



STUDY GUIDE

THE PURSUIT OF PURPOSE 05.28.2017

[set up]

Share about a time in your life when a more spiritually mature family member, friend, or leader wrote to you or had a conversation with you that helped alter the course of your life.

[digging deeper]

We just wrapped up our series in the book of Ecclesiastes, a book where God used a wise and wealthy teacher (the “Koheleth”) who looked for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment in all the offerings of the world, only to come up empty (“it’s all vanity”).

What was his conclusion when it was all said and done (Ecclesiastes 12:13)?

- How is his conclusion encouraging and affirming?
- How is his conclusion incomplete?

The book of Ecclesiastes acknowledges the sovereignty of God in many places.

Review these verses: Ecclesiastes 2:24; 2:26; 3:11; 3:13; 3:14; 3:17; 5:1-2; 5:19; 7:13-14; 11:5.

How would you summarize these verses in one sentence?

Ecclesiastes also points man to what is after this life under the sun.

Review these verses: Ecclesiastes 3:11; 3:20; 12:5; 12:7; 12:14.

How would you summarize these verses in one sentence?

But, like a missing puzzle piece, there is not a connection to the Gospel of Christ from this book. How do we launch to the Gospel from the end of Ecclesiastes, especially with the last sentence mentioning the final judgement? Write down some New Testament verses that come to mind. (Here’s a few to start – John 5:24; Romans 3:21-31; Romans 8:1)

In the final two chapters of Ecclesiastes, there is an emphasis on those in their youth. (See 11:9-12:1) Essentially, what is the writer of Ecclesiastes saying to those who are younger? How does it relate to (or what does that mean for) those who are older? How has this played out, or how is this being played out, in your life?

Reflect back on the entire series in Ecclesiastes. What has stood out to you as a significant “take home” for you from this book? How can you live your life differently because of what God has shown you in Ecclesiastes?

[living it out]

The life message from last week's concluding message in Ecclesiastes was, "Live for the One above the sun while we are under the sun." There were four assessment questions offered in the message to help us evaluate how we are doing. Please recall your answers (or do them now). Rate yourself on a scale from 1-5. (5 - True of me. 4- Often true of me. 3- Sometimes true of me. 2- Rarely true of me. 1- Not true of me).

- _____ I'm taking appropriate faith-based risks with resources and relationships.
- _____ I'm decreasing stress and increasing joy by enjoying all the goodness of God's creation.
- _____ I'm seeking godly wisdom from those older & wiser than me while also speaking & pouring godly wisdom into the next generation.
- _____ I'm walking close to Jesus while I have my vitality so that I can experience His love, follow His lead, obey His commands, and share in His mission.

Once you're done with this exercise, can you share a story or example from your highest scoring category that demonstrates a "win" in this area for you? Now circle the area you scored least in, and give an action step of how you will act on that area this week. A good LifeGroup exercise would be to pick the category your group collectively scored least on and brainstorm a list of action steps to grow in that category, then pick one idea that you will personally live out this week. Circle back around with each other this next week (call, text, face-to-face conversation) to see how everyone is doing with their action steps.

Close in Prayer. In addition to praying for needs within your group, pray for God to cement into your heart and mind what He taught you in Ecclesiastes. Also, pray over the application steps each person has committed to take and live out from what has been learned.