

## Ecclesiastes Bible Study Week 2



In Ecclesiastes 1:1-11, “the Teacher” concluded the life “under the sun” is meaningless (or vanity, or futile, or like vapour), because the world just keeps rolling on from one generation to the next. There is nothing new, there is nothing special, and there would appear to be nothing particularly meaningful or purposeful in a life that amounts to a series of groundhog days. But how had the Teacher reached this seemingly bleak conclusion? And is it so bleak after all?

### The talk

1. What were the main points from the talk that stood out for you? What challenged you or encouraged you?

### The pursuit of knowledge and wisdom

2. Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18. The Teacher “applied [his] mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens” (1:13). In what ways do we pursue earthly knowledge and wisdom? Why might we think that this will lead to a meaningful and purposeful life?
3. Why is this ultimately “a chasing after the wind” (1:17)?

4. What are some examples where you have realised that some things just can't be understood (1:15), or where wisdom and knowledge has only brought sorrow and grief - or perhaps a bucketload of worry (1:18)?
5. Consider 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:8 or James 3:13-18. What are some of the limitations to human wisdom anyway?

### **The pursuit of the three Ps**

6. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11. In what ways do we pursue each of the following, and what makes us think that these things are what the 'good life' is about?
  - a. pleasures (2:1-3)
  - b. projects (2:4-6)
  - c. possessions (2:7-10)
7. Again, what is the problem if any of these things become the 'driving force' or the motivating factor in our lives? Why does it lead to the Teacher's conclusion in 2:11?

### **Making it personal (part 1)**

8. Are you more likely to seek meaning and purpose in knowledge / wisdom, or in pleasures, or projects, or possessions? Are any of these a struggle for you at the moment?

### **Five invitations**

9. While the message in Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:11 is confronting, sometimes hearing a harsh truth enables us to respond appropriately. The talk suggested that the message of this passage (and of the gospel as a whole) contains five invitations. Consider each one and the suggested passages – what does each one mean and which ones do you find particularly challenging?
  - a. an invitation to be free (of the pressure to chase knowledge or pleasures) (see Luke 18:15-17, Matthew 6:19-21, Galatians 5:1-12, John 8:31-32)
  - b. an invitation to embrace the love of God (see Romans 8:1 & 31-39, Ephesians 1:3-14)
  - c. an invitation to find our rest and hope in God alone (see Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 4:6-11, Matthew 6:25-34)
  - d. an invitation to enjoy what we have (see Philippians 4:11-12)

e. an invitation to live for Jesus (see Ecclesiastes 12, Colossians 3:1-4, Matthew 6:24) – to look to give more instead of seeking to get more

10. Life under the sun is meaningless. But life under the Son (Jesus) is not meaningless. Why is this so, and how can this give us real meaning and purpose in life?

11. How will you respond this week to live more under the Son than under the sun?