

Ecclesiastes Bible Study

Background

- **Author:**

Traditionally attributed to Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel (Ecclesiastes 1:1). His voice is reflective, seasoned, and deeply honest.

- **Date & Setting:**

Likely written late in Solomon's life, after decades of leadership, wealth, accomplishment, failure, and spiritual wandering.

Ecclesiastes reads like the journal of an older man looking back over his life with hard-earned wisdom.

- **Purpose of the Book:**

Ecclesiastes wrestles with the big questions seniors often ask:

- What truly matters?
- What lasts?
- What brings joy?
- What is the purpose of my remaining years?
- How do I live well before God?

Solomon exposes the emptiness of life “under the sun”, life lived only from a human perspective and invites readers to rediscover meaning through God's eternal viewpoint.

Major Themes:

- The weariness of life's repetition
- The limits of human achievement
- The gift of simple joys
- The sovereignty of God over all seasons
- The call to fear God and live wisely

Week 1 - Ecclesiastes 1

1 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: 2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." 3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? 4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. 5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. 6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. 7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again. 8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. 9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. 11 No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them. 12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind! 14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are

meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted. 16 I said to myself, “Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge.” 17 Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind. 18 For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.

Theme of the Week:

“Seeing God’s Purpose When Life Feels Repetitive & Wearisome”

Main Point 1 - Life Feels Repetitive

Theme:

“The Cycles of Life Can Make Us Feel Tired and Invisible”

- Nature repeats endlessly

5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.

6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. 7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again. (Ecclesiastes 1:5–7 NIV)

- Human experience feels predictable

9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9 NIV)

- Generations pass quickly - People come & go and are often forgotten.

Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. (Ecclesiastes 1:4 NIV)

11 No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them. (Ecclesiastes 1:11 NIV)

- Daily routines feel monotonous.

8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. (Ecclesiastes 1:8 NIV)

- Repetition can feel meaningless.

2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2 NIV)

Discussion Questions:

- Which parts of life feel most repetitive to you now?
- How do life’s cycles look different in your senior years?
- Where have you seen God bring meaning into routine?

Main Point 2 - Human Effort Alone Cannot Satisfy

Theme:

“Our Work, Achievements & Knowledge Cannot Fill the Deep Places of the Soul”

- Human labor never fully satisfies.

*8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.
(Ecclesiastes 1:8 NIV)*

- Achievements fade quickly - Nothing truly new or lasting comes from human effort alone.

*9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which one can say, “Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.
(Ecclesiastes 1:9–10 NIV)*

- Wisdom increases sorrow.

18 For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief. (Ecclesiastes 1:18 NIV)

- Human striving cannot fix brokenness.

15 What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted. (Ecclesiastes 1:15 NIV)

- Solomon's accomplishments still left him empty - His great works did not satisfy.

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind! 14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 1:12–14 NIV)

Discussion Questions:

- What accomplishments mattered most to you earlier in life?
- How has your understanding of satisfaction changed with age?
- What does “chasing the wind” look like in today's world?

Main Point 3 - God Gives Meaning Beyond the Sun

Theme:

“Only God Can Break the Cycle of Emptiness and Give Eternal Purpose”

- Life “under the sun” is incomplete - Solomon describes life without God’s perspective.

3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? (Ecclesiastes 1:3 NIV)

- God gives eternal meaning - He places eternity in our hearts.

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NIV)

- Joy is God’s gift - True enjoyment comes from Him.

24 A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, 25 for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? (Ecclesiastes 2:24–25 NIV)

- God redeems every season - Each season has divine purpose.

1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: (Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV)

- Meaning comes from fearing God.

13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. (Ecclesiastes 12:13 NIV)

Discussion Questions:

- How has God given meaning to your later years?
- What does it mean to see life from God's perspective?
- How does eternity shape your daily choices?

Practical Application

- Recognize the value of your current season - God is present in repetition & routine.
- Reflect on how God has guided your life's cycles - Even the wearisome ones.
- Release the pressure to achieve - Your worth is not tied to productivity.
- Invite God into your daily rhythms - Ask Him to show purpose in small things.
- Practice gratitude for simple joys - Meals, friendships, memories, quiet moments.
- Anchor your identity in God's eternal perspective - Not in fading accomplishments or changing circumstances.