

What two-letter word best describes what you think about more than anything else?

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Me?

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Me?

or

We?

Me or We?

Ecclesiastes 4:4-16

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He gives us a question to free us from ourselves:

How are *we* doing?

We, not I.

That's the chapter in a nutshell.

We, not me.”

I. The Me-Focused Life

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A. A me-focused person is often motivated by
envy (v.4)

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B. A me-focused person may be lazy (v.5)

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The NLT explains the meaning like this:

Fools fold their idle hands, leading them to ruin.

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.
(Prov.6:10-11).

I. The Me-Focused Life

C. A me-focused person cannot understand moderation or contentment.

David Gibson:

“Stop chasing the wind! Stop thinking the future will be better and easier. Stop thinking that if only things were different you would be a better person and that one day you will be a better father. You do not know the future or what lies around the corner, whether good or ill.

Perhaps these are indeed the very best days of my life. Maybe I'll be dead tomorrow. Live the life you have now instead of longing for the life you think you will have but which you actually cannot control at all.”

I. The Me-Focused Life

D. A me-focuses person works only for himself
(vv.7-8).

Philip Ryken:

“Apparently the man did not even take the time to stop and ask himself what he was doing with his life. Or if he did ask the question, he could not answer it. Here he was, making costly sacrifices to advance his career and build up his bank account, yet never even considering whether it was all worth it.

The Preacher could see that it wasn't worth it; the man's sacrifices were worthless. His possessions could never satisfy his soul, and without anyone to share it with, his life would end in unhappiness.

What the Preacher saw is a warning for all of us against isolation, selfishness, greed, and a sinful addiction to work.”

II. The We-Focused Life

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A. A we-focused person understands balance and enjoys contentment (v.6).

Godliness with contentment is great gain.
(1 Tim. 6: 6)

II. The We-Focused Life

B. A we-focused person enjoys the blessings and benefits of companionship (vv.9-12).

v.18 – *I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts.*

v.19-20 – *For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.*

We all stop breathing.

We all stop breathing.

We all go to the place of death.

We all stop breathing.

We all go to the place of death.

We all return to dust.

v. 21 – Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?

the spirit returns to God who gave it. (Eccl.12:7)

God *has put eternity into man's heart,*

*God has put eternity into man's heart,
yet so that he cannot find out what God has done
from the beginning to the end. (Eccl. 3:11)*

I. A Time of Judgment is Coming for All
People (3:17).

*God will judge the righteous and the wicked
(3:17).*

*For God will bring every deed into judgment,
with every secret thing, whether good or evil.
(12:14)*

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:31-32)

For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. (John 5:22-23)

Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. (Mt.25:32-33)

*Then the King will say to those on his right,
'Come, you who are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the
foundation of the world. (Mt.25:34)*

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. (Mt.25:41)

*And these will go away into eternal punishment,
but the righteous into eternal life. (Mt.25:46)*

II. The Rewards of the Righteous

Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

(Matthew 19:27-29)

We will always be with the Lord (1 Thess.4:17)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. . . .

And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

(1 Thess.4:13-14; 16-17)

Therefore encourage [or comfort] one another with these words. (1 Thess.4:18)

What joy he has to be welcomed by God the Father, and be reunited with my mother in the presence of Jesus.

– Franklin Graham's description of Billy Graham in heaven

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. (John 15:8)