

Ecclesiastes is the most contemporary book in the Bible. It tackles many of the challenges of secularism by exposing “the mad quest to find satisfaction in knowledge, wealth, pleasure, work, fame, and sex.”

Ecclesiastes turns the reader toward God, the only hope of meaningful life.

- Philip Ryken

Ecclesiastes speaks to people who were most likely to build their lives on success, wealth, power, and intellectual reputation. [Like many Americans.]

Over and over again, the book points out the futility of such a way of life, urging instead that readers face their need for God.

- David Dockery

*The Top 10 Things People Want In Life
But Can't Seem To Get*

1. Happiness

2. Money

3. Freedom

4. Peace

5. Joy

6. Balance

7. Fulfillment

8. Confidence

9. Stability

10. Passion

What people often mean when they say “I want to feel passionate about my work” is this: They want to feel alive, not exhausted, beleaguered and demoralized. They want to feel that there’s a reason they’re on this planet, a reason for the talents and abilities they were given at birth and have cultivated.

They want to believe that they're here for a purpose and finding that purpose will give their lives the meaning and passion they're missing.

- Kathy Caprino

Ecclesiastes:

Discovering What Matters Most

Throughout this book, the writer calls our attention to:

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1. All the many things that do not ultimately matter.
2. The few things that really do matter.

Keys to Discovering What Matters Most

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

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That's where the name Ecclesiastes comes from.

I. The Writer: A man who had it all and had done it all, but it wasn't enough.

ekklesia – the NT word for church; an assembly or gathering of people.

The writer of this book had more money, enjoyed more pleasure, exercised more power, and possessed more human wisdom than anyone else in the world, yet everything still ended in frustration.

The same will happen to us if we live for ourselves rather than for God.

“Why make your own mistakes,” the writer is saying to us, “when you can learn from an expert like me instead?”

- Philip Ryken

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The word vanity in Ecclesiastes speaks of futility and emptiness. It's a pointless way of going about life.

- Bruce Waltke

v.3 *What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun?*

III. The Truth: Living life with God at the center is what matters most.

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There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy (Eccles.2:24-26a)

III. The Truth: Living life with God at the center is what matters most.

And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. (Eccles.5:19, NLT)

The universe we inhabit comes from his hand and comes to us as a gift. Our lives are a gift, offered for a short period and then taken back once again. Embrace life for what it is, rather than what you would like it to be.

Live it out before God, reverencing and obeying him. This is the pathway on which joy lies, even though puzzlement and pain will also be found there, and there are never guarantees about how things will turn out.

- Philip Ryken

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

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We can live “under the sun” and leave God out.

There's two ways we can live life in this world:

We can live “under the sun” and leave God out.

Or,

We can live life “with the Son, Jesus Christ.”