

The Book of Ecclesiastes

31

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

This morning we read **Ecclesiastes**, the fourth of the Bible's "wisdom" books. The author of this book identifies himself in **1:1-2,12** only as "The Teacher" (NIV) or "The Preacher" (KJV). It is unknown whether this person was Solomon, but tradition holds this to be the case. Whoever the author may be, he is at the end of his life and is looking back over the decisions he has made. He is trying to make sense of life and, indeed, has seen his life as an experiment designed to uncover life's meaning.

One key phrase that links the many parts of **Ecclesiastes** is "vanity, vanity" (KJV) or "meaningless, meaningless" (NIV). Everything that he has chased in life, says the author, has proven to be nothing less than a "chasing after the wind."

Many people read **Ecclesiastes** and cannot reconcile some of its teachings with the rest of the Bible. But as you read the book you need to remember that the author has deliberately tried to search for meaning in life without God. In that sense, **Ecclesiastes** is a clever treatise based on a very simple premise:

What if you did *not* have God in the world? What is left? Is there any meaning in life without God?

And the answer, of course, is a resounding "meaningless, meaningless." In the end of the book, however, the final solution is given:

"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

Like **Proverbs**, **Ecclesiastes** is a book to be meditated and pondered upon. Even though we will be reading it through in one sitting today, we encourage you to go back later and take the time to read the book through more slowly. Put yourself in the author's shoes and see if you come to the same conclusion as he does.

Memory Verse

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Romans 13:8

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is his Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!