

Solomon points to the endurance of the earth in 1:4 to humble us with the fleeting nature of our lives. Read Psalm 39:4-6; 90:9-12; and James 4:13-17.

☀ *Why do people become proud? What evidence can you offer to prove that this attitude is foolish?*

☀ *Why does the Bible emphasize the brevity of life? How does God want you to maximize your life and the allotted days that God has given you?*

Ecclesiastes asks the questions that the rest of the Bible answers. Read this quote from commentator Tremper Longman and note how Jesus answers the question, “How can we live under the sun if all is emptiness and futility?” “As we turn to the NT, we see that Jesus Christ is the one who redeems us from the vanity under the sun, the meaninglessness under which Solomon suffered. Jesus redeemed us from Solomon’s empty world by subjecting himself to it in His death. He conquers and mends what is broken and crooked.”

☀ *Read Romans 8:18-21, 1 Corinthians 15:58 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. According to these verses what is the purpose of life in this world? The word translated “futility” in Romans 8:20 is the same word used in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) to translate the motto word of Ecclesiastes “vanity.” What is God’s solution for the emptiness and futility of our world?*

☀ *Read the story of the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21. How does Jesus save us from the emptiness at the end of this story and the vanity of Ecc. 1? Use John 10:10 and Matt. 16:24-26 in your answer.*

WRAPUP: Herman Melville (the author of the classic book, Moby Dick) called Ecclesiastes “the truest of all books.” More than any other book in the Bible, Ecclesiastes captures the futility and frustration of life in our world. It’s a difficult book to wrestle with and understand. But, we must always consider the possibility that when we encounter a difficult biblical book, perhaps the problem does not lie with the book, but with ourselves. Our “difficulty” may be that the book speaks truly about reality while we are devoted to illusions. The “difficulty” may be that we are not too keen to embrace the truth, but prefer to embrace half-truths or lies.

☀ *How do you see yourself ignoring the problems of this life? What illusions or distractions keep us from considering the questions of the purpose and goal of life?*

☀ *The things under the sun allure us away from ultimate questions of life into temporary satisfaction in things that are ultimately meaningless. Look back at John 10:10 and attach the truth of Jesus’ full and abundant life to the things “under the sun” that you are most tempted to believe offer true life.*