



Apart from God, Life is Futile

Open it

1. Who is your all-time favorite teacher? Why do you like this teacher so much?

Daily Devotions

Day 1 — Today's Theme: Explore It

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1–11.

2. Who is the teacher?
3. What did the teacher say?
4. What question does the teacher ask in Ecclesiastes 1:3?
5. What does the Teacher say about the following (1:4-7)?
 - A. Generations—
 - B. The earth—
 - C. The sun—
 - D. The wind—
 - E. Streams—
6. What is new under the sun?
7. Who is remembered from former generations?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: Who Influences You?

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1.

If you could ask for anything in the world, what would you ask for? Solomon was asked this question by God as he began his rule over Israel. Do you know what he asked for? He didn't ask for riches or a long life or for the death of his enemies. He asked for wisdom!

Solomon asked the Lord, "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."¹ Because Solomon asked for wisdom, the Lord not only gave him more wisdom than anyone who ever lived before or after him, but the Lord also gave Solomon riches and honor.

As we study Ecclesiastes, keep in mind that Solomon used this wisdom from the Lord to understand what the meaning of life is apart from God!

Solomon refers to himself as the "Teacher," which means that through the wisdom that God has given him, he is teaching God's will, not just for the Israelites, but also for you and me today!²

So, listen carefully to what the Teacher has to say as we read and study the book of Ecclesiastes to understand God's will for your life. Allow the message of Ecclesiastes to influence the decisions and direction that you take in life.

8. Who or what influences your life? In what ways have they influenced you?

9. What are some poor decisions you have made because you either listened to bad advice or failed to listen to the wise counsel of others?

10. What are some good decisions you have made because you listened to the godly wisdom of others?

¹ 1 Kings 3:9

² <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/ecclesiastes-1.html>

Day 3 — Today's Theme: All is Vanity

Read Ecclesiastes 1:2.

Tom Brady is considered the greatest football player in the history of the NFL, and as of today, he has won seven Super Bowls. In 2005, after winning three Superbowl rings, he was interviewed on *60 Minutes*. He said, "Why do I have three Superbowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, 'Hey man, this is what it is. I reached my goal, my dream, my life is... Me.' I think, 'God, it's gotta be more than this. I mean this isn't –this isn't what it's all cracked up to be. I mean, I've done it. I'm 27. And what else is there for me?" He was then asked, "What's the answer?" Brady responds, "I wish I knew. I wish I knew."³

Four times in this one verse we see the word meaningless. The Hebrew word for "vanity" literally means a "vapor or breath."⁴ This is the thesis sentence, or main idea of all Ecclesiastes that Solomon will explore in the verses that follow. What Solomon is saying is that life apart from God is meaningless. If we pursue anything else in life besides God, then we will come to realize that life has no real value or significance! It's like trying to grab the wind.

11. What are the things that people devote their whole lives to pursuing to find fulfillment? What do you see teenagers around you pursuing?

12. What are the dreams you have in life? Is it wrong to chase after those dreams?

³ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=808396986179808>

⁴ Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1892.htm>

Day 4 — Today's Theme: The Cycles in Life

Read Ecclesiastes 1:3–7.

In Ecclesiastes 1:3, Solomon asks the question, “What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?”

He answers this question by observing the cyclical nature of life in how history has a way of repeating itself, both in the lives of men and in nature.

Every person born goes through the same stages of life. They start out as a baby, then develop into a child, then an adolescent, and finally an adult, where they have to find a way to survive, usually by working a job. They typically get married, have children, grow old and then die. Then the cycle repeats itself with a new generation.

Every day, you can count on the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening. You can always count on wind coming and going at various times in the year. If you travel to the ocean, you will always find it full of water with streams flowing in and out of it.

There is a consistency in life, which in one sense isn't a bad thing, because in a general sense, we know what to expect, but what value is there in the cycles of life looking at life without any thought about God? The phrase 'under the sun' “shows that Solomon was looking at life from the perspective of man on the earth without the aid of special revelation from God.”⁵

13. What is a project that you worked long and hard on in school? What benefit did you receive from it?

14. What do you think this passage is trying to say about work?

15. What do the following verses say about work? How do we look at these verses in light of the question Solomon is asking in verse 3?

Genesis 2:15—

Proverbs 12:11—

Proverbs 14:23—

Colossians 3:23—

⁵Constable, Thomas. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/ecclesiastes-1.html>

Day 5 — Today's Theme: There's Nothing New Under the Sun

Read Ecclesiastes 1:8–11.

When you see the phrase, “There’s nothing new under the sun,” you may be wondering like I did, what about technology? People never had cell phones 50 years ago and even cars weren’t around 200 years ago. By saying, “There is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9), Solomon was not overlooking inventions and technological advances that have resulted in civilization’s advancement through the centuries.... Technology changes, but human nature and human activity remain the same.”⁶ In a broad, general sense, humans all experience the same things in life. We all experience joy, sadness, trials, temptations, relationships, etc. just like those who have lived before us.

Solomon also says that we don’t remember these former generations but, even though we forget about these former generations, we must remember that there are two things that last forever: the Word of God ⁷ and people.⁸ Although these people may not be remembered by future generations by those still living on the earth, “under the sun,” they will spend an eternity either with God in heaven or apart from God in hell. Therefore, it is important to invest our lives in knowing the Word of God and sharing the gospel with people.

16. How far back can you name the generations of your family? What things do you remember about former generations?

17. For what would you like to be remembered after you are long gone? What are you doing today to build that kind of legacy? What might you need to change today to build that kind of legacy?

18. Since the Word of God and people are the only two things on this earth that are eternal, what do you need to continue to do or what changes do you need to make in your life to invest in the Word of God and people? Write down the names of three people in your life who don’t know Jesus.

Note: This study was written by Pastor Mario Arindaeng. www.villagebible.church/students.

⁶ Constable, Thomas. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/ecclesiastes-1.html>

⁷ | Peter 1:24-25

⁸ Matthew 25:46