
CONNECT BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

- What was your favorite story or book when you were growing up?
- If you had to pick one person from history to have a meal with, who would it be, and what's one question you'd be sure to ask them?
- What's an area of life that seemed simple when you were a child but became more complicated and gray as you got older?

TRUTH UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING

The book of Ecclesiastes is both strange and wonderful. In a lot of ways, it's a conversation between the Teacher in Ecclesiastes and the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a book full of wisdom and good advice, and it's a good idea to live by it. But even if you follow Proverbs perfectly, life won't always go as planned. That's where Ecclesiastes comes in. It's honest about the fact that there's a glitch in the system, and it points us beyond the system.

The Glitch in the System

READ: Ecclesiastes 1:1-14

DISCUSS: Describe a time in your life when you experienced the "vanity" the Teacher describes—a time when life was really hard to understand

This word for "vanity"—a Hebrew word pronounced "hevel"—literally means vapor or smoke. It shows up 38 times in the book, and it captures the Teacher's big lesson—that everything under the sun has a vapor-like quality. It's an enigma, hard to figure out. It's fleeting, here one day and gone tomorrow. It looks solid, but the second you try to grasp it, it slips through your fingers.

Look Past the Sun

READ: Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

DISCUSS: Be honest. How does the Teacher's description of life make you feel?

Another really important phrase the Teacher uses is "under the sun." Here's where we find the glimmer of hope. Not absolutely everything is vapor. It's the stuff under the sun, the stuff in this life and in this age. If our lives become all about striving after things under the sun, we'll be disappointed. Rather, we must let vaporous nature of life point us beyond the sun.

GRACE SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

READ: Mark 8:34-38

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” Even if you gain everything under the sun, you lose it all and forfeit your soul. But Jesus came in order that we might find our lives. He who dwelled in heaven beyond the sun came under the sun to save us.

CHANGE APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

The Teacher says it’s meaningless to chase the wind. We must stop playing that game and follow Jesus instead.

- How do the Teacher’s words impact the way you think about your own life?
- What are some things under the sun that you tend to put too much of your meaning in?
- What do you think it would look like to be someone who’s focus is on Jesus instead of things “under the sun?”

PRAYER RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Pray that those in your group wouldn’t find their meaning in things under the sun but rather in following Jesus.
- Pray for wisdom and boldness to apply this passage to your life.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?