

FUN, FUN, FUN ... UNDER THE SUN (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)

The MESSAGE of Ecclesiastes is that God designed life to _____ Him and be _____ in relationship with Him, but apart from a _____, vertical, _____ relationship with _____, man is _____ and life is _____. How does this apply to you - whether you are saved or not?

I. SOLOMON'S INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)

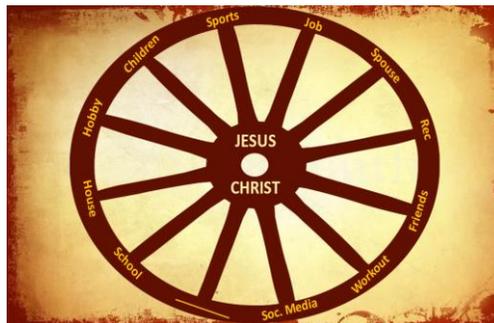
II. SOLOMON'S INVESTIGATION (1:12-11:10)

A. Solomon's PURSUITS. (1:12-18)

B. Solomon's PROOFS that 'ALL is VANITY'. (2:1ff)

1. Experiment #1: _____. (2:1-11)

- a. His *first test / experiment* regarded "mirth" or to "_____". (2:1a) The Hebrew word refers to the enjoyment that comes from the physical senses. These pleasures may be positive /righteous (Prov. 10:28), negative / sinful (Prov. 21:17), or merely involving neutral activities which are done with unrealistic expectations of finding lasting meaning and purpose in life apart from God. This Solomon pursued with reckless abandonment (2:1b)
- b. His *first conclusion* was "surely, this also is _____" (2:1c), which means that which is **transitory, and therefore lacking in lasting purpose, meaning, or fulfillment.** Keep in mind that this is "pleasure", "joy" or "happiness" strictly from a human perspective apart from the Lord which involves ONLY things "under heaven." Thus, it acts as a goad to destroy our false beliefs and worldly hopes to point us to the true source and means of lasting happiness and meaning in life.
- **Principle to remember:** The chief end of man is to _____ God by His amazing grace. True _____ and _____ in life is the by-product of knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and walking by faith in fellowship with Him and His Word resulting in doing His will as a steward of what He gives you. (Psalm 1:1-3; 16:11; 36:7-9; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)



c. His lanes on the dead-end street of pleasure involve ...

- 1) _____. (2:2) The NET Bible states that this word "laughter" is "always used in contexts of self-indulgent banqueting, drinking, frivolous partying and merrymaking (Eccl 2:2; 7:3, 6; 10:19). It is distinct from "healthy" joy and laughter (Ps 126:2; Job 8:21). The connotation of "frivolous merrymaking" fits this context best."

- **What does Solomon conclude about this? "I said of laughter - " _____!" {utter foolishness}; and of mirth, "What does it accomplish?" (2:2).** Anticipated answer: _____!

- 2) _____ . (2:3) **“I searched in my heart how to _____** {to enjoy, cheer, indulge, gratify} **my flesh with _____, while guiding my heart with _____, and how to lay hold on folly** {which stems from self-indulgence of wine / drugs etc. – behaving foolishly}, **till I might see** {discover} **what was good** {profitable, good; an interrogative particle – ‘what or where is the good’} **for the sons of men** {Adam / man} **to do under heaven** {apart from the Lord} **all the days** {the few days} **of their lives.** What does this remind us of again? What is the biblical balance regarding drinking alcohol?
- 3) _____ . (2:4-6) **“I made** {made; undertook} **my works** {projects, achievements} **great, I built** {for} **myself houses, and planted** {for} **myself vineyards** {SOS 8:11-12}. **5 I made** {for} **myself gardens and orchards** {orchards & parks}, **and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made** {constructed – for} **myself water pools** {for irrigation} **from which to water the growing trees of the grove.** Why does mankind like to create and make things? Can there be a sense of accomplishment in doing so? Is this wrong? What is a biblical view of “work”?
- 4) _____ . (2:7a) **“I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house.”** Who were these ‘servants’ and what was their function? Did this result in lasting satisfaction?
- 5) _____ . (2:7b) **“Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me.”** Why would this be needed and what did it prove? What must you remember as a believer in Christ? (1 Tim. 6:17-19)
- 6) _____ . (2:8a) **“I also gathered** {amassed; collected} **for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces.”** 1 Kings 10:14-29 says 666 talents of gold poured in yearly to Solomon along with special treasures. This is 25 tons of gold, the equivalent of \$1.3BB annually in today’s dollar. What did our Lord remind us of about this? (Matthew 6:19-21)
- 7) _____ . (2:8b) **“I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.”** What would a party or entertainment be without music which requires singers, instruments, etc.? What is a biblical view of music?
- d. His *self-evaluation* of his pursuit of self-indulgent pleasure was, **“So I became great** {by way of honor & glory} **and excelled** {surpassed in wealth} **more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom** {reasoning, objectivity} **remained with me. 10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep** {restrain; deny} **from them. I did not withhold** {refuse; hold back} **my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced** {found pleasure and some temporary enjoyment & happiness} **in all my labor** {tremendous amount of exertion, efforts, & burden}; **And this was my reward from all my labor. (2:9-10)**
- e. His *final conclusion* was, **“Then I looked** {considered, reflected, evaluated} **on all the works that my hands had done And** {I reflected} **on the labor in which I had toiled;** {Was it worth it with lasting value?} **And indeed all was vanity** {transitory, and therefore lacking in lasting purpose, meaning, or fulfillment} **and grasping for the wind** {elusive}. **There was no profit** {net gain} **under the sun.” (2:11)** Did his experiments regarding pleasure fail? What word kept popping up throughout this passage and what can you learn from this?