

# ECCLESIASTES



*Man's Search for Meaning*

**3 Week**  
**GROUP GUIDE**

# ECCLESIASTES

## Man's Search for Meaning

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## SERIES

The Gospel

### OUR MISSION

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Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.  
**Jesus the Messiah**

### OUR VISION

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To bring the hope of Jesus to all people.

We will do this by  
**Sharing** the Gospel,  
**Connecting** them to the Church,  
**Equipping** them for Ministry, and  
**Multiplying** disciples.

### OUR VALUES

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As we follow Jesus, we live out His values:

**Biblical Truth**  
**Real Relationships**  
**Inspired Worship**  
**Selfless Service**  
**Spirit-Led Living**

## Ground Rules

Here are some guidelines for your gatherings.

### Confidentiality

If the group is going to move towards authenticity, then what's shared in the group should stay in the group (note: for situations that you are not qualified to speak into, use a referral to Cornerstone Counseling).

### Don't Rescue and Don't Fix

Let people openly share without trying to solve their problems. Only give advice if they request it.

### No Crosstalk

People feel valued when we listen. The opposite is true as well: people will feel devalued if they are constantly interrupted. If someone has the floor, no other conversations should be happening.

### Give Everyone a Chance to Share

Everyone has something to contribute and everyone should feel heard. Don't be too quick to provide all of the answers. Give others space to share.

### Use Humor Responsibly

Our conversation should build up rather than tear down. Humor can be a great thing provided it is not used as the expense of others.

### Use 'I' Statements

Groups are an opportunity for self-reflection. We should be quick to reflect on how what we are studying should shape us personally, and slow to tell others how it should shape them.

### Fight for the Relationship

Real relationships only thrive when we commit to 'fight' for the relationship. We will not hide from conflict or disagreement, but will instead discuss them in an open and healthy way.

## Leader Guidelines

Thank you for taking the time to invest in others by leading a group. As a leader, your task is to create an environment where real relationships can thrive. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do that:

### Multiply.

The mission of the church is to multiply disciples. Groups are one of the environments where this occurs. You are involved in the discipleship of each person in your group. We ask that each of our group leaders has someone who they are equipping to be a disciple-maker.

### Create a safe environment.

When we say 'safe', we mean an environment where participants can freely share without feeling belittled or that what they share will get spread beyond the group. When we say 'safe', we also mean a group where participants can encounter Jesus and His plan for their life.

### Recognize that your group is unique.

This booklet is designed to be a general guide, but every group is unique. So when you're planning, take into account what does and doesn't work for your group and shape the session to their personalities and needs.

### Review the ground rules.

Periodically, remind your group about the ground rules for the group.

### Ask lots of questions.

Engaging leaders draw participants into the discussion. Ask many questions and lead your group into self-discovery. Follow the 70/30 rule: your goal should be to talk for less than 30% of the time. If you're going over that, then people in your group are going to feel limited in their ability to engage!

### Get feedback.

Improve your group by asking others for feedback.

### Seek wise council.

There are some questions you won't be able to answer and some situations you aren't trained to handle. That's OK! Know who your wise council is (whether a coach, minister, or another disciple-maker) and turn to them in your time of need.

For more on this topic, check out *Servant-Leadership Training* and the *CCW Group Leader Training 2.0* resource on RightNow Media.

## Before the Session

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As a group leader, it's essential to be prepared. Before the group session:

**Pray.** God is the one doing the transformation.

**Read the Bible passage.** Write down questions and observations.

**Preview the session guide.** Highlight important questions to ask and add your own.

**Tap into study resources.** Check outside sources to expand your understanding of the topic.

## During the Session

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**Share:** Take time to review the content from last week. Use this time to do a life check-up, asking about prayer requests and challenge accountability from the previous session.

**Transition:** Ask an Icebreaker question and introduce the topic (we give you an example on each talk sheet).

**Read It:** Read through the Scripture passage. If it's a larger section of scripture, break it into smaller sections and ask questions throughout.

**Talk About It:** There are two types of questions that help your group digest what you're reading:

*Review:* These questions help your group retell the story in their own words.

*Reflect:* These questions help your group to bridge the gap between the Biblical text and their own life.

**Apply It:** Apply what you have learned by asking the *React* questions. As a group leader, it will be your responsibility to help participants set specific goals for how they will apply these truths to their lives (we call these *Challenges*).

**Pray Together:** Find creative ways to engage your group in prayer.

## After the Session

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**Follow Up:** Be present with group members throughout the week by: (1) Reminding them of their application/challenge commitments, (2) Checking in on needs and prayer requests and (3) Finding opportunities to do life together.

**Input Group Attendance:** Fill out your Group attendance in the ChurchTeams email that you receive.

If you run into issues or need help navigating challenging circumstances in your group, contact me and I would be honored to help out.

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CCW.Church - Ecclesiastes

# STRIVING

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## Icebreaker

Open the conversation with a fun question:

- When you were a child, what did you think it meant to be 'successful' in life?

## Transition

Describe the goal by saying something like:

*In this short series, we'll be reading through the book of Ecclesiastes (see the reading plan on the back of this packet) and discovering the failed attempts at success, identity, and purpose by one of Israel's greatest kings: Solomon.*

**Watch:** Bible Project - Ecclesiastes

## Talk About It

Read: **Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 22**

*Review:*

- (1 - 8) What do you find shocking about Solomon's list? Which item do you find most challenging to accept? What would you add to this list? What do you think Solomon's purpose for adding this list is?
- (9) How would you answer Solomon's question?
- (11) What does it mean that God has 'put eternity into man's heart'?
- (12 - 13) What is Solomon's conclusion regarding the changing world we live in?
- (14 - 15) How does Solomon describe the works of God in this world?
- (16 - 17) What concern did Solomon have while observing the world?
- (18 - 21) What happens to all living things? Why should this be humbling to humanity?
- (22) What is Solomon's conclusion to

these reflections?

*Reflect:*

- In these reflections, Solomon notes how temporary the things of this life truly are. How have you experienced this same degree of hopelessness?
- What have you seen people turn to in order to give life meaning and purpose?
- When have you acted as if the things of life were not temporary (or acted as if you were 'immortal')?
- How do you see our culture pursuing immortality?
- Do you agree with Solomon's conclusion about work and death? Why or why not?

*React:*

- What temporary thing are you pursuing as if it were immortal? What are some eternal things that you treat as temporal?
- Knowing that most things return to 'dust', what should be your attitude towards the things of this life?
- What principle from the teachings in Ecclesiastes can you apply to your life this week?

## Pray Together

# INDULGING

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## Icebreaker

Open the conversation with a fun question:

- What's something that you find it difficult to say 'no' to? What do you overindulge in?

## Transition

Describe the goal by saying something like:

*The Teacher of Ecclesiastes took time to address a number of topics, including our human tendency to pursue pleasures and indulge in excessiveness. This, too, he recognizes as ultimately fruitless.*

## Talk About It

Read: **Ecclesiastes 5:8 - 6:12**

Review:

- (8 - 12) According to the Teacher, why should we not be amazed at corrupt government officials? Why is the ultimate product of this greed?
- (13 - 16) What evil does the Teacher address in this section? What is the product of wasted riches?
- Why does the Teacher address the excesses of the rich and wealthy?
- (18 - 20) What conclusion does the Teacher come to regarding the use of wealth? Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not?
- (6:1 - 6) The Teacher recognizes another evil in the world: a person failing to enjoy the abundance that God has given them. To what does the Teacher compare this person?
- (7 - 9) What does the Teacher say about our 'appetite'? What does this mean? How does this level the playing field between all people?

- (10 - 12) What additional things does the Teacher recognize as empty or meaningless?

Reflect:

- What pleasures are commonly pursued in our culture?
- How have you seen the pursuit of pleasure go awry in the lives of others?
- What have you pursued that you ultimately found was empty or meaningless?
- What is the purpose of pleasure and wealth? What would it look like to have an eternal perspective of these things?

React:

- What is a pleasure that you need to put in its place this week? How can you go about changing your attitude towards this pleasure?
- What principle from the teachings in Ecclesiastes can you apply to your life this week?

## Pray Together

# UNDERSTANDING

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## Icebreaker

Open the conversation with a fun question:

- What are some common phrases that we use to talk about 'death'?

## Transition

Describe the goal by saying something like:

*The Teacher has spent eleven chapters gearing up towards this final conclusion. He has systematically deconstructed the many pleasures and pursuits that people turn to for identity and meaning. In this session, we'll look at the culmination of his arguments.*

## Talk About It

Read: **Ecclesiastes 12:1 - 14**

Review:

- (1) What does the Teacher call people to do in their youth?
- (1 - 7) The Teacher provides a series of examples of 'ends' - both as a result of change and as a result of death. Which of these ends most reminds you of your own mortality? Which do you find challenging to understand?
- (8) The Teacher uses the word, 'Vanity', three times in quick succession. Why do you think he emphasizes it in this way?
- (9 - 10) What else did the Teacher do with his time on earth?
- (11 - 12) What do the words of wisdom do for us? What warning is given to adding to this wisdom?
- (13 - 14) What is the final conclusion of the Teacher? What reason does he give for this conclusion?

Reflect:

- Looking at your life, how does 'time' show that the arguments of the Teacher ring true?
- If we are all moving towards an 'end', what sort of legacy do you hope to leave behind?
- Where do you seek wisdom?
- What would add or take away from the conclusion that the Teacher makes at the end of his book?

React:

- What 'good' things in your life have become a greater priority than 'fearing God and keeping His commandments'?
- How can 'time' become a reminder to refocus on the Teacher's conclusion?
- What principle from the teachings in Ecclesiastes can you apply to your life this week?

## Pray Together

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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## RIGHTNOW MEDIA

Get a free RightNow Media account to get access to thousands of study resources. Some potential resources include:

- **The Book of Ecclesiastes** (Jonathan Pokluda): Life is a gift, but it rarely turns out how we expect. We're convinced things like wealth, power, fame, and control will give us meaning and lead us to a flourishing life—but, every time, they let us down. So where do we go when the bottom falls out? Where do we turn when things are going great but we still feel empty? In this ten-session series, pastor Jonathan "JP" Pokluda takes us through the book of Ecclesiastes and shows us that we are not alone in our search for meaning. Join JP and discover how God himself, not the things of this world, satisfies our deepest desires for meaning.

## BOOKS TO CHECK OUT

- **Why Everything Matters: The Gospel in Ecclesiastes** (Philip Ryken)

## WEBSITES AND MEDIA

- **THE BIBLE PROJECT** ([www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com)) The Bible Project offers a variety of amazing resources. These videos expand on many of the ideas that we have touched on in this series.

# ECCLESIASTES READING PLAN

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God's Word is alive and active. As we read and meditate on Scripture, it begins the process of transformation in how we think and act. As a result, we discover God's design for our life, His purpose for this world, and the path to achieving that.

We invite you to join us in reading about the life of Joseph. This reading plan has a small section of Scripture to dig into each day from **August 7 - August 26**.

DATE	SCRIPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 4	Eccl. 1:1 - 11
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 5	Eccl. 1:12 - 18
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 6	Eccl. 2:1 - 11
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 7	Eccl. 2:12 - 26
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 8	Eccl. 3:1 - 22
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 9	Eccl. 4:1 - 16

**Sunday: Join us at CCW**

DATE	SCRIPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 11	Eccl. 5:1 - 10
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 12	Eccl. 5:11 - 20
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 13	Eccl. 6:1 - 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 14	Eccl. 7:1 - 14
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 15	Eccl. 7:15 - 29
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 16	Eccl. 8:1 - 17

**Sunday: Join us at CCW**

DATE	SCRIPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 18	Eccl. 9:1 - 12
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 19	Eccl. 9:13 - 10:10
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 20	Eccl. 10:11 - 20
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 21	Eccl. 11:1 - 10
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 22	Eccl. 12:1 - 8
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar 23	Eccl. 12:9 - 14

**Sunday: Join us at CCW**