vs. 4 Rivalry between man and his neighbor is vanity and striving after the wind.

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Vs. 5 Folding of hands is an expression of life. Consuming your life means to waste it. These are the actions of a fool.

Vs. 6 The balanced person is content with what he has. Being satisfied with what you have brings peace / quietness / satisfaction / freedom from envy. Perfection and Maturity operate outside of envy their goals align with God and deliver fulfillment and contentment that allow advancement.

### **Rules for Contentment**

1. Keep your eyes on your own stuff: The prize and it's focus should never be on what others have. Your blessings are in your own domain. God has already blessed you with what you need to be fulfilled and have a life of meaning and purpose.

2. Give thanks for what you have: Gratitude is a rare practice that contains significant spiritual value. It is an operation of the spirit and not the flesh. Take an inventory and thank God.

3. Ask, don't complain: Move from the negative of complaining and live in the positive affect of asking for what you need. Knowing what you need then becomes the dilemma needing to be solved. cf. James 4:1-3

### **C. Disillusionment - vs. 7-8**

Vs. 7-8 For who do we toil? This question requires a vertical view point to overcome the disillusionment that life will give.

### **II. Summary**

1. Power corrupts Solomon recognizes that the pursuit of wealth and power ultimately corrupts.

2. Success breeds envy and creates jealousy and rivalry. The best success by far is contentment.

3. Life at the top is hard and can quickly become lonely if that is all you know.

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### III. Exhortation

If you make it to the top, remember:

1. Aim for contentment each day and not increased production only.

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2. Strive to be useful wherever you are, and not to be #1 all the time.

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3. Work at being faithful to God, your spouse/family, to your work. The goal is not faultless or perfect (the worldly sense).

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## 7. One Plus One Equals Survival: Solutions to Loneliness

In Solomon's experiment with wealth and power, he concludes that life at the "top" is filled with grief (oppression, envy, disillusionment).

### ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

Solomon will now summarize a common feeling of those on the top: Loneliness.

### Intro - Review

Solomon's notes on wealth and power lead us now into loneliness. He also gives us the antidote available to top or bottom.

Solomon has found that life at the "top" can be filled with Loneliness.  
Wealth and Power alone do not guarantee happiness or completeness.  
Forced separation like death, divorce, or dispute feels like anger, fear, and sorrow.

He will discuss one other difficult experience felt by those in leadership roles.

Culture shock can often feel like anxiety, discouragement and a sense of unreality.

\* This lesson will focus on the solutions to loneliness.

### I. Loneliness

It is both a perception and a feeling. This is the feeling of being on ones own without connections to others through friendship, family, shared history, ideals or common objectives.

Loneliness not only has a face and an image but also has a heart or feeling. It is felt in various ways, like, fear, anger, anxiety, heaviness, sorrow, discouragement.

Loneliness is a normal part of life. It is like a small island we visit during seasons of our lives. Change is a constant therefore we make our visits to this island. The danger is making this our permanent home.

We know we've been on the island of loneliness too long when we say things like:

"Why don't people love me and help me?"  
Here we shift responsibility for our loneliness to others. The blame game.

"If only other people realized how difficult things are for me." This could be a cover for attention getting strategies. We deal with loneliness here through self-pity.

"Nobody cares. I am all alone in this."  
This is an attitude. A type of pride that your problems are more complex and greater than anyone else. This is a martyr complex.

We cannot get off the island of loneliness by: blaming others for putting us there  
By sitting under a palm tree and feeling sorry for ourselves.  
By stoic self-resignation.

## II. Solomon's solution to loneliness Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Solomon recognized that loneliness afflicted everyone.

We cannot enjoy life to the fullest as loners. We were created for companionship, consider the story of Adam.

In chapter 4:9-12 Solomon proposes the solution to our lonely condition.

The solution to our loneliness is companionship.



Vs. 9 Stating the conclusion first, Solomon recognizes life is better when shared with someone.

Vs. 10-12 – These contain three reasons why having friends is the answer.

Life is tough and unexpected things happen, that's why we need others in our lives. When babies are born they are given parents, they do not come into the world alone. Society has messed up this natural order of things.

Vs. 10-1. One can encourage when the other is weak.

The blessing of friends would not be necessary if we did not make mistakes, sin, or ever get sick. Friends can help through trouble and negative circumstances.

Vs. 11-2. The Sum is greater than the parts.

Companions can divide the work load and multiply the joy. They can help develop our personalities and add depth to our existence.

Vs. 12a-3. We need Protection.

The world requires protection, both physical and spiritual.

## **Summary**

Solomon teaches that loneliness can strike whether you are at the top or at the bottom.

Cultivate companionship.

- Companions help calm the storms of life.
- Companions reassure us when we are vulnerable or exposed.
- Companions take our part when others try to take us apart.

Many times one person plus one friend equals survival.

## 8. Worship Attitude

In chapter five there is an abrupt change as Solomon comments on the attitude necessary for proper worship and then goes on to talk about the enemy of spirituality - materialism.

### ECCLESIASTES 5:1-6:12

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Intro - Solomon changes from describing his life's pursuits and begins warning about the proper attitude they should have at worship.

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#### I. Worship Attitude - 5:1-7

Pay Attention - vs. 1 Respect is in order when worshipping the creator and judge of the world. God speaks through sermons, songs, prayer, teaching pay attention for His voice.

Guard Your Mind - vs. 2-3;7 Remain focused when worshipping God. Eloquence nor volume impress God. Honesty, devotion, and faith is His desire.

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Keep Your Promises - vs. 4-6 If you are not sure about your promises to God, it is better to keep silent. Simple yes or no, make no elaborate promises.

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#### II. Folly of Riches

1. Absolute Power corrupts vs. 8-9

The powerful tend to neglect, not help the poor. God's leaders "cultivate" the people, help them to grow and develop good lives.

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2. Greater Wealth does not equal greater satisfaction vs. 10

Solomon was not satisfied with his great wealth. Great wealth tends to breed desire for more wealth.

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3. More Money = more worries vs. 11-12

The more you have the more you maintain, protect, count, service and replace.

4. You Can't take it with you vs. 13-15

No matter how hard you work or hoard you cannot keep your material gatherings.

5. Live High Die hard vs. 16-17

Money is no comfort to those who are dying.

Solomon describes three God-given riches:

A. God gives true enjoyment vs. 18

This gift is given to those with a correct attitude about wealth.

B. God enables fulfillment in your work vs. 19

Satisfaction can be enabled in what you do, not simple in what you like to do.

C. God provides general contentment vs. 20

Satisfaction and inner peace can be found by those who focus on the Lord and not on what they don't have or more wealth.

### III. Self Portrait - vs. 6:1-12

Solomon's portrait is one of depression for several reasons.

1. He is not able to fully enjoy all given to him. vs. 1-2

The "foreigner" here can be an enemy, a disease or a depressed spirit.

Something gets in the way of contentment, less than full devotion blocks enjoyment and peace.

2. A hundred children cannot overcome futility vs. 3-5

If your soul cannot be satisfied with good things, life will become obscure.

3. All go to the same place/way vs. 6

Those who live long or those who live short all go the way of death.

4. With all man's labor he is not satisfied vs. 7-9

Better a bird in hand than two in the bush.

In the end, his lifestyle and depression helps him understand certain basic truths about life:

A. God is sovereign vs. 10a

Naming denotes sovereignty, all has been named and there is always someone greater.

B. Man is not sovereign vs. 10b

Man will always be in a position of subordination to God.

C. Disputing with God is a waste of time vs. 10a-11

Many words only increase futility. God requires faith not debate. Believe and Obey, His way will always be best.

## Summary

This completes the first major part of Ecclesiastes. Solomon has experimented an examined life from every angle. Satisfaction, happiness and true contentment are not under the sun. Moving forward Solomon will look in another direction.

# 9. Wisdom Proverbs

In the first 6 chapters of the book we see the fruit of Solomon's rebellion. By chapter six he has exhausted his search, sees that his results are empty, and comments on this discovery using several parables.

## **ECCLESIASTES 7:1-29**

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**Intro - Chapter 6 ends Solomon's search for happiness away from God.  
Chapter 7 begins his return to God.**

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Styles of writing \_\_\_\_\_

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Contrasting - Proverbs 13:1 \_\_\_\_\_

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Completive - Proverbs 14:10 \_\_\_\_\_

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Comparative - Proverbs 25:24 \_\_\_\_\_

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## I. 7 Wisdom Proverbs

1. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 1

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 1b

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 2a

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4. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 3-4

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5. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 5-7

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6. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 8

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7. \_\_\_\_\_ - vs. 8b-10

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In the last 4 verses, Solomon explains the advantages of wisdom:

A. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 11-12

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B. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 13-14

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Two lessons for today \_\_\_\_\_

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## **II. Wisdom at Work - vs. 15-29**

A. Wisdom provides \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 15-18

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**B.** Wisdom provides \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 19-22

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

C. Wisdom provides \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 23-28

1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
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# 10. Qualities of a Wise Leader

Solomon is no longer exploring and writing about the various experiences and pursuits of worldly living, which have left him unfulfilled and depressed. He now turns his attention to leadership and the qualities that leaders need to possess.

## ECCLESIASTES 8:1-9:10

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**Intro – Solomon begins to discuss some of the blessings that come from living under the authority of God.**

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### I. Qualities of a Wise Leader – 8:1-9

Various kinds of leadership include:

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Godly leaders have certain qualities:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 1a
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 1b
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 2-4
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 5-7
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 8-9
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## II. Mysteries of Life – 8:10-17

Mysteries that are beyond Solomon’s understanding.

1. Mystery of \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 10-13

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2. Mystery of \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 14

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3. Mystery of \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 15

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## III. Developing a Life Philosophy – 9:1-10

Solomon’s new life philosophy has 4 key truths and applications.

Truth #1: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 1b

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Truth #2: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 2-3a

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Truth #3: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 3b

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Truth #4: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 4-6

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Application #1: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 7

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Application #2: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 8

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Application #3: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 9

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Application #4: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 10

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# 11. Comments on the Rat Race

Solomon has been sharing the fruit of his hard-won wisdom. After living apart from God he returns and notes some of the things he has learned concerning wisdom itself.

**ECCLESIASTES 9:11-10:20**

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**Intro – Solomon provides more insights about wisdom and its uses in life.**

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## I. Comments on the Rat Race

Our culture did not invent the “rat race” mentality. \_\_\_\_\_

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Solomon comments on the Rat Race of his day.

Vs. 11 \_\_\_\_\_

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Vs. 12 \_\_\_\_\_

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Vs. 14-15 \_\_\_\_\_

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Based on these observations, Solomon develops some core ideas about life in the fast lane.

1. Human activity \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 11

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2. Strength is more impressive but \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 15-16a

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3. Wise counsel is \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 16b

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4. Human rulers will always \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 17

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5. Wisdom is better than \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 18

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## II. Wisdom and Folly - Chapter 10:1-11

Solomon builds a case for living wisely.

He contrasts Wisdom vs. Folly

1. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 1

\_\_\_\_\_ vs. 2

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\_\_\_\_\_ vs. 3

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2. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 4

\_\_\_\_\_ vs. 5-7

3. \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 8-10

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### III. A Fool's Portrait – vs. 12-20

What does a fool look like?

1. Character of a fool. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Actions of a fool. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### IV. How to Deal with a Fool

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Proverbs 14; 23:9  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Psalms 107:10-12; 39-40  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Psalms 107:21-22  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# 12. Positive Thinking

In his return journey to God, Solomon has found that wisdom and wise living are the surest way to find contentment and avoid wasting one's short lifespan.

**ECCLESIASTES 11:1-12:14**

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**Intro - In the last chapters, Solomon's journal turns much more optimistic.**

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**I. Think \_\_\_\_\_ 11:1-6**

Instead of Defense \_\_\_\_\_ vs.1

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Instead of Hording \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 2

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Instead of Watching \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 3-4

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Instead of Doubting \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 5-6

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**II. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ 11:7-12:1**

Different kinds of procrastinators.

Solomon says that joy and satisfaction are linked to \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_.

1. God permits \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 7-8a

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2. Take advantage \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 9a

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3. There are no \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 8b-9b-10

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4. The essential ingredient for happiness is \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 12:1

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**III. Grow old \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 12:2-8**

There is no avoiding getting old.

1. Accept \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 2-5

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2. Prepare \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 6-7

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3. Acknowledge \_\_\_\_\_ vs. 8-14

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### Summary

In the end, Solomon says that life is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.

However, for the one who \_\_\_\_\_ God and \_\_\_\_\_ Him, there are 3 promises:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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