



ECCLESIASTES 1:2

2 *"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."*

ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14

"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. In Ecclesiastes 1:2, we see a repetition of the word "meaningless" (which could also be translated as vapour or utterly absurd). What does the writer say is meaningless? How does this phrase make you feel? Is it true?
2. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. In verse 13, we are told the duty of every person is to fear God and keep His commandments. What does this mean? What is the motivation for fearing God and keeping His commandments? (See verse 14.)

START SHARING

1. The writer of Ecclesiastes describes life as meaningless. Have you ever felt this way about life? What else was happening in your life at that time? How were you able to find meaning in God during that season?
2. Can you think of a time when you felt you had gained what you set out for, yet only found in time that you were dissatisfied again? What did you do? What would you do differently in light of Ecclesiastes 12:13-14?

START PRAYING

Spend some time praying for the Group's needs

START DOING

This week, watch the Bible Project's overview of Ecclesiastes ([YouTube video](#))



Have you ever reflected on life and thought, "Is this all there is? What is the meaning of life?" This Sunday, Mooi shared the first message in a four-part series in the book of Ecclesiastes, which provokes introspection, challenges worldly pursuits, and points readers towards a deeper understanding that life is meaningless without God.

The author of the book is not known, but there are many convincing theories which suggest King Solomon wrote it.

According to tradition, Ecclesiastes is believed to have been written during Solomon's later years, contrasting with his other writings. Song of Songs is attributed to his youth, characterised by passionate love. Proverbs, written during his middle age, aimed at guiding his son away from repeating his own past mistakes. Finally, Ecclesiastes, written in Solomon's old age, showcases deep introspection and contemplation on the true meaning of life.

In verse 2, the writer starts off by saying that life is meaningless: 2 "**Meaningless! Meaningless!**" says the Teacher. "**Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.**" Ecclesiastes 1:2. The repetition of the word, meaninglessness, points to the theme of the book - that life outside of God is meaningless.

This ancient wisdom applies to our lives today. How many of us wake up tired and go to bed tired, with all our waking hours in-between spent rushing from one thing to the next?

The writer examines life from all angles to see where satisfaction comes from or where satisfaction can be found.

There is the use of exclamation marks and the repetition of the word "meaningless". This tells us that the writer wants to emphasise it, draw our attention to it, and perhaps warn us about something.

He does not mean that life is not good, but he warns that chasing after things is meaningless at the end of the day. We accumulate stuff, wear our bodies down through busyness and stress, and constantly go after the next big thing... but the writer says we should learn from him.

When Solomon became King of Jerusalem, he asked God for wisdom, and God gave him wisdom beyond what he could imagine. He had it all - wealth, wisdom, 700 wives and 300 concubines... everything he could dream of. But one thing was lacking: happiness. He was never satisfied with what he had. Many of us can identify with that. We've all seen (and maybe even been) the people that have everything... but happiness.

And so, this is why the writer of Ephesians says to us - everything is meaningless because he's heard it all... seasons come and go, generations come and go, and there is nothing new under the sun.

Some of us are depressed, some of us are stressed... Maybe we looked for meaning in our work, and our job came to an end, there is no income, and we're stressing... And the writer says that instead of stressing, we should go back to the source of life, the source of provision - God. The writer says it's pointless working to accumulate things to achieve happiness, wealth, greatness and satisfaction. It's all futile if God is not the source of it all

Romans 12:2 reminds us not to conform to earthly standards: *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* There will be times in our lives when we have to go back to the drawing board and ask ourselves if our current pursuits and struggles are the perfect will of God.

We may find ourselves in a season where we feel purposeless, perhaps seeing ourselves as having no value, but our value and purpose come from God. He is our provider; we have to surrender to His good and perfect will. When we revere God, read His Word, and meditate on His Ways, we find his will and purpose for our lives.

Our work is not the determining factor of our value; education

is not the determining factor of our value; success is not the determining factor of our value. Our value and meaning are found in life in Christ Jesus. We don't lack for anything when we are in Him.

But the key to understanding is found in the last two verses of the book - acknowledging that everything in life is out of our control and finding joy in the Gift of God and life as we experience it: *Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.* Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

So, we need not fear that life is meaningless. Instead, the writer of the Ecclesiastes is opening our eyes to the fact that God must be first - fear God reverently, trust and obey His Word.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1

Pursue an intimate relationship with God rather than wealth and success by worldly measures. Striving and pursuits apart from God will not bring us happiness - money will not bring us happiness, fame will not bring us happiness, the pursuit of greatness will not bring us happiness, power will not bring us happiness, our accomplishments will not bring us happiness, human wisdom and the knowledge will not bring us happiness.

The world is fighting for our attention, but rather we should give our attention to spending time in The Word because heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God will remain. *The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.* Isaiah 40:8.

Even if sometimes it means starting all over again, it does not matter, because God is in control. When there is no food, trust God. When there is no work, trust God. Don't keep on running and chasing after "the wind", instead, listen to the writer who is proclaiming satisfaction and meaning of life is only in the Lord.

As Paul said, *...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* Philippians 1:6.