

Ecclesiastes: Futility of Life

[Ecclesiastes 1:1-18](#)

The author of Ecclesiastes begins by introducing the writings of the Teacher, most likely Solomon. Solomon has all the time and resources in the world, and he sets forth to “search for understanding and explore by wisdom.” While his findings are dark, we are called to embrace the tension and look with hope to a sovereign God and a loving Savior.

Application

1. Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes are considered wisdom literature. How has your life experience shaped the way you view these books of the Bible? Which book(s) would you naturally lean towards to find truth? Which book(s) would be more difficult? Why?
2. The author of Ecclesiastes invites us to consider that life is “hevel”—a fleeting, unpredictable vapor. As we begin this series, what does it look like for you to humble yourself and grapple with the following questions: What is my motivation? Where can I find hope?
3. When we feel the weight of the brokenness in the world and our powerlessness to fix it, many of us self medicate in different ways—food, alcohol, shopping, work, pornography, etc. How do you tend to escape when you feel life pressing in? What does that reveal about how you view God and yourself?

Key Points

- Both Ecclesiastes and Job are grounded in the theological distinction between God the Creator and us as his creatures. It’s vital that we grasp that there is a God, and we are not him.
- Solomon begins with the premise that life is meaningless—“hevel.” This idea includes the imagery of life being a vapor—ephemeral, fleeting, insubstantial, and unpredictable.
- We must sit in the tension that even though we bear God’s image, we cannot understand the big questions around brokenness and injustice in the world.
- Instead of striving for understanding, we should strive to trust God, to embrace the gap between his sovereignty and our limited nature.

- Even in the midst of life's brokenness, we can have hope. We are called to fear God and keep his commandments. The only way to have purpose is to keep covenant with God.
- Ultimately, our hope rests in Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. He was pierced for us so that we would not be pierced. Through that lens, we look forward with hope.

Other Scripture References

[Proverbs 3:5-6](#)

[Psalm 144](#)

[Proverbs 3:15-18](#)

[Ecclesiastes 12:11](#)

[James 4:13-16](#)

[Genesis 3](#)

[Hebrews 12:2](#)