

I wholeheartedly recommend Warren Wiersbe's commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes entitled "Be Satisfied." The outline here, all the major points, and the scripture references are drawn from this work with some additions of my own. His work will be more helpful than mine as these notes here were originally designed to accompany a church Bible study.

Ecclesiastes

Life Under the Sun

Eric Newcomer

Ecclesiastes²

Living in Circles

Words/Phrases:

- “Vanity”: Hebrew *hebel*, meaning vapor, breath, vanity. Also the name of Abel (Genesis 4). Used to refer to idols or false gods, individuals or their sentiments, Not stated in the book.
 - Noun form occurs 71 times (36 in Ecclesiastes).
 - In Ecclesiastes it can refer to:
 - An inability to find fulfillment.
 - An apparent disconnect between sin and judgment.
 - Something that is senseless.
 - Something that is meaningless, unsubstantial, or transitory.
 - Don’t let the repetition of this word dull your senses to it.
- “Under the Sun”: Hebrew *tahath*, meaning under, and *hashamesh*, meaning sun.
 - A figure of speech meaning that which is the whole world – all that is illuminated or ruled by the sun.
 - The perceivable realm of mankind, past, present, and future.
 - Based on Solomon’s conclusion (12:13-14), what is “under the sun” is not what truly matters. God is greater than the sun and the one that we should be concerned with (5:7, 11:9).

Text:

- Nothing is changed (1:4-7)
 - A scientific view of nature is shown here.
 - Compared to our lives, the earth seems eternal. (1:4)
 - Note cycles shown here – the sun, the wind, the water.
 - Predictable, uninterrupted cycles.

“Everything an Indian does is in a circle...even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood...” - Black Elk, Sioux

- Do people still think this way?
- What does the New Testament say about these things? Are they permanent and unchanging? Cite specific scriptures.
- Even in the Old Testament God is found intervening in “supernatural” ways. Can you cite some?
- How does life in Christ change our view of the ‘cycles’ of the world?
- Nothing is new (1:8-11)
 - Is it true that nothing is new *under the sun*? What about human “progress”?
 - Why is man so restless? (Verse 8)
 - Why do we so often perceive things as new?
- Nothing is understood (1:12-18)
 - Why did Solomon call searching things out by wisdom “unhappy business”?
 - Do you think people believe that “everything done under the sun...is vanity and a striving after the wind”? Are they right? Why or why not?
 - Wisdom and experience will not solve every problem (vv16-18), but what advantages do believers have?
 - How does more knowledge increase sorrow? (Genesis 3)

Discussion:

- How does being a Christian change our view on these topics?
- How are things changing? Is anything new?
- How can things be understood?
- How does Bible knowledge surpass the scientist, the historian, the philosopher?

² This outline is from: Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Satisfied*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print. “Be” Commentary Series.

Ecclesiastes³

Disgusted with Life?

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 2

He tested life (2:1-11)

- He tried laughter, pleasure, employment, wealth, and wisdom.
- See 1 Kings 4:33, ch. 5, ch. 7; 2 Chronicles 8:4-6.
- For laughter, see Proverbs 14:13.
- What was the life of a king like?
- What is the result of a life consumed with the pursuit of pleasure?
- What about work? Genesis 2:15.

He hated life (2:12-23)

- In the context of the certainty of death, this is all vanity. (See Ecclesiastes 1:4; 2:14-17; 3:18-20; 5:15-16; 6:6; 8:8; 9:2-3, 12; 12:7-8.)
- Concerning wealth, Solomon noted that we can't keep it (18), we can't protect it (19-20), and we can't enjoy it as we should (21-23).
- How did Solomon's son, Rehoboam, do after him? 1 Kings 11:41-12:24.
- Solomon noted that death comes to both the foolish and the wise.
- Can you think of other servants of God who expressed a desire to die?
- See 1 Peter 3:10.
- Do you agree with the saying, "You can't take it with you"?
- "A writer in *The Wall Street Journal* called money "an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider of everything except happiness.""

He accepted life (2:24-26)

- This is the first of six "conclusions" in the book. See also 3:12-15, 22; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-10; 11:9-10.

- Solomon is not suggesting that we "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!" (Isaiah 22:13; 1 Cor. 15:32.) That is fatalism. Faith says, "Thank God for what you have, and enjoy it to the glory of God."

"Only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."
- Bertrand Russell, atheist.

Discussion:

- Is Solomon saying that these things are not worthy pursuits? Didn't God give us all things to enjoy? (1 Timothy 6:17)
- Pleasure-seeking is subject to the 'Law of Diminishing Returns.' What does that mean?
- Labor and constructive endeavors are worthy pursuits, but not the goal of life. What is the goal of life?
- What does this mean for evangelism? How should we handle those who merely live "under the sun"?

Notes: _____

³ This outline is from: Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Satisfied*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print. "Be" Commentary Series.

Ecclesiastes

Time and Toil⁴

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

Look up: God orders time (Ecc. 3:1-8)

- Here the appeal is to the times and seasons we have for all things.
- “season” in verse 1 refers to an appointed time.
- Note that, “He has made everything beautiful in its time.” (3:11)
- V2 – birth and death. How might some doubt God’s control here? (Psalm 139:13-16)
- How does this list have universal appeal?
- V5 – *stones*, see 2 Kings 3:19.
- V5 – *embrace* is maybe greeting.
- V7 – *tear* may refer to tearing garments in mourning.

Look within: Eternity is in your heart (Ecc. 3:9-14)

- V10 – Life here is seen as given from God. And v13.
- V11 – We have some concept of eternity. Perhaps because of Genesis 1:26-28. Perhaps Romans 2:14-15 needs considered. But it is clearly limited.
- VV12-13 – Life should be enjoyed.
- V14 – God has his part; People have their part.

Look ahead: Death is coming to all (Ecc. 3:15-22)

- V15, see 1:9-11. Cycles.
- VV18-21, man is here compared to beasts suffering the same fate – death and dust. But is man the same? See Psalm 73:22; 2 Peter 2:12 Ephesians 2:1-3. In this case, verse 21 seems to be rhetorical like “Who can prove...?”
- V22 – See 3:12-13. The conclusion.

Discussion:

- If one’s only perspective is from “under the sun,” how might this book be understood?

“There is no reason to suppose that a man’s life has any more meaning than the life of the humblest insect that crawls from one annihilation to another.” - Joseph Wood Krutch, professor of English at Columbia University from 1937 to 1952.

How should believers understand this book? (Not being as limited in their perspective.)

- Discuss the fact that God “appoints” these things both good and bad. What purpose may he have in the times of bad things? (Genesis 3:16-19, 50:20; Romans 1:18, 8:28; Hebrews 12:1-17.) How is that helpful to a believer? (2 Peter 2:9) How can the idea be taken too far?
- There is a definite cyclical pattern to “life under the sun.” But how has Jesus broken that cycle? What does that mean for his people? (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

Notes: _____

⁴ This outline is from: Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Satisfied*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print.

Ecclesiastes

Life Just Isn't Fair!⁵

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 4

- Try not to look at this book as a mere philosophical endeavor or an academic exercise. After all, it talks about the universal experiences of life: Life, death, time, eternity, and judgment. It is an examination of real life with relevant implications for all of us today.

In the courtroom (Ecc. 4:1-3)

- The law bears witness to the importance of civil justice. (Exodus 18:13-27; Deuteronomy 1:17; 17, 19; Leviticus 19:15.)
- The prophets often spoke on the topic. (Psalm 82; Isaiah 56:1, 59:1; Amos 1-2.)
- Solomon did what he could. (1 Kings 3:16-28.)
- Yet he noted three tragedies:
 - Oppression and exploitation in the halls of justice.
 - Pain and sorrow in the lives of innocent people.
 - Unconcern on the part of those who could have comforted.
- See also 1 Timothy 2:1-6.
- “Edward Gibbon, celebrated author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, said that political corruption was “the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty.””

In the marketplace (Ecc. 4:4-8)

- V4, The industrious man motivated by the wrong reasons. (Genesis 2:15, Proverbs)
- V5, The idle man wasting away. (Prov. 6:10-11, 18:9, 19:15, 24:30–34; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.)
- V6, The integrated man is balanced. (1 Timothy 6:6.)
- VV7-8, The independent man working truly in vain.

“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” - Proverbs 27:1 NKJV.

On the highway (Ecc. 4:9-12)

- Two are better than one: For walking - v10 - warmth - v10, watchcare – v12. (Galatians 6:1-2)
- Note the progression: One v8, two v9, three v12. It’s common in Hebrew literature.

In the palace (Ecc. 4:13-16)

- The fourth “better” statement, vv3, 6, 9, 13.
- Contrast the old and foolish king to the wise youth. (Similar to David and Saul?) Compare their outcomes.
- “Do not trust to the cheering, for those persons would shout as much if you and I were going to be hanged.” – Oliver Cromwell.

Discussion:

- Life under the sun is obviously complicated. What value do we see in balance? In relationships?
- Review 3:12-13, 22; 4:6; 12:13-14. What do you tell the one who is in despair from all that is vanity “under the sun”?
- Consider the greatness of being part of the body of Christ, and consider how life in Christ is far greater for living “under the sun.” (See 1 Peter 4:8-11; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Corinthians 10:31.)

Notes: _____

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Ecclesiastes

Stop, Thief!⁶

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 5

Don't rob the Lord (Ecc. 5:1-7)

- Principle first: "Guard your steps when you go to the house of God."
- Background: The making of vows in the Bible: Num. 30; Deut. 23:21-23; Acts 18:18.
- Instruction 1: Don't be hasty to make a vow, vv2-3.
- Instruction 2: Do not delay in paying it, vv4-6.
- Instruction 3: Fear God, v7.
- See Psalm 66:13-14

Don't rob others (Ecc. 5:8-9)

- See also Ecc. 3:16-17, 4:1-3.
- Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 24:17.
- "Do not be amazed at the matter," v8.
- Rightly motivated leadership is helpful, v9.

Don't rob yourself (Ecc. 5:10-20)

- See discussion on 2:1-11.
- Myth #1: *Wealth brings satisfaction*, v10. True satisfaction is in the Lord. Ecc. 3:11; Luke 12:15.
- Myth #2: *Money solves every problem*, v11. And when wealth increases, so do the number of people willing to have part of it.
- Myth #3: *Wealth brings peace of mind*, v12. (Note the example of John D. Rockefeller.)
- Myth #4: *Wealth provides security*, vv13-17. See Luke 12:13-21; Job 1:21; Ps. 49:17; 1 Tim. 6:7.
- The conclusion: Verses 19-20.

Discussion:

- Verse 18 seems to sum it up. Rephrase this in your own words.
- The Bible does not forbid riches or insist upon poverty for God's people. What is the healthy balance? See Prov. 30:7-9.
- What are the clear biblical commands concerning wealth?

"If we focus more on the gifts than on the Giver, we are guilty of idolatry. If we accept His gifts, but complain about them, we are guilty of ingratitude. If we hoard His gifts and will not share them with others, we are guilty of indulgence. But if we yield to His will and use what He gives us for His glory, then we can enjoy life and be satisfied." - Warren Wiersbe

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Ecclesiastes

Is Life a Dead-End Street?⁷

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 6

Riches without enjoyment (Ecc. 6:1-6)

- The accumulation of wealth and worldly success can quickly be overturned by events outside of our control and rob us of the enjoyment these things can provide.
- See also Ecc. 5:19 and 3:13. What difference does it make to know that life and all that it entails is a gift from God?
- “Enjoyment without God is merely entertainment, and it doesn’t satisfy. But enjoyment with God is enrichment and it brings true joy and satisfaction.” – Warren Wiersbe
- “He also has no burial,” indicates that this hypothetical fellow (vv3-6) was not mourned or no one was concerned enough to bury him.
- See Romans 14:7-9, 2 Corinthians 5:15, 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17, 23. How does the believer’s understanding of purpose guard against this despair?
- From where comes the ability to enjoy life? See Philippians 4:11-13.

Labor without satisfaction (Ecc. 6:7-9)

- Consider how one who merely works to eat, then eats to work is living. How is this any different than the animals?
- Living for a higher purpose is described in John 12:20-28.
- Two rhetorical questions in verse 8 anticipate the answer, “none” if indeed we live only to satisfy our appetites.
- A more contemporary version of what is said in verse 9 may be, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” Solomon is not suggesting that we should not dream or plan,

The toil of dropping buckets into empty wells,
and growing old in drawing nothing up.

- William Cowper, *The Task*

but if our only view is what is “under the sun,” what does it matter?

- So how is there any meaning or satisfaction in life? See John 4:34, Ephesians 6:6, and Psalm 16:11.

Questions without answers (Ecc. 6:10-12)

- “If you devote your life only to the pursuit of happiness, you will be miserable; however, if you devote your life to doing God’s will, you will find happiness as well.”
- The two questions in verse 12 are well answered by “God”.
- Answers can put knowledge in the mind, but not healing in the heart. However, knowledge of God is indeed eternal life. See John 17:3 and 1 John 5:20.

Discussion:

- Re-read 11:9-12:14. How was Solomon in chapter 6 preparing his listener to receive the conclusion of the matter?
- Write your own creative illustration for futility like “chasing after the wind,” or like “blind men driving cars down crowded dead-end streets.”
- Life as we know it “under the sun” was not our original estate (as in the garden) nor is it our destiny (as in the New Jerusalem), so might we expect to become despairing at time? How do we overcome despair?
- Have you ever become so discouraged with life that you wanted to die, or to never have been born? You’re in good company. See Moses (Num. 11:15), Elijah (1 Kings 19:4), Job (3:21; 7:15), Jeremiah (8:3; 15:10), Jonah (4:3), and even Paul (2 Cor. 1:8–11).

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Ecclesiastes

How to Be Better Off⁸

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 7

Wisdom can make life better (Ecc. 7:1-10)

- Note “better” in verses 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10.
- Vv1-2. At birth we are named, but have no reputation. At death, our reputation is settled. A good reputation leaves a better aroma at death than the burial ointments. (Name and ointment are similar words.) Proverbs 10:7, 22:1. Contrast Mary of Bethany and Judas Iscariot, Mark 14:1-11.
- Vv2-4. Sorrow can be better than laughter because of what it can do for the heart. Ecc. 3:4; Psalm 90:12.
- Vv5-6. Rebuke is better than praise. (Song, thorns, and pot are similar words.) Ps. 141:5; Pr. 10:17; 12:1; 15:5; 17:10; 25:12; 27:5, 17; 29:1, 15.
- Vv7-9. The “long haul” is better than the shortcut. James 1: 19; Pr. 14:17, 16:32; Php. 1:6; Hebrews 12:2; Romans 8:28.
- V10. Today is better than yesterday.

Wisdom helps us to see life clearly (Ecc. 7:11-18)

- Living wisely is much about perspective and balance.
- Vv11-12, Wealth. Wisdom is better than insurance.
- V13, Providence. Solomon does not call us to *fatalism* but to a life yielded to the will of God. Recognition of his providence causes us to draw near. We don’t understand (Ecc. 11:5) but we trust (Ecc. 3:11).
- V14, Adversity and Prosperity. Php. 4:10-13. A balance is given – blessings to enjoy and burdens to humble.
- V15, Righteousness and Sin. The promises of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience are part of the covenant with

“While you are dreaming of the future or regretting the past, the present, which is all you have, slips from you and is gone.”

– Hilaire Belloc

Israel for their lives in the land. New Testament blessings are about character, necessity, mission, and future consummation. The end-time judgments and rewards will make all things right.

- Vv16-18, Here is a warning against self-righteousness and pride, not a prohibition of being “too good.” The key to balance is fear of the Lord. Proverbs 9:10; 1 Cor. 1:30.

Wisdom helps us face life stronger (Ecc. 7:19-29)

- Three problems to overcome:
 - Sin, v20.
 - What people say about us, vv21-22.
 - Our inability to grasp the meaning of all that God is doing in this world, vv23-25. See Ecc. 3:11, 8:17.
- Vv26-29, The sinfulness of humanity in general. Pr. 2:16-19, 5:3-6, 6:24-26, 7:5-27; 1 Kings 11:3-8.

Discussion:

- How does godly wisdom help us to overcome the snares and temptations in the world?
- Solomon used a deceiving woman as his example in 7:26 (probably from personal experience). But what is the application more generally?

Notes: _____

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Ecclesiastes

What About the Wicked?⁹

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 8

Authority (Ecc. 8:1-9)

- What do do with the king’s command?
- V2, obey it. Romans 13:1-7. Thus, avoiding punishment, v5a, or death. After all, his word is supreme, v4, and will likely be accomplished with or without you.
- V3a, do not desert him.
- V3b, do not rebel against him. Of course, some have cited Acts 5:29.
- Either way, it’s going to take wisdom. vv5b-6. James 1:5, 3:17-18.
- See Joseph’s example, Genesis 43-45; Nehemiah’s example, Nehemiah 1-2; and Daniel’s example, Daniel 1.

Inequity (Ecc. 8:10-14)

- V14 sums up the problem.
- V11, why did the wicked man that was buried persist in his evil during his life? Answer seems to be in v10.
- See 2 Peter 3:1-13. Is God ‘letting’ sin happen? See also Hebrews 9:27; Matt. 25:31-32; Rom. 14:10; Acts 10:42; Psalm 72.
- V14 “I said this is also a vanity,” indicates that this is one of those ongoing problems that makes no sense “under the sun.” See John 12:8 and Revelation 22:10-15.

Mystery (Ecc. 8:15-17)

- V17 We will never understand all things in totality (See Ecclesiastes 3:11; 7:14, 24, 27-28.),
- V17 but perhaps if we apply ourselves to search things out as Solomon did, we may come to some important conclusions. (See Ecclesiastes 2:24, 3:12-15, 5:7, 5:18-20, 8:15, 9:7-10, 11:9, 12:13-14.)
- Indeed, to search things out is a privilege. Dt. 29:29; John 7:17; Proverbs 25:2.

“Laws, like the spider’s web, catch the fly and let the hawks go free.” – Spanish Proverb

- V15, this is not a suggestion to “eat, drink, and be merry,” as the world does, but rather to enjoy all things in faith and thankfulness. 1 Timothy 6:17.

Discussion:

- How would you discuss the problem of evil with an unbeliever? With someone who is hurting?
- Have you considered the question, “Where does all the good come from?”
- The Social Justice movement seeks to right the wrongs of inequity and/or inequality. Will it work? What else might it lead to? How can the gospel be brought to bear on the issue?
- Ponder verse 8:5b-6. Have you considered wisdom defined this way?

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Ecclesiastes

Meeting Your Last Enemy¹⁰

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 9

Death is unavoidable (Ecc. 9:1-10)

- The subject of death comes up several times in this book. See Ecc. 1:4; 2:14–17; 3:18–20; 4:8; 5:15–16; 6:6; 8:8; 12:1–7.
- Life and death, blessing (“love”) or sorrow (“hate”), are in the “hand of God.” In other words, we don’t know what the future brings.
- Under the sun, death appears to be the great leveler, but what about the view beyond? Hebrews 9:27; 1 Cor. 15:26; Romans 6:23; John 11:25-26; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.
- How people respond to the threat of death:
 - Escape, verse 3.
 - Endurance, verses 4-6. Compare 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2 Timothy 1:10.
 - Enjoyment, verses 7-10. See also Ecc. 2:24; 3:12–15, 22; 5:18–20; 8:15; 11:9–10.
 - The common things of life.
 - V7, Meals. 1 Kings 4:22-23; Prov. 15:17, 17:1.
 - V8, Every occasion. Php. 4:4, Matt. 18:1-6.
 - V9, Marriage. Prov. 18:22, 19:14; 1 Kings 11:1-8.
 - V10, Work. Col. 3:17.
 - The time is now to make the most of these opportunities. Col. 3:23-25; 1 Cor. 3:10ff.

Life is unpredictable (Ecc. 9:11-18)

- Some might say, “Since death is unavoidable, we should put all our effort into this life.” Solomon anticipated this argument.
- Vv11-12, Abilities are no guarantee.
 - God has a time for everything (Ecc. 3:1-8), a purpose to be fulfilled in that time (Ecc. 8:6), and something

“Oh why do people waste their breath
Inventing dainty names for death?”
– John Betjeman

“While there’s life there’s hope”
– The character Korydon in a poem by
Theokritos, 3rd century B.C.

beautiful to come out of it in the end
(Ecc. 3:11).

- Christians know that “time and chance” are in the hands of God. James 4:13-17.
- Vv13-18, Opportunities are no guarantee.
 - Note in verse 15, it might mean “could have delivered,” so the meaning may be that he was ignored. The rest makes more sense with this interpretation.
 - “One sinner destroys much good.” See Genesis 3; Romans 5; Joshua 7; 2 Samuel ch. 15, ch. 24.

Discussion:

- Conclusion? _____ God, live by _____ and enjoy the _____ God gives us.
- Read Revelation 1:17-18. How does that truth affect the way Christians view life? Read Paul’s attitude in 1 Cor. 15:57-58.
- To someone that claims there is no afterlife, what purpose is there in living according to any moral code? (Ecc. 9:2)

Notes: _____

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Ecclesiastes

A Little Folly is Dangerous¹¹

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 10

Introduction (Ecc. 10:1-3)

- Verse 1 – the principle. A little folly can ruin and otherwise good reputation.
- Fool, folly, or foolishness appears nine times from three related Hebrews words.
- Verse 2 – Foolishness, like all character, is rooted in the heart. Right is the seat of honor and power. Left represented weakness, rejection, or even bad luck.
- Verse 3 – The foolishness of the heart becomes evident to everyone.

The foolish ruler (Ecc. 10:4-7)

- V4 – Just because a ruler loses his cool, does not mean that we have to join him. Prov. 16:14, 16:32, 25:15, 25:28.
- VV5-7 – Foolish rulers make bad personnel decisions. Those on horses would be commanders, and those on foot, infantry. Prov. 19:10, 30:31-32.
- Look what a foolish ruler did in 1 Kings 12:1-24.

Foolish workers (Ecc. 10:8-11)

- VV8-9 – Use in your next safety meeting.
- V10 – The wise person plans his work and uses his mind more than his body.
- V11 – A foolish snake charmer gets in a hurry and makes not profit.
- The common thread among these seems to be presumption.

Foolish talkers (Ecc. 10:12-15)

- V12 – Words of a fool are *destructive*. Proverbs 10:32, 25:11; Isaiah 50:4. Also see James 3:5-8; Prov. 25:18, 13:3, 21:23.
- V13 – Words of a fool are *unreasonable*. Ecc. 5:3; Titus 1:10.
- V14a – Words of a fool are *uncontrolled*. Proverbs 10:19; James 3:1-2; Matt. 5:37.

“A president’s hardest task is not to *do* what’s right, but to *know* what’s right.”

– Lyndon B. Johnson

“A friend of mine says that every man who takes office in Washington either grows or swells; when I give a man an office, I watch him carefully to see whether he is swelling or growing.” – Woodrow Wilson

- V14b-15 – Words of a fool are *boastful*. Ecc. 3:22, 6:12, 8:7, 9:12; Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-17.

Foolish officers (Ecc. 10:16-20)

- Foolish appointees (bureaucrats) are marked by the following:
- *Indulgence*, vv16-17. Immature leadership is a judgment of God, Isaiah 3:1-5. This can apply to church life – Titus 1:5ff; 1 Tim. 3:6; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Heb. 5:11-14.
- *Incompetence*, v18. Will the officer focus on his privileges or his responsibilities? 1 Timothy 3:10; Prov. 18:9.
- *Indifference*, v19. Again, a focus on the wrong things. See Amos 2:7, 4:1, 5:11-12; 1 Timothy 6:10.
- *Indiscretion*, V20. Exo. 22:28; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17.

Discussion:

- Review Solomon’s advice in Ecc. 3:12–15, 22; 5:18–20; 8:15; 9:7–10; and summarize it in your own words.
- Read Ecc. 11-12 for our conclusion next time, “What Life Is All About.”

Notes: _____

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Ecclesiastes

What Life Is All About¹²

Text: Ecclesiastes Chapter 11-12

Life is an ADVENTURE (Ecc. 11:1-6)

- So live by faith!
- The Merchant, vv1-2. See 1 Kings 10:15, 22.
- The Farmer, vv3-6. See Psalm 139:14-15; Ecc. 3:1-11; Eph. 5:15-17; John 3:8;
- Faith is required for both of these examples because life is unpredictable – “for you do not know...” in verses 2, 5, 6.
- Don’t wait around for ideal circumstances.

Life is a GIFT (Ecc. 11:7-12:8)

- So enjoy it!
- See Ecc. 2:24; 3:12–15, 22; 5:18–20; 8:15; 9:7–10.
- Rejoice, 11:7-9. But guard your heart. See Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:20-23; Prov. 4:23; Num. 15:39.
- Remove, 11:10. Matt. 6:24-34; 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 4:6-9.
- Remember, 12:1-8. Matt. 6:33; vv3-7 picture a breaking down house to represent aging. See Job 4:19; 2 Cor. 5:1-2; 2 Peter 1:13.
- Images: Silver cord/golden bowl – a hanging lamp; pitcher/fountain used to fetch water; wheel/cistern also used to fetch water.
- See Gen. 3:19; Job 34:14-15; Psalm 90:3; Psalm 103:14; Ecc. 3:20.

Life is a SCHOOL (Ecc. 12:9-12)

- So learn your lessons!
- Note Solomon’s example of being wise and orderly in thinking about these things.
- What is Solomon’s attitude toward what he has written? Vv10-11. See 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21.
- V12 – We judge other books by the Word of God, and make it our primary text. Psalm 119:97-104; John 16:12-15, 17:17.

“The remarkable thing about fearing God, is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.”
-- Oswald Chambers.

Life is a STEWARDSHIP (Ecc. 12:13-14)

- So fear God!
- The purpose of life is to be good stewards of God’s gift of life. See Acts 17:24-28; Eph. 2:10.
- To fear God is healthy, and the healthy kind of fear will result in obedience. Isaiah 8:13; Psalm 112.
- God is the final judge. Ecc. 3:17, 11:9, 12:14; Rev. 20:11-15; Matthew 12:36.

Discussion:

- When Solomon brought God into the conversation, how did it change things? See 1 Cor. 15:58 and compare it to Ecc. 1:2, 12:8.
- What is the healthy Christian attitude about the final judgment? See Romans 14:1-12; Romans 8:1.
- When people share with you their confusion, concern, or even anger, about the difficulties or the monotony of life, how can you transition the conversation to a gospel conversation?

Notes: _____

¹² This outline is from: Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Satisfied*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996. Print.