

*Ecclesiastes*  
*Leader Guide*  
(NASB and ESV)

LIFE UNDER THE SUN

*Ecclesiastes Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)*

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Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422

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1<sup>st</sup> edition (10/2020)

## USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

### Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

### Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**  
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**  
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

### Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


#### When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

#### For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

<b>PRINTED PAGE NO.</b>	<b>L E S S O N S</b>	<b>PDF PAGE NO.</b>
1	LESSON ONE: Ecclesiastes 1–2	5
7	LESSON TWO: Ecclesiastes 3–5	11
13	LESSON THREE: Ecclesiastes 6–8	17
19	LESSON FOUR: Ecclesiastes 9–12	23

To locate a particular lesson in the pdf, click on  in the grey bar on the left side of the window. Bookmarks will appear for each of the lessons. Select the lesson you need.

**ECCLESIASTES  
LEADER GUIDE  
Lesson 1**

**Lesson emphasis:**

Ecclesiastes 1–2

You might begin this discussion by asking your group what their overall impressions of Ecclesiastes are. Give a brief time for them to share.

What is one of the main points of Ecclesiastes?

All is vanity.

Ask your group what they learned about the definition of “vanity.”

“*vapor, breath*”<sup>1</sup>; “emptiness, futility, uselessness”<sup>2</sup>  
It “means something meaningless and purposeless.”<sup>3</sup>

What did the author conclude in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14?

Fear God and keep His commandments because He will judge every act / deed.  
This relates to every person (ESV—this is the whole duty of man).

Now lead your group to chapter 1.

**ECCLESIASTES 1**

Verses 1-2

According to verse 1, who wrote Ecclesiastes? What does chapter 1 say about him?

The Preacher, David’s son who was king in Jerusalem  
He had magnified and increased wisdom more than (ESV—He had acquired great wisdom, surpassing) all who were before him over Jerusalem

He set his mind (ESV—applied his heart) to seek and explore / search out, using his wisdom. He saw all the works of man; observed a wealth (ESV—had great experience) of wisdom and knowledge. He set his mind (ESV—applied his heart) to know wisdom and madness and folly.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), H1892.

<sup>2</sup>James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>3</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 25.

Now you can ask what your group learned from the cross-references that were to help determine the author's identity.

2 Chronicles 1:1, 7-12 and Proverbs 1:1

Solomon became king in Jerusalem after his father David. He asked God for wisdom to rule His people, and God gave Solomon wisdom surpassing all who were before him.

He was the king of Israel.

1 Kings 4:20-34 and 1 Kings 10:23-25

Israel was at its height as a kingdom at the time Solomon ruled. He was over other surrounding kingdoms as well. These references tell of the magnitude of his kingdom and requirements to sustain it.

Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and over 1,000 songs. Many came from other nations to hear his wisdom.

These cross-references fit with the description in Ecclesiastes 1 of the author.

According to 1 Kings 11, what happened after Solomon became great?

1 Kings 11:1-13

Solomon's heart was turned away from the Lord because of his many foreign wives. He followed their gods and wasn't wholly devoted to His God who had appeared to him twice.

Who do these cross-references point to as the author? Is Solomon a possibility?

*NOTE: There are various opinions about the author of Ecclesiastes that your group might read about in commentaries and study Bibles. But don't let your group get into a debate about who the author is, because it doesn't change the content of the book.*

*Also, some think that verses 1-2 were written by someone other than the author.*

You might ask your group if anything in Solomon's life relates to theirs. Then if so, encourage them to continue their study of Ecclesiastes to see what the Lord might say to them.

Lead your discussion back to Ecclesiastes 1.

Verses 3-11

What is the question, and how do the following statements relate to it?

What advantage does man have in his work under the sun?  
(ESV—What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?)

A generation goes and one comes, but the earth remains forever. Then verses 5-7 tell of the sun, wind, rivers / streams, and sea continuing in their courses. In a sense, mankind continues in a course of a generation coming and a generation going.

Then verses 8 and 9 conclude that there is nothing new under the sun. Everything has already existed / been. The cycle is wearisome / full of weariness.

Man's life and understanding is like a vapor—no advantage / gain.

Ask your group if they've ever felt like this; give them time to discuss personal application. And encourage them to ask any questions they might have.

### Verses 12-15

How do these verses relate to 1-11?

The Preacher had tried to understand the earth and its works, and man's relationship to these, but he couldn't. Not even with his great wisdom.

His conclusion was that works of a man's life are vanity and striving after wind.

Compare striving after wind with verse 6.

Verse 15 seems to indicate that man can't do anything to change what exists.

God gave men a grievous task / unhappy business as they try to figure things out.

### Verses 16-18

How does the flow of thought continue?

The Preacher even set his mind (ESV—applied his heart) to know madness and folly as well as wisdom. But his conclusion was again striving after wind.

As wisdom and knowledge increase so do grief / vexation and pain / sorrow.

Ask your group how they feel after discussing this chapter. Does it seem like there is any hope for life? Encourage them to continue studying the rest of this book.

What is a possible chapter theme for Ecclesiastes 1?

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart.

Preacher, seek and explore / search out—all vanity under the sun

## ECCLESIASTES 2

### Verses 1-8

How does this chapter or reasoning continue from chapter 1?

Because of the vanity expressed in Ecclesiastes 1, the Preacher tested himself with pleasure. But it was also futility / vanity.

Laughter

Wine

Works

Built houses, planted vineyards, made gardens and parks, ponds / pools

Slaves, flocks, and herds

Silver and gold, treasure

Singers

Concubines

Does the description of the Preacher lend evidence to the author's identity?

How do the pleasures listed in these verses compare with today? Do people still think that pleasures can add meaning to life? What about you? Was there a time in your life when you thought this way? Do you today?

### Verses 9-11

What is the reasoning and conclusion in these verses?

The Preacher took pleasure in labor / toil and viewed his pleasures as his reward for the labor / toil.

But when he considered his activities (ESV—all that his hands had done), he concluded that it was vanity and striving after wind. There was no profit (ESV—nothing to be gained).

### Verses 12-17

What kind of thinking did the Preacher turn to in these verses? Did his thinking get better or worse?

So he turned to consider wisdom, madness, and folly—which are also in 1:17.

He thought about his successor.

Conclusions:

wisdom excels folly (ESV—there is more gain in wisdom than in folly) but one fate awaits both (ESV—the same event happens to all)—the wise man and the fool both die so he hated life, for the work was grievous everything is futility / vanity and striving after wind



You might ask your group if they have ever felt like that, or if they know someone who does now? Is there any help?

People can give up hope easily because of various reasons.  
Ecclesiastes does have the answer.

Verses 18-23

How does the reasoning continue?

One doesn't know for sure if he leaves his work for a fool or a wise person to continue.  
This led to despair of all the work he had done.

So, the question in verse 22. The answer again is vanity.

Labor is hard—painful and grievous (ESV—his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation); even at night there's no rest for the mind / heart thinking of the task.

Verses 24-26

How does this chapter end? Is there any hope? If so, what?

Eat, drink, and tell oneself his labor is good (ESV—find enjoyment in his toil).  
This is from God's hand. There's no enjoyment without / apart from Him.  
He gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to the one who's good in His sight / who pleases him.

Contrast: the sinner is given by God to give to the good (ESV—the one who pleases God).  
This is vanity and striving after wind.

There is hope with God.

You might ask if your group noted anything else about God on their page about Him in the Appendix of the course.

What is a possible theme for this chapter? Tell them to look again at their At a Glance chart.

Pleasure, wisdom, and folly: hated and despaired of life: enjoyment with God

End your discussion by encouraging your group to continue their study of this very interesting, thought-provoking, and peculiar book in God's Word.



**ECCLESIASTES  
LEADER GUIDE  
Lesson 2**

**Lesson emphasis:**

Ecclesiastes 3–5

**REVIEW**

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about Ecclesiastes; what it’s about, who they think the author is . . . . Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid.

Many people think Solomon wrote this book. It compares with what other Bible passages say about his life.

Ecclesiastes is about the vanity of life under the sun; labor, pleasure, wisdom, and folly. A generation goes and a generation comes.

But it’s better to enjoy life with God than view life from an earthly perspective.

Ask what they remember about God from Ecclesiastes from chapters 1 and 2. Tell them to look at their list about Him if they need help remembering.

He gave a grievous task to men—they can’t understand or change His works.

Enjoyment of life comes from Him.

He gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who are good in His sight / who please him.

**ECCLESIASTES 3**

Verses 1-8

What are the contrasts in these verses, and what are they about?

There is an appointed time / a season for everything, every event / matter under heaven.

These contrasts list the events of life.

These events are common to every person’s life. Some in your group might relate these to the cycles in chapter 1.

How do these contrasts relate to life? Ask your group how they relate to them specifically.

Give time here for your group to talk about any one of the events and how it took place in their life or what they learned from it.

Who is the main character in verses 9-18?

God is.

Tell your group to look at the text and their list about God as they discuss these verses.

Verses 9-15

How do these verses relate to 1-8?

God is the one who made everything appropriate / beautiful in its time.

Although He set / put eternity in man's heart, man cannot find out all of God's work (ESV—what God as done) from beginning to end.

Verses 12 and 13 repeat what 2:24 and 25 say.

Better to enjoy the life God gives than to view it from a purely human viewpoint.  
Life is a gift from Him to be enjoyed. It's a time for doing good in His sight, pleasing Him.

Verses 14 and 15 tell why men should fear God (ESV—fear before God). He and His work remain / endure forever. Man's life on earth does not.

*NOTE: Commentators and different versions of the Bible offer some interpretations of the end of verse 15. It's a difficult statement for interpretation. But the interpretation has to fit into its immediate context. So, it has to do with the repeated cycles of life—what the Preacher wrote about in chapter 1 also.*

How do the cross-references in Isaiah and Deuteronomy relate to what Ecclesiastes 3:9-15 say about God?

Isaiah 55:8-9

God's thoughts and ways are as high as heaven is above the earth compared with man's thoughts and ways. Man cannot comprehend God.

Deuteronomy 29:29

God revealed certain things for man to understand and do, but He kept some things secret.

What statement is repeated in 2:24 and 3:10, 16 and 22? Why?

The Preacher said he had seen . . . .  
This introduces different topics in these chapters.

Verses 16-22

How does this chapter end? What do these verses teach about God and man?

The Preacher saw wickedness in the place of justice and righteousness.  
God will judge every matter and deed /work.

God tested / is testing man so he sees that both men and beasts die.

His conclusion is the same as at the end of chapter 2. It's better to be happy in one's activities (ESV—rejoice in his work) instead of trying to understand what he cannot and making his life miserable.

Now ask your group how verses 9-22 relate to them. Do they understand that they cannot figure out all that God does and has done? How do they fear God? Are they happy in their activities? (ESV—Do they rejoice in their work?)

What is a possible theme for Ecclesiastes 3? Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart.

God appointed time / seasons; men should fear Him, He'll judge all

#### **ECCLESIASTES 4**

##### Verses 1-8

What did the Preacher see next? What are the topics in these verses?

The Preacher said he looked again. This time he saw oppression, verses 1-3.

The oppressed have no comfort so he concluded that it's better to be dead or never born.

Then in verses 4-6 he saw rivalry / envy.

This might refer to selfish labor—toil for oneself alone.

Verses 7 and 8 say the Preacher looked again at vanity.

The vanity of labor to the extreme with no dependent (ESV—son or brother), no satisfaction and depriving self of pleasure

You might ask your group how they see these things today? How do they affect their lives? What lessons for life have they learned from these verses?

##### Verses 9-12

What are these verses about? How do they relate to verses 7-8?

Companions / fellows as opposed to labor / toil by oneself  
Two are better than one and three is stronger.

Ask your group how they live and work with companions. How does this compare with not having companions? Do they need to ask the Lord for some godly companions? Or do they need to be one for someone else?

Verses 13-16

How does this chapter end? What else did the Preacher see?

A poor and wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer will receive instruction / take advice from others.

One rises from obscurity to take the place of the old king, but his popularity also does not last. Another one rises to rule.

Does this continue now? How? What are lessons for life from this situation?

Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for Ecclesiastes 4.

Oppression, rivalry / envy, companions / fellows, popularity—vanity

**ECCLESIASTES 5**

Verses 1-8

What are verses 1-3 and Ecclesiastes 10:12 about?

Words: not hasty or impulsive  
Few because a fool uses many.  
Gracious words

How are these verses different from Ecclesiastes 1–4?

The Preacher wrote instructions here.

What are the specific instructions? Tell your group to look at what they underlined.

Guard  
Draw near to listen  
Don't be hasty in word (ESV—Be not rash with your mouth) or impulsive in thought (ESV—heart be hasty) before God  
Don't be late / delay in paying a vow  
Don't sin by speech (ESV—Don't let your mouth lead you into sin)  
Don't say speech or vow was a mistake  
Fear God  
Don't be shocked (ESV—Don't be amazed) at what you see

Tell them to look at their list about God and ask what they learned about Him from Ecclesiastes 5:1-7.

Guard self when in His presence.  
Draw near to Him to listen.  
Don't be hasty / Be not rash or impulsive to bring up a matter in His presence (ESV—to utter a word before God).

He's in heaven far above earth, so listen more than talk when focused on Him.

Not paying a vow makes God angry enough to destroy one's works.  
So fear Him.

Men need to be reverent before God, and especially in what they say.

Compare this with Ecclesiastes 3:9-15.

God has worked that men should fear Him.  
He's not under the sun or heaven. He's in heaven, far above men.

You might ask if any of these things about God spoke to some in your group. If so, give time for them to describe.

Who and what are verses 8 and 9 about?

Oppression and officials  
Officials are to watch over others, but many times justice and righteousness are denied.  
But a king who is involved is an advantage.

Verses 10-20

What connects these verses?

Money, riches

What does verse 10 say about not being satisfied? Also, ask about the cross-references.

The one who loves money is not satisfied with it.

Ecclesiastes 4:8

The one who works extremely hard but only for himself is not satisfied with his riches.

Philippians 4:11-12

Paul said he'd learned to be content in need and in abundance, in all circumstances.

Ask your group how satisfied they are with what they have. Have they learned to be content?

Matthew 6:24-34

Man cannot serve God and wealth/ money.  
Don't worry / be anxious about life, food and drink, or about tomorrow.  
Worry / being anxious does no good.            Learn to be content.

Luke 12:15-21

Be on guard against greed / covetousness.

Life doesn't consist of one's possessions (ESV—in the abundance of one's possessions).

Like Ecclesiastes says—all men die, even rich ones.

They cannot take possessions with them.

Store / lay up treasure in heaven; be rich toward God.

Lead the discussion back to Ecclesiastes 5, and ask about verses 11-12.

The Preacher asked again about advantage.

There is no advantage to increasing wealth. The one who loves riches doesn't even sleep as well as the one who works.

The only advantage so far in Ecclesiastes is to fear God and enjoy what He gives.

What are the grievous evils in verses 13 and 16?

Riches hoarded to the owners' hurt.

Nothing to support a son (ESV—nothing in the father's hand) when the riches are lost.

As a man is born so he dies (ESV—just as he came, so he shall go), taking nothing with him.

Again, there is no advantage to hoarding riches to oneself.

What is good and fitting in verses 18-20?

Verse 18 repeats 2:24-25 and 3:12-13.

God gives years / days of a man's life.

He gives riches and wealth / wealth and possessions.

He gives the ability to enjoy His gift.

God keeps man occupied with a glad heart (ESV—joy in his heart) so he doesn't have to think about how long he'll live. That's contentment; and it's from God.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart, and ask about a theme for this chapter.

Words, riches, and fearing God

You might close your discussion by asking what they learned from this lesson to put into practice in their lives.



**ECCLESIASTES  
LEADER GUIDE  
Lesson 3**

**REVIEW**

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and list on God. Then ask what they remember as some main points in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes is about the vanity of life under the sun.  
The Preacher describes what he experienced and saw during his life of wisdom.  
Labor, pleasure, length of life, riches, wisdom, and folly

There are cautions and instructions about God's presence and what one says.

From a human point of view life is striving after wind.  
But if a man fears God he can enjoy his life under the sun.

God empowers some to enjoy the fruit of their riches.

*NOTE: Watch your time at the beginning of your discussion as there is a lot to discuss from this lesson.*

**ECCLESIASTES 6**

Verses 1-6

How does this chapter continue from chapter 5?

Again, the Preacher tells of an evil he's seen under the sun.  
God gave riches / possessions, wealth, and honor, but not the power to enjoy them.  
Contrast this with 5:18-19.

Somehow a foreigner / stranger enjoys them—maybe by seizure from the one who God gave them to originally. This is vanity, a severe affliction / a grievous evil.

Another situation is presented in verses 3-6—a dissatisfied man with many children and years of life. The comparison is with a miscarriage / stillborn child, nothing enjoyed or satisfying. They both die.

Ask about the other references in Ecclesiastes about not being satisfied.

- 1:8 eye not satisfied with seeing nor ear with hearing
- 4:8 eye not / never satisfied with riches
- 5:10 one who loves money not satisfied with it  
one who loves abundance / wealth not satisfied with income
- 6:7 appetite not satisfied

Then ask your group how satisfied they are and give time for them to discuss.

Verses 7-9

What are these verses about? What is the repeated question?

What advantage...?

It's better to appreciate what one has than desire what he doesn't—for the wise and the fool both.

Verses 10-12

What are these verses about? How do the questions continue?

A man cannot dispute with one who is stronger than he is—God is stronger.  
Mankind is known by God.

What advantage is there to man?  
Who knows what's good for a man to spend his life doing?  
Only God knows.

Ask your group what lessons for life they learned from this chapter.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Not satisfied with riches / wealth and enjoyment

**ECCLESIASTES 7**

Verse 1-14

What are the main points of the comparisons?

Good name better than ointment  
A person's name or character is better than an outer remedy.  
Internal better than outward

Day of death better than day of birth  
Better to go to a house of mourning than feasting  
That's the end of every man and the wise take it to heart.  
A person's death causes others to think about their own death, and maybe how they're living.

But fools prefer pleasure / mirth more than mourning, verse 4.

Sorrow better than laughter; after being sad one can laugh again.

Verses 5-12 contrast wisdom with folly.  
Listen to wisdom.  
Anger is foolish.  
Wisdom is an advantage and a protection.

What do you learn from verses 13-14?  
How do verses 13-14 compare with 1:15 and 3:11?

Consider God’s work; He made prosperity and adversity—listed in verses 1-8.

Man can’t change God’s work or completely understand it.

Relate the last two lines of verse 14 with the question at the end of 6:12.

Now ask what your group learned about life from these verses. How can they practice the truth put forth in these statements? What can adversity and lack of understanding cause them to do?

#### Verses 15-18

Ask what they learned from these verses.

Sometimes the righteous die young while the wicked have long lives.

Don’t be excessive.  
Excessive foolishness can lead to death.

Again, the best thing to do is fear God.  
This is the third time fearing God is mentioned in Ecclesiastes.  
Also, it’s the Preacher’s final conclusion in 12:13.

What does Psalm 111:10 say about fearing God?

Fearing Him is the beginning of wisdom.

You might ask your group if they fear God. How do they know?

#### Verses 19-22

What do these verses say about wisdom and righteousness?

Wisdom strengthens.  
Even the righteous sometimes sin.

Again, there is warning about words. Don’t take words seriously (ESV—Don’t take to heart all the things people say), and don’t curse people. Remember that you’ve sinned too.

Verses 23-29

What happened in these verses? Ask about the cross-references at relevant points.

The Preacher tested wisdom, but even he could not understand all.  
The past is remote and mysterious (ESV—far off and very deep).

He investigated (searched out), sought wisdom and explanation (ESV—the scheme of things) and to know the evil / wickedness of folly and the foolishness of madness. It might refer to his experience with women, 1 Kings 11:1-10.

He only found one righteous man in a thousand and no woman.

More bitter than death is a woman whose snares and chains / fetters capture /take the sinner. Only one pleasing to God escapes from her.

Compare this with Hebrews 11:6.

Faith pleases God. Seeking and believing Him

Ask what your group learned from Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 about the adulteress and the man lacking sense. Give time for them to share the points that stood out to them.

What is a possible theme for Ecclesiastes 7?

Death and mourning better than birth and feasting; don't be excessive, fear God

**ECCLESIASTES 8**

Verses 1-9

What is repeated in these verses? What do the verses say about these subjects?

Authority / power and evil

Wisdom illumines a man (ESV—makes his face shine).

Keep the king's command because of the oath before God. God established the king in his position.

Know the proper time and procedure (ESV—time and way) for being under authority. The one who keeps the commands experiences less trouble (ESV—will know no evil things).

But no one has authority / power over the wind (power to retain the spirit), death, war, and evil. Only God.

Some exercise authority / power over another to his hurt.

Verses 10-13

Who and what are these verses about?

Verse 10 tells about the religious wicked who died and were forgotten / praised.

If authority doesn't quickly / speedily execute a sentence against evil, men do evil.

Verse 8 says evil / wickedness won't deliver those who practice it, although he might live a long time as verse 12 says. Verse 13 says he won't lengthen / prolong his days by evil; God determines how long a person lives.

But it's well for those who fear God and openly (ESV—who fear God before him).

Verses 14-15

How does the Preacher continue his flow of thought in verses 14-15?

Bad things can happen to good people, and good things can happen to bad people.

How does verse 15 compare with Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; 3:12-13; and 5:18?

So the Preacher commended pleasure / joy given by God. It's good to eat, drink, and be merry /joyful in life as one toils during his life.

Verses 16-17

What did the Preacher see in these verses?

Man cannot discover / find out every work of God. It's impossible for man.

What are some lessons for life from this chapter? Give time for application discussion.

Ask what your group noted as a possible theme for Ecclesiastes 8 on their At a Glance chart.

Authority / Power and evil; fear God; pleasure / joy

Ask what they learned from the cross-references about God.

Isaiah 40:28

The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth doesn't become weary or tired (ESV—faint or grow weary). Man cannot understand Him.

Isaiah 44:6-8, 24

The Lord of hosts said He is the first and the last. There is no other God. None is like Him. He makes all things, forms people from the womb.

Isaiah 45:6-7 and Deuteronomy 32:39

He forms light and creates darkness, causes well-being and calamity.  
He puts to death / kills and gives life / makes alive, wounds, and heals.

No one can deliver from / out of His hand.

Romans 11:33-36

He is unsearchable. No one has known His mind or given counsel to Him.

How does 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 relate to this knowledge of God?

People can only understand what God has told us about Himself by His Spirit.

He gives His Spirit to those who believe in Christ Jesus.

We have His mind by His Spirit.

You might end this discussion by asking if those in your group have His Spirit. How do they know?

**ECCLESIASTES  
LEADER GUIDE  
Lesson 4**

**REVIEW**

To begin your last discussion of Ecclesiastes, ask your group what they remember as main points of this book. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart if they need help.

Solomon might have been the author of this book. A lot of what is in it relates to his life. He was the wisest man who ever has lived.

Ecclesiastes was written from the perspective of life under the sun.  
The Preacher tested and examined most aspects of life.  
The main repeated statement is that all is vanity—vapor.  
All die so man should take pleasure in his life under the sun.  
But there is no pleasure without God.

The main point in the book about God is for man to fear Him. The Preacher's conclusion at the end of the book is to fear Him, keep His commands, because He'll judge all for everything.

What does Ecclesiastes 8:16-17 say about the Preacher's conclusion regarding man discovering /finding out all of God's work?

Even the wisest cannot discover / find out God's work.  
That has been a repeated theme in Ecclesiastes since chapter 1.

**ECCLESIASTES 9**

Verse 1

How does this verse relate to Ecclesiastes 8:16-17?

It seems to continue from the end of chapter 8. The Preacher gave his heart—mind—to know wisdom and to see God's work.

Verse 1 says he took all he saw to heart / laid it to heart—mind—and now explains (examining it all).  
Again, even the wisest and righteous and their deeds are in God's hands.  
No one knows what comes next in his life.  
Love or hatred can be next.

Verses 2-6

What are these verses about?

One fate awaits, all die (ESV—the same event happens to all).  
That’s the one thing all can know comes after life under the sun.  
This has been stated before in this book.

How does Hebrews 9:27 compare with what the Preacher said?

Men die and then are judged.

Ask your group how studying this book has changed their perspective on life and death.  
Give time for them to discuss.

Verses 7-10

Since all die, what did the Preacher say in these verses? Has this been repeated in Ecclesiastes?

Be happy / joyful, cheerful / merry. God has already approved your works / what you do.  
Enjoy life with the woman /wife you love—the Preacher is not against all women, 7:27-28.  
Enjoyment of life is a reward / portion in life and work. Life is from God.

Live to the fullest; there is no activity / work in Sheol—the place of the dead.  
The Preacher still contrasts life under the sun with death.

If life is only what happens under the sun and then death comes, what hope does man have?

John 3:16

God made provision for eternal life by sending His Son Jesus.  
Whoever believes in Him will not perish, even at death.

You might ask if those in your group are sure they have eternal life.

Verses 11-12

What else did the Preacher see under the sun?

Time and chance also overtake / happen to all.  
Evil can suddenly fall on anyone.

Ask your group how they’ve experienced this? Or know someone who has? Are they prepared?

Verses 13-18

What are these verses about?

Wisdom is repeated. It’s better than strength / might.  
Be wise. Listen to wisdom, even from unexpected sources.  
One sinner destroys much good.



Ask what your group noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

All die so enjoy life; better to be wise

### **ECCLESIASTES 10**

To discuss this chapter, you can tell your group to look at the lists they made on the page at the end of the lesson about wisdom and fools.

Then ask what they learned from this chapter about wisdom and fools. And how it all applies to them.

Verse 1 seems to say a similar thing as 9:18.

Fools are easily recognized, even when the ruler.  
Wisdom gives direction / inclines him to right.

Verse 8-11 are examples of why one should listen to wisdom before acting.

Beginning in verse 12, there are facts about words—another repeated subject in this book.

Also, the appropriate time (ESV—at the proper time) is mentioned in verse 17, another repeated subject.

How do the cross-references in James and 1 Corinthians relate to this chapter?

#### James 1:5-6 and 3:13-18

If anyone lacks wisdom, ask God in faith, and He gives it without reproach.  
Wisdom is shown in good behavior and deeds (ESV—good conduct and works). That's what Ecclesiastes 10 says, too.

There is a contrast in wisdom from above—God's wisdom given to men—and earthly wisdom of men without God.

#### 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

This passage also contrasts God's wisdom and that of mere men.  
God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise so no one can boast before Him. Only boast in the One who gives wisdom—Christ Jesus.

What is a possible theme for Ecclesiastes 10?

Wisdom and fools; exalted / high places and words

## **ECCLESIASTES 11**

### Verses 1-6

This chapter begins with some proverbs. Ask your group what they learned from these verses.

Be active and don't put all resources to work in one area.

Verse 4-6 are about idleness (ESV—withholding your hand).

Verse 5 might indicate pondering what one cannot know instead of action.

Compare the cross-references in 1 and 2 Thessalonians with these verses in Ecclesiastes.

### 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13

These passages warn believers not to live unruly lives (ESV—walk in idleness) in the area of working to provide for themselves. Paul and those with him were examples of working hard to provide.

Don't grow weary of doing good.

You might ask your group what they do when they get weary.

### Verses 7-10

How does this chapter end?

Rejoice in life although there are many days of darkness in life.

Rejoice in childhood, young manhood / youth. These times are fleeting / vanity.

Also know that God will judge all impulses and desires (ESV—ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes), how one lives.

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Don't be idle/ withhold your hand; rejoice in youth, remember darkness

## **ECCLESIASTES 12**

### Verses 1-8

How do these verses continue from the end of chapter 11?

Remember God the Creator in youth.

Verses 2-6 describe old age when there is not much pleasure in life.

Verse 7 is about the end of life—death.

All is vanity—a vapor.

If you have time, ask what your group learned from commentaries about verses 2-6.

Ask what they learned about God and how the cross-references relate to 11:7–12:7?

He is Creator, and He'll judge.

Exodus 20:11 and Revelation 4:11

God made all creation in six days.

Because He wills it, all things exist and were created.

Colossians 1:13-16

By the Son, Jesus Christ, all things were created.

All was created through and for Him, including people.

What should this knowledge bring about in one's life?

Verses 9-12

Who and what are these verses about?

The Preacher wrote proverbs as well as Ecclesiastes. This also fits with Solomon being the author.

Wise words are given by one Shepherd—God. Beyond this, writing many books is endless and devotion to them is wearying to the body.

You might ask what your group thinks about this.

Verses 13-14

What is the Preacher's conclusion?

Fear God and keep his commandments.

This is for every person / the whole duty of man.

God will judge every action / deed, even hidden / secret, good or evil.

Ask what your group learned about judgment from the cross-references.

The ungodly

2 Peter 2:9 and 3:7

The ungodly will be judged.

Salvation offered

Romans 5:18-21 and 6:23

Salvation is offered to unbelievers. Christ Jesus came to save men from God's judgment

The free gift of God is eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 1:16

Believers preach the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection to bring unbelievers to Him. The power for salvation is in the gospel for all who believe.

Believers also judged

Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Believers will stand before the Lord at the judgment seat to give an account for deeds done in life. There will be recompense (ESV—they'll receive what is due).

Tell your group to look again at their At a Glance chart and ask about a theme for chapter 12.

Remember Creator in youth; Preacher wrote proverbs; Conclusion: fear God, He'll judge

Also ask about a book theme for Ecclesiastes.

All under the sun is vanity, so enjoy your life from God

End your discussion by asking what your group learned from this study that has helped them with understanding life.