



THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

CHASING THE WIND

Week 3

WEEK 2 REVIEW

- Ecclesiastes' purpose is not to force us into despair or to deconstruct God. Rather, it should force us to evaluate our own perspectives and pursuits.
- Qoheleth pursues many things that in the end do not satisfy his quest for purpose.
- Sometimes we obsess over formulas to give us the "right" solutions to life's problems, but life is not always reducible to simple formulas.
- God has appointed times for everything; His view of time is very different from ours.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

- Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and fill out the worksheet provided. Then, discuss your answers.



A SURVEY OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

OPPRESSION AND THE UNBORN

- Read Ecclesiastes 4:1-3. What do these verses seem to be saying?
- How can we tell if something or someone is oppressive? By what standard can we measure oppression?
- Have you ever felt powerless in the face of oppression? What comfort would you give someone who was truly oppressed?
- Should we conclude that it is always better to die or to have never been born than to live under oppression? Why or why not?

ENVY AND CONTENTMENT

- Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-6. What does the teacher say is the impetus for "all toil and achievement"? Do you agree with his observation?
- In what sense does envy drive society? Why do we compete with each other? Is competition bad?
- Have you ever felt the pressure to "keep up with the Joneses"? If so, in what areas of life? Education? Sports? Possessions? Spirituality?

A BALANCED LIFE

- In contrast to the person who is envied for his work, what do some people do? (v.5)
- What does the Bible say about work and laziness? (Proverbs 6:6-8, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8, Genesis 2:15)
- In contrast to laziness, how do some people live? (v.6)
- What does the Bible say about rest? (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-10, Hebrews 4:9-11, Matthew 11:28-30, Psalm 127:2)

WORK LIFE BALANCE



A BALANCED LIFE

- Have you seen this situation play out before where a person works so hard without questioning the reason for it all? Is a person's value merely defined by the work they accomplish? What determines a person's value?
- "When your identity is dependent solely on the job, you're conditioned to feel as good or as bad as your latest performance, your worth hanging in the balance with every task or jitter-inducing free moment. Having to remanufacture your worth every day is exhausting, and it crowds out the parts of life needed to bolster your real identity." - Joe Robinson, *American Identity Crisis: Are You Your Job?*

LONELINESS AND COMPANIONSHIP

- Read Ecclesiastes 4:7-12. List some of the Teacher's observations in these verses.
- What good is a pursuit if its fruit is not able to be shared with others?
- Have you ever had seasons of profound loneliness? What got you through those seasons?
- How do you approach companionship? Do you make friends easily? Why or why not?

LONELINESS AND COMPANIONSHIP

- In what senses are two better than one? In every sense? When does three become a crowd?
- Is Qoheleth only referring to two people, or can it be more? What is the difference between a group and a team?
- How does this passage speak to marriages? How does this passage speak to churches? What examples can we take from the life of Jesus?

POSITION AND POPULARITY

- Read Ecclesiastes 4:13-16. What point is the Teacher making here?
- Why would one usually not expect a poor youth to be wise or an old king to be foolish?
- Define "admonish." Why do we sometimes resent admonition as we get older? What does Scripture say about receiving correction? (2 Timothy 3:16, Psalm 141:5, Colossians 3:16)

POSITION AND POPULARITY

- How does pride and selfishness, combined with position, lead to a heart that is unwilling to learn? Can you think of any examples of pride and position hardening a person's heart?
- God is ultimately in charge of placing people in positions (Romans 13:1). Contentment is more fulfilling because it trusts God for promotion and success. Contentment seeks to do the right thing rather than getting ahead. Are you content?

WORSHIP AND WORDS

- Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. What does it mean to go to the House of God, and what should we keep in mind when we go there?
- What is the sacrifice of fools? Why is it not acceptable? (1 Samuel 15:22-23, Psalm 51:16-17)
- Is there a difference between a vow and a promise? Why should we be cautious to make either? (See Matthew 5:37)

WORSHIP AND WORDS

- What would be better than failing to keep a vow?
- In what ways do people's mouths cause their flesh to sin? What are some examples in which people make commitments before God but do not take them seriously?
- What are some consequences of rash speech?
- "Dreams and words are no substitute for a personal relationship with God." - J. Vernon McGee

WORSHIP AND WORDS

- "Religion has damned the world more than any other thing. Look what the pagan religions did for peoples in the past. Look at India, China and the Muslim world. Look at the Roman Catholic world. Look at Liberal Protestantism. Multitudes have joined churches since World War II to get away from God." - J. Vernon McGee
- "If the Holy Spirit were to leave your life or your church today, would you even notice?"

AVOIDING EXCESSES

- Read Ecclesiastes 5:8-20. What subject is discussed again in verse 8? What consolation does the Teacher offer on this matter?
- What disadvantages do riches have according to these verses?
- What conclusion does the Teacher reach in how we ought to use our physical blessings?

AVOIDING EXCESSES

- How does our view of possessions change if we recognize that God has given them to us to be used according to His purposes?
- Which purchases should we ask God about? Which purchases do you ask God about?
- How confident are you in the way you conduct your life? Are you prideful and assertive, or humble and God-fearing? What would others say about you?