

LEAD SHEET

ECCLESIASTES - WEEK 1

EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS?

APRIL 3, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY

If you want to know God better, tell other people about Him!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- Where do we get wise sayings?
- What makes something wise or not?
- How can wisdom help us in life?

We're going to start a study of a book of wisdom, Ecclesiastes, today. Before we do, we probably should know a thing or two about its author, Solomon.

DIGGING IN

Read 1 Kings 3:5-15

Discussion Questions:

1. If God asked you the same question He asks Solomon, how would you answer? (*Fame, riches, etc.*)
2. For what purpose did Solomon ask for wisdom? (*So that he might rule well.*)
3. What condition does God place on His blessing to Solomon in verse 14? (*He would have a long life if he kept God's commands.*)

The meaning of "Under the Sun"

It is important that we understand the phrase "under the sun" in Ecclesiastes. We will see it a lot. Anytime you read this phrase think "apart from God." The phrase in Hebrew meant something that was not plainly stated. Kind of like when we say, "the whole enchilada," we mean "everything." Or when we say, "go all out" we mean try our best. So, "under the sun" means "apart from God."

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Solomon identify himself at the beginning of the book? (*As the teacher, son of David, and the King of Jerusalem.*)
2. According to Solomon, what is meaningless? (*Everything.*)
3. According to verses 10-11, is there anything new on earth? (*No.*)
4. If that was true 3,000 years ago, do you think it is still true today? (*Certainly.*)

Wait a minute. There are new things. There was a time when there was no way to record music. Now, we can play back recorded music on iPods, CD players, and over radio waves. There used to be a time when there was no medicine that could fight cancer. Now there are many of cancer-fighting strategies.

5. What do you think Solomon means when he says there is nothing new? Do you think he means inventions and stuff? What could he mean? (*Allow for answers.*)

Solomon is talking about the ways of the world, the heart of man, and the repetition of nature, etc. In a way, new inventions are not really that new. They just improve upon things that we could already do.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Solomon's mood sound here in this passage?
(Kind of depressed and discouraged.)
2. What did his wisdom bring him, according to verse 18?
(Sorrow and grief.)
3. This pursuit of knowledge Solomon calls, "Chasing after the wind." What do you think that means?
(It is meaningless; you can never catch the wind.)

MAKING IT REAL

So, if everything in this life is meaningless apart from God, how can life have meaning? The answer is at the end of Ecclesiastes, which we will jump to right now, and periodically during this series.

Read Ecclesiastes 12:13

Discussion Questions:

1. According to Solomon, what is the conclusion to all that has been heard?
(To fear God and keep His commandments.)
2. Based on what we read earlier from Ecclesiastes 1, what should everything else be considered?
(Meaningless.)
3. There is a powerful question we must all confront with this in mind--are you living a life that is rich in meaning, or one that has no meaning?

All anyone really wants is for life to mean *something*. But are you willing to do what it takes to make it so?

Discussion Questions:

1. How can loving God be a part of your friendships?
2. How can fearing God be a part of your life at school?

3. How does obeying God's commandments affect the way you treat your family?

4. Being honest with yourself, is there anything on your list that you would need to eliminate if you were to take Ecclesiastes 12:13 to heart? If so, what?

5. If everything that is absent of the presence of God is meaningless, why do you think we spend so much time on those things?

So, we can conclude from this lesson that loving God and obeying His commandments are the only things that really matter. With this in mind, we all probably have some repenting and changing to do.

CLOSING PRAYER

#CRAZYFORCHRIST