

Ecclesiastes chapters 1-12 (summary)

Many people before they die, they would express their love to their family and friends. In addition, many would like to tell what they have achieved well in life, and some of their mistakes or bad experiences so that the future generations would not repeat that same path. It is very similar to the book of Ecclesiastes where Solomon was at his old age wrote this book. Most sections of the book are an internal dialog of Solomon thinking through his mistakes in terms of purpose of life, and written to tell the future generations about it. King Solomon had wisdom from God but due to temptation of woman, wealth, etc. he spent a lot of his life time wasted on those issues.

The main point on most chapters is life is meaningless, pointless or vanity if you live a life “under the sun”. “Under the sun” mainly refers to live a life in a worldly perspective where one has no spiritual perspective and not having God to guide his/her life. (Ecc. 1:13-14)

1.) Life is meaningless in all circumstances if one lives in the worldly perspective

a. Knowledge (Ecc. 1:16-18; 2:12-16)

Solomon gained a lot of knowledge from various sources like sayings and teachings from different countries but it is meaningless because he found out: 1. Looking for knowledge is an endless chase and, 2. Having knowledge still made his life meaningless.

b. Pleasures (Ecc. 2:1-11)

A large list: he tried wine, having projects, growing and planting (gardens and parks), have slaves, own properties, entertainment, woman and sex, etc. The same type of pleasures can be found today. Overly involved in your occupation can be similar to his description of having projects; some people use their occupational tasks as an escape instead of trying to know the real meaning of life.

c. Conditions of others (Ecc. Chapter 4)

Look around the world and see lives are meaningless: some people are oppressed, some worked so hard and not able to get ahead, many are lonely, etc.

d. **Wealth (Ecc. 5:1-17)**

Having great wealth is the desire of many people. Solomon stated there is no satisfaction (Ecc. 5:10). Further, you can't take it with you when you die. Ecc. 5:15 "Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands."

2) **Live a life in God's perspective**

a. **Understand** God's natural creation for all mankind, **b. God's specific calling** to each one to **accept Him** as your God and savior and **c. Fear God and keep** His commandments

a. **God's creation for all mankind**

God created this universe for mankind for both Christians and non-Christians, and for both "good" and "bad" people.

- 1) Life consist of many repeated cycles (Chapter 1). Physical life on earth follows the regularity of God's creation: generation come/generation go, sun rises/sun sets, the cycling of water, history repeats itself (what has been done will be done again- Ecc:1:9 NLT), etc.
- 2) God has mercy for all: God provides food, drink and work. All can enjoy what God has given (Ecc. 2:24; 5:19)
- 3) God's specific timing for lives (Ecc. 3:1-8), e.g. time to be born, love, die.

b. **God's specific calling to each of us to accept Him as God and savior**

You can have eternal life only if you accept Jesus as your savior and God/Lord. (Read Rom. 3:10, Rom. 3:23, Rom. 6:23, Rom. 5:8, John 3:16.)

- 1) When I graduated from college and had a good job. I saved enough money to do what I like such as buy tech equipment and travel to foreign countries. After a while, I found I achieved what I wanted. I was thinking what is the meaning of life? Is it just achieving one goal after another? Finally, I found God. Knowing having an eternal life by accepting Jesus as my savior and God/Lord is the only way to have a meaning life and have an eternal life.

Accepting Jesus as savior and Lord so that you can have eternal life with God. That is the way to break the repeated cycles in physical life, and enjoy the eternity with God after physical death.

- 2) Ecc. 3:11 stated we should look for the eternal life. The short life time on earth follows the “repeated” cycles of God’s intended creation, but physical life is only a part of the eternity. God said that I am the beginning and the end, and we Christians live with him through time in eternity (Read Rev. 21:6-7).

c. Fear God and keep His commandments (Ecc. 12:13-14)

Ecclesiastes was written in the OT period mainly for the Israelites. Thus, the point b. above was not mentioned. The conclusion is to fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind (Ecc. 12:13). We can live in God’s perspective only when we follow Him closely.