

## Session 3: Meaningless

### Scripture questions:

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

Ecclesiastes 2:17

Ecclesiastes 11:8

**The writer of the book is referred to as “Qoheleth,” which is Hebrew for the “teacher” or the “preacher.” What repeated phrase do you see in the passages that you read?**

**Knowing that this is the central phrase of this book, repeated several times, what is the mood of the book? Do you expect a book like this to be in the Bible? Why or why not?**

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

**How does the writer describe the gaining of wisdom? Do you see where there might be validity in what he says? Why or why not?**

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11

Ecclesiastes 2:18-23

**What is the writer’s perspective on working hard to advance in status and fortune? Why does he think so?**

Ecclesiastes 2:14-15  
Ecclesiastes 3:19-20  
Ecclesiastes 6:6  
Ecclesiastes 9:2-3

**How is what humanity has in common more powerful than their differences? What are your thoughts, as you reflect on what the writer says?**

Ecclesiastes 7:15-18

**What type of lifestyle is the writer encouraging?**

Ecclesiastes 3:12  
Ecclesiastes 3:22  
Ecclesiastes 5:18  
Ecclesiastes 9:7

**In these passages, what is the book of Ecclesiastes saying about life?**

Ecclesiastes 8:7  
Ecclesiastes 8:17  
Ecclesiastes 9:1  
Ecclesiastes 11:5

**What do these passages tell us about our ability to fully understand the world around us?**

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

**This passage is the epilogue, or ending of the book. It is written by someone else looking back at Qoheleth, the writer of Ecclesiastes, and his ideas. How does this passage evaluate Qoheleth's teachings?**

## How does the writer modify Qoheleth's teachings?

**Ecclesiastes:** This book of wisdom cautions us that even wisdom has its limits.

The author of Ecclesiastes is referred to as **Qoheleth**, which is a made up word that means "teacher," "leader of the assembly," or "preacher." There is no clear identification of who Qoheleth is, but the reader is supposed to have Solomon in mind as they explore the ideas of the book.

The **central phrase of Ecclesiastes** is repeated at least two dozen times in the book:

*"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless!"*  
*Ecclesiastes 1:2 NIV*

## Why All Is Vanity

- Wisdom and Knowledge have limits and only bring sorrow.
- If we build a great name or legacy, we have no control and will someday leave it to another.
- Pursuing pleasure does not satisfy.
- All will die and our names will be forgotten.

## How Do We Live If All Is Vanity?

- Moderation- We should be careful not to wear ourselves out doing things that aren't permanent.
- Contentment- We should learn to be at peace, and satisfied, with where we are in life.
- Accept- We should accept the limits of our understanding. God is God and we are not.

### Application Questions:

**How does it feel knowing that most of what you strive for in life is described as useless and "utterly meaningless?"**

**What does a life of moderation and contentment look like? How do you encourage these characteristics in your life and in the lives of those around you?**

**The writer of Ecclesiastes has wrongly been viewed by some as old and bitter, and because of this, many disregard his message. How do you sometimes reject a valid message because you reject the messenger?**

**What many see as a depressing book can actually be seen as a liberating one, for we are encouraged to let go of things that don't last and are meaningless. Of the things you strive for in life, which are meaningless and which are lasting?**

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