

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 19, 2005

Passage: Ecclesiastes 2

Memory Passage: Matthew 6:33 **TODAY:** *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-3.** In verses 1-11, identify the pleasure that Solomon sought to make his life meaningful: Verses 2-3? Verses 4-6? Verse 7? Verse 8? Verse 9?

(b) Which would you rather search for: happiness in life or meaning in life? What is the difference between these? Which was Solomon searching for? What did he find in his search? What was his conclusion of all this (2:11)?

(c) In Ecclesiastes 1:18, what had Solomon discovered from his search for wisdom and knowledge? What did this lead him to try according to 2:1? What is the value of laughter? Even with this value, can laughter be the source of true happiness? Why or why not?

(d) Where did he next attempt to find his joy (2:3)? What does Proverbs 14:12-14 tell us about what often seems right? What does he say about laughter? How are these verses connected?

(e) What is the connection between a “way that seems right” and joy ending in sorrow? What does this tell us about the condition of those who are “enjoying life” apart from God? How is the “good man” satisfied? Is it proper to enjoy things in this world (1 Timothy 6:17)?

(f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-3 and Proverbs 14:12-14. Share some of your funniest memories together. In what ways are they lasting? Temporary? Can laughter alone satisfy? Pray that each of you will gain an eternal perspective this week through these studies.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 2:4-11.** What did Solomon pursue next in his quest for meaning and satisfaction (1 Kings 9:15-19; 7:1-2; 2 Chronicles 8:4-6)? Did Solomon lack *anything* that he wanted or desired (2:10-11)?

(b) How does Paul describe such people in Philippians 3:18-19 (compare this with 1 John 5:21; 2:15-17)? How are we to be different (Philippians 3:20-21)? *What* should motivate us?

(c) What warning is given in James 4:13-16? How can a proper view of *this life* in comparison to *eternity* protect us from this?

(d) What do Proverbs 15:16 and 16:8 tell us? What should be our prayer regarding the pursuit of happiness (Proverbs 30:7-9)? What are the dangers for these two extremes? Which is *more* dangerous? Read Philippians 4:4-13. How was he able to have joy in every situation?

(e) What should be the focus of *our labors* (Matthew 6:19-21; John 6:27; 1 Corinthians 3:8; Colossians 3:22-24)? How can an eternal focus enable us to find joy even in the “vanities” of life?

(f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 2:4-11 and Matthew 6:19-21, 33. Talk about the word “contentment.” What does it mean? Why is it important? Why is it difficult? How does an *eternal perspective* enable us to be content now and find joy in what we have? Pray that each of you will have great joy in all God has given you today!

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 2:12-17.** What *three things* does he compare in these verses? How would you define each one? Especially, what is the difference between madness and folly?

(b) How great is the difference between *wisdom* and *folly* (2:13-14)? How does *wisdom* exceed *folly*?

(c) What does he conclude about the ultimate difference between these (2:14-16)? What is the “great equalizer” for all humans?

(d) Remember that the view in Ecclesiastes is from “under the sun.” How can Christians view the works and deeds of their lives “under the Son” (Hebrews 6:10)?

(e) What does Jesus promise in Revelation 22:12-13? How should this motivate us (1 Corinthians 15:58)?

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 2:12-17. Discuss the statement: “Death makes everyone equal.” Is this true? Why is this? Why is it important that we decide to trust Christ *before* we die (Hebrews 9:27)? Pray for someone that needs to know Christ.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 2:17-23.** What did Solomon conclude about what happens to *everything* that we work for here? What also happens for the “rich and famous” after they die? What happens with all our money and possessions (1 Timothy 6:7; Luke 12:13-21)?

(b) What was Solomon’s conclusion in Ecclesiastes 2:18? Why is this frustrating to him? Put verses 18-23 in your own words.

(c) Read Proverbs 23:5 and 10:22. How do these apply to Solomon’s concerns? What reminder should it give us? What did Paul tell us about this in 1 Timothy 6:6-10? What usually happens to those who set their hearts on these things?

(d) Without the joy of resting in the Lord, what are Solomon’s nights like? What does this tell us about the elusive nature of peace and contentment? Read Psalm 127:1-2. What does the Psalmist conclude about those that trust the Lord to watch over them and all they have? What was Paul’s confidence in 2 Timothy 1:12?

(e) Read Hebrews 10:32-34. What gave these confidence and peace even in the greatest difficulties (Hebrews 11:37-40)? What were they expecting that enabled them to live “above” their circumstances?

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 2:17-23. Talk about what happens to *everything* that we can own or possess? Why does this happen? Think about a time when something you really liked broke or was lost. What happened to *your* happiness? Read Colossians 3:1-3. Where should we set our hearts? Pray that you will have a heart for the right *thing* this week.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-26.** Does God desire that we are *happy* with all that we do (verse 24)? What does Paul tell us to do in 1 Corinthians 10:31?

(b) What brief insight does Solomon gain as to how to have this happiness in all of life (end of verse 24)?

(c) Does God give the same to all men (Ecclesiastes 2:26)? What makes the difference in His choices as to what He gives to each?

(d) What does he give to the “man who is good?” How is this different from the way that Solomon was seeking all of these? How did Solomon *first* get wisdom, knowledge, and joy in his life (1 Kings 3; 4:29; 5:12; 10:24)? How had he been seeking these in Ecclesiastes?

(e) Ecclesiastes frequently reminds us to view all of life in light of the coming judgment? How would your life change if you lived every day knowing it affected eternity? Ecclesiastes 11:9 for all these things, God will bring you to judgment.

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-26. Talk about verse 26: Where does real joy come from? What happens when we try to get it apart from God? How does verse 26 conclude? Read John 10:10. Take time to thank God for what He has given you.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. What are some of the things people seek in order to be happy? Why will these things never satisfy? How can you begin to change your focus from an earthly to an eternal focus? Pray that you might live today in light of eternity.