

The Rest of the Story: Ecclesiastes

Love God

The Lord is the original worker. He created the universe and then took a rest. Take a moment in prayer to praise God for some aspect of His creation as well as His give of rest and refreshment.

Grow in Grace

1. What do you remember about your first job? It can be your first job as a child or an adult. How did you get the job? How did you like it? How long did it last? Did you learn anything from it?
2. The author of Ecclesiastes is a king in Jerusalem often considered to be Solomon the wisest of all. The title he chooses for himself is “The Teacher.” Read chapter 1:1-11. What is the tone of his teaching? Verse 2 states the overall theme of his discoveries. What does this summary tell you about the rest of the book?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 and 2:12-16. What is his view on the value of wisdom? Does it surprise you that the wisest man in the Old Testament would have such a perspective? Is the Teacher simply cynical or does he have a deeper purpose?
4. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 How does he feel about pleasure, entertainment and personal achievement? Why didn't these satisfy him? How does “the law of diminishing return” apply to these goals? What does this message have to say to our culture which is so focused on pleasure and entertainment?
5. Read Ecclesiastes 2:17-26 What is his attitude toward work? Why does he worry about what his heirs will do with his wealth? 2:24 gives us an example of a repeated refrain in the book: eat, drink and enjoy your work. How do you feel about this philosophy of life?
6. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-14 This is a familiar poem made famous by Pete Seeger and The Byrds in the 60s. Their song was upbeat but what message do these verses give if you read them with the same slightly cynical tone we find in the rest of the book?
7. How does 3:11-13 change the outlook of the book. What does it mean that God “has made everything beautiful in its time”? What does it mean to have “eternity in the human heart.” How does your perspective change if you realize you were made not for this earth but to live forever?

Share with Others

C.S. Lewis said, “Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth 'thrown in': aim at Earth and you will get neither.” How does this advice align with the book of Ecclesiastes? How does it change your life to realize you were meant to live forever?

Have you ever chased after something only to find it was meaningless? What advice would you give others about career, wisdom, pleasure, wealth, etc...

End in prayer of thanks to God for the lessons you've learned, the beautiful things He places in your life and the gift of eternity He places in your heart.