

# ECC. 1:12-2:26 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## THE SECRET OF SATISFACTION - ([SERMON MP3](#))

In Ecclesiastes 1: 12–18, Solomon the historian becomes Solomon the philosopher as he tells how he went about searching for the answer to the problem that vexed him. As the king of Israel, he had all the resources necessary for “experimenting” with different solutions to see what it was that made life worth living.

- ☀ List the 7 things Solomon pursued in his experiment. Under each pursuit, list specific ways that people today try to find meaning in the same pursuits. Discuss how these approaches fall short of providing satisfying answers. Star the pursuits that are most appealing to you? In which area has God convicted you to change your attitude and/or behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1:16 \_\_\_\_\_ 2:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ 2:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_ 2:7

\_\_\_\_\_ 2:8 \_\_\_\_\_ 2:9 \_\_\_\_\_ 2:18-23

- ☀ Notice all the personal pursuit (for me, my, myself) in chapter 2:1-11. How many are there? \_\_\_\_\_ What can we learn from the way Solomon pursued these things?

Commentator Michel A. Eaton says that “Ecclesiastes is an essay in apologetics that defends the life of faith in a generous God by pointing to the grimness of the alternative.”

**Solomon says in 1:16-18 that he acquired “great wisdom and great experience of wisdom and knowledge.”** When is gaining wisdom a good thing? Is it possible that it is a bad thing too? Why or why not?

- ☀ Compare Ecc. 1:16-18 with Prov. 2:1-11. Explain the difference between wisdom from man and wisdom from God. Where can we find the right kind of wisdom? (Jam. 1:5)

- ☀ Christians can some times be painted as lacking a strong world view or “happy idiots” because we rely on God. Read 1 Cor. 1:20-31. Why does Paul say this happens?

**Solomon amassed a huge fortune for himself, but he said it was “striving after wind...there was nothing to be gained under the sun.”** The late night host, Johnny Carson said, “The only value of money is that you don’t worry about being poor.” Do you agree or disagree?

- ☀ How have you seen yourself affected by the materialistic mindset of America? Share a time when you were given over to the idea that having more money or a certain possession would make you happy? Describe if it brought satisfaction or not (either in the short or long-term).

**Solomon said that in the midst of all the “good” things he was pursuing, something kept him from truly finding rest and enjoyment in what he amassed.** What was that? \_\_\_\_\_ (2:14-15, 18-19)

- ☀ What reasons for the fear of death appear in Ecclesiastes chapter 2? What other reasons are there? Have you fully acknowledged the transient nature of your own life? How does this mindset affect your pursuit of pleasure and management of time?

- ☀ Christians often jump to the Apostle Paul to provide an antidote to Solomon’s pessimism about the futility of life in the face of death, but Paul seems to share Solomon’s verdict. How does Paul agree with Solomon in 1 Cor. 15:12-19, 50-58 about the futility of life and even on Christian faith if death truly is the end?

☀ *How does the expectation of physical resurrection deal with the problem of death that Solomon so forcibly confronts us with in Ecclesiastes?*

**The gifts of God cannot be enjoyed outside of a relationship with God.** His gifts and the enjoyment of those gifts are two separate things.

☀ *Read the following passages and think about how apart from relationship with God, his gifts cannot be fully enjoyed. Haggai 1:6-7, John 15:4-5, Psalm 4:7, Proverbs 14:11-14, Ps. 127:1*

☀ *Think through the areas of your life that bring the most disappointment, sadness or despair. What are you trying to get or expecting others to give you? How are you expecting to get from life's components what only your Creator can give you? When you experience despair, unfulfillment and restlessness, is it really possible for you to find enjoyment by increasing experiences and possessions? YES NO*

☀ *Why do you think we are so tempted to find meaning in pleasure? What eventually causes someone to move past this method?*

☀ *The gospel is the ultimate answer for anyone who looks for life apart from God. Read Romans 4:1-8. Why does the Bible teach that people cannot save themselves by their own works? How does the Bible say that a person can receive a right relationship with God? How can Solomon's experience help us to understand these things?*

**Life becomes seemingly impossible when we focus on the wrong things.** Relationships aren't what we want, jobs don't seem as fun, and even our joyful times of life can seem fleeting. Ecc. 2:26 says that God alone gives the gift of satisfaction to those who \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

☀ *What does it mean to please God? (Heb. 11:6, Rev. 3:11, Matt. 6:25-33, Col. 3:16-17)*

☀ *Have you ever found satisfaction in God? How did you find it or how can you find it? What are some characteristics of a life that is lived in Godly fulfillment?*

**Use the following statements to apply what you have learned.** Check 2 or 3 that you can use this week to grow in your pursuit of ultimate satisfaction in God alone.

- I need to pursue the godly grief that should accompany my inability to understand the meaning of life in and of myself.
- I need to demonstrate the joy, humility and realism that should accompany an understanding that God alone gives enjoyment in His gifts.
- I need to adjust my monthly budget and expenses or how I spend my time in light of the imbalanced priorities God has revealed.
- I need to pursue and display the heart of God toward pleasure rather than being either a killjoy or a libertine.
- I need to challenge a friend, family member or coworker about the futility of the life they seem to be pursuing.
- I need to depend on God to add the enjoyment to what I already have rather than depending on Him only to help me add more of what I think I want.
- I need to pursue God's enjoyment of me rather than my enjoyment of God's things.

Name	Prayer Need