



STUDY GUIDE

THE PURSUIT OF PURPOSE 05.14.2017

[set up]

Tell a recent story from your life about how a lesson you learned or advice you were given greatly helped you or prevented a painful or damaging experience.

[digging deeper]

Read through Ecclesiastes 7:1-18. What were some of the lessons/advice that were offered?

From this passage, what did you read that you really can relate to? What did you struggle with?

What are the advantages that come with mourning and sorrow? Can you give an example of how that has played out in your own life?

What can be learned from Ecclesiastes 7 and 8 about the sin nature of man? What other verses in the Bible come to mind and support this instruction? How is this understanding discouraging to us? How is it encouraging, especially in light of the Gospel?

What mysteries have I encountered that defy human understanding (8:16-17)?

Take a large Post-it note and list out all the ways people can practically live out and apply the lessons found in Ecclesiastes 7 and 8.

One of the problems of life addressed in Ecclesiastes 7 and 8 is that bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people (7:15; 8:10-15). With this in mind, how would you assess yourself on these issues with the following questions? (Please share your answers with your group afterwards.)

- 5 - Very much true of me
- 4 - Usually true of me
- 3 - Sometimes true of me
- 2 - Rarely true of me
- 1 - Not true of me

- I am at peace and trust God when I see good people experience bad things.
- I am at peace and trust God when I see bad people experience good things.
- I have a fear of God that helps keep me from sinning as much as my human nature desires.
- I know that any good in me is completely God's doing, not my own, and is the outcome of His grace.
- I feel equipped and prepared to answer someone who asks me why bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.
- I have several Bible verses that I am familiar with and can turn to that help me see God's teaching on this issue.
- I actively and regularly share the lessons that God teaches me with others.

What helps me to trust God in spite of my circumstances?

(Some additional verses on these topics that you can read now or later:
Isaiah 41:10; 1 Peter 5:7; John 16:33; Romans 8:18; James 1:2-4; 2 Corinthians 5:10;
2 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Psalm 37.)

[living it out]

What is one lesson I learned today, or what is a critical lesson I was reminded of?

What does that lesson teach us about the Lord?

Who will I commit to share that lesson with this week? (Think primarily of passing on to the next generation in and outside of your home, your LifeHouse neighbors, and as a missionary at work or in your circle of contact/influence.)

Close in Prayer. Pray that the Lord helps you grow in learning all He wants to teach you in His Word. Pray for the courage and urgency to share the wisdom and lessons God teaches you with others. Pray for the person you intend to talk to. (You can pray in a large group, or break up into pairs or trios.)