

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, August 14, 2005

Passage: Ecclesiastes 9

Memory Passage: Colossians 3:23-24 **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 8:16-9:1.** What conclusion had Solomon reached in 8:16-17? Why can't man "know it" or "find it" (Ecclesiastes 3:11; 7:14)?

(b) Read Romans 11:33. What was Paul's conclusion after studying about the doctrine of election in Romans 9-11?

(c) What should be our attitude when we try to examine or explain why things happen in our lives today? Can we ever figure them out? Why not (Isaiah 55:8-9)? What should be our response to the mystery of life?

(d) What do Deuteronomy 33:3 and John 10:27-30 tell us about God's special care for His people? What does it mean to be "in the hand of God?"

(e) Can we tell about God's love for us by what we see happening in life? Why or why not? How do we know God loves us (1 John 3:16; 4:19; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8)?

(f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 8:16-9:1 and Isaiah 55:8-9. Talk together about the wisdom and mystery of God's plans for our lives. Why is it so difficult to trust God for the future? Why is it so important that we learn to do so? Can there be any real satisfaction in life if we don't? Pray for someone you know that is going through a difficult time.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 9:2-3.** What is the *one event* that comes to everyone's life (2:14)? What also comes with that event that is the same for everyone (Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:31)?

(b) What description of the hearts of men does Solomon give in verse 3? What does Jeremiah 17:9 also tell us about man's heart? How is "madness" connected to this idea?

(c) **Read Ecclesiastes 9:4-6.** If there is no difference in the end, then what is the point of living now? What is the advantage of being alive (Psalm 27:13)? How should this affect the way we live (Psalm 90:12)?

(d) What happens when people die without Christ (Psalm 34:16; Job 18:17)? What happens with people who die in Christ (Psalm 112:6; Malachi 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:26)?

(e) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 9:2-6 and the passages in section e. Talk about death and living. Why should the living have hope, even in this life? What is the difference between a person who dies knowing Christ and one who dies in Christ? Pray for some today who do not know Jesus as Savior.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-10.** In your own words, summarize the attitude that Solomon says we should have. Does a right view of God's sovereignty result in passivity or activity? What are the things that he tells us to enjoy? Make a list. What is the reason that we should rejoice?

(b) What is the connection between eating meals with gladness and rejoicing with your wife? What is Solomon saying about the source of our joy (Proverbs 15:17; 17:1)? Is it possible to have all these things and not enjoy them?

(c) Compare verse 10 with Colossians 3:23-24. What does Paul encourage us to do? Why (Colossians 3:17)? Discuss John Piper's statement: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."

(d) Just examining Deuteronomy, what are the Israelites continually told to do (12:7, 12, and 18; 16:11, 14, and 15)? What does Deuteronomy 26:11 tell us to do? Compare this with 1 Thessalonians 5:18. In what should we rejoice?

(e) What does 1 Corinthians 10:31 tell us to do? How is this similar to what Solomon is encouraging?

(f) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 and Colossians 3:23-24. Talk together about why we should do everything with joy in our lives. Also discuss why our work matters to God? How is He glorified when we work faithfully and joyfully? What happens when we do not? Pray that each person might do everything today with a heart of great joy!

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 9:11-12.** Can we trust in our own abilities? Why or why not? What does James 4:13-17 warn against?

(b) What does Jeremiah 9:23-24 warn us against? Where should our confidence be (1 Corinthians 1:31; Psalm 20:7; 147:10; Isaiah 31:1; Romans 11:6, etc)?

(c) What does Solomon mean by “time and chance” (Ecclesiastes 3:1; Psalm 31:15)?

(d) What is the illustration that Solomon presents us with to remind us about the uncertainty of life? What warning do Psalm 73:18-20 and Proverbs 6:15 give the person without Christ?

(e) *Family*: Read Ecclesiastes 9:11-12 and James 4:13-17. Talk about what the Bible says about planning. Is it wrong to plan? How should we plan? Pray today for some things that you are hoping for in your family or in your life.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ecclesiastes 9:13-18.** What situation in these verses does Solomon tell about that causes him great grief?

(b) What is the difference between wisdom and strength (vv. 16-18)? What is the attitude of people *after* times of crisis have passed?

(c) Read James 3:15-18. Make a list of the characteristics of wisdom from below and those from above. How could you identify heavenly wisdom? Which characteristics are most surprising? How is this similar to Ecclesiastes 9:17?

(d) What is the warning in the final verse of Ecclesiastes 9? What cancels out much wisdom? Read Joshua 7 and 2 Samuel 24. How did one sin destroy much good in these two situations?

(e) *Family*: Discuss why people often reject the wisdom of the Bible and why some turn to God for a while when they are in a crisis. Read Ecclesiastes 9:13-18 and discuss the situation that Solomon gives. Talk together about the importance of living by God’s wisdom even when rejected by the world. Pray for strength to follow God always, not just in crisis situations.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. What have you learned about God’s sovereign control over all events in our lives and how do “time and chance” affect our plans and dreams? How should we plan and then how should we react whenever things do not go according to our plans? How should Colossians 3:17, 23-24 affect the way you approach life? Pray that you might do everything this week with joy for the glory of God!