



The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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What is the Purpose of Life A Study of Ecclesiastes

Date	Lesson	Text
05/02	Introduction	
05/09	Trivial Pursuits	Chap 1-2
05/16	Expectations	Chap 3-4
05/23	Satisfaction	Chap 5-6
05/30	Perspectives	Chap 7-8
06/06	Guest Teacher	Bro. Smarto
06/13	Live Wisely Pt 1	Chap 9-10
06/20	Live Wisely Pt 2	Chap 9-10
06/27	Joint Class with Bell Class	
07/04	Final Exam	Chap 11-12
07/11	Summary & Review	

Food for Thought

Wandering From Wisdom

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.
Monitor your heart daily to avoid
wandering from God's wisdom.

So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

1 Kings 3:9 (NIV)

(From "Our Daily Bread" Sep 22, 2007)

LIVE WISELY - Part 2 ECCL 9 and 10

It seems that we are hesitant to come to grips with our impending death. We would rather avoid any discussion about it. After all, death is a depressing subject. And who wants to be depressed? Yet, I would argue that **we are not prepared to live until we are prepared to die**. Solomon tackles the subject of death head-on. Instead of denying death, he discusses its reality and our response. In Eccl 9:1-12, **Solomon provides two reminders that will enable us to make the most of our few days on earth: Death is certain and life is uncertain**. In 9:1-6, Solomon explains that death is the "Great Equalizer." Death plays no favorites and overlooks no one. Regardless of your strength and wealth, you are going to die. In 9:7-12, Solomon urges us to make the most of our lives because time and chance can overtake us. Verses 11-12 could serve as a summary for the entire book of Ecclesiastes. So much of life is enigmatic and fails to conform to the rules we have learned. **We've been taught that if you want to succeed you have to compete and be aggressive, get up earlier, go to bed later, put in more hours, do unto them before they do unto you. But, says Solomon, it doesn't always work that way. Nothing is guaranteed.** This is how life is, but we shouldn't despair nor should we quit aiming to be swift, strong, wise, brilliant and learned. We should, however, quit thinking that life owes us anything, or, for that matter, that God owes us anything under the sun. In Eccl 9:13-18, we will see that life may indeed be deep, but it is also rather simple. Yet, in order to experience life as God intends, we need to follow His Word. In this passage, Solomon tells us that **"wisdom helps make a life."** He also provides this parable, a poor, wise man outsmarts a great king. He saves the day, yet he is unrewarded with wealth or social esteem. Whether the poor man delivered the city by diplomacy or military strategy is not the issue. The point is that the city owed its survival to him, but he received no reward or lasting respect. The sad truth is: wisdom is sought out only in desperate times; otherwise, only those who have wealth or power are in a position to demand public attention. Although the wise man failed to personally profit from his labors, his wisdom was not profitless for others or for his world. In fact, this poor man's wisdom impressed Solomon (9:13) so much that he draws three conclusions from this parable (9:16-18): **Godly wisdom is greater than strength (16), Godly wisdom is not always heeded (17), and Godly wisdom can be overcome by sheer folly (18).**

In the midst of a passage praising wisdom, Solomon warns us of **the dangers of foolish behavior**. In Ecclesiastes 10, he uses the word "fool" nine times. In Solomon's three books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon), he uses the words "fool, fools, foolish, and folly" a staggering total of 128 times. We could call him a "fool buster." Consequently, he writes an entire chapter replete with proverbs that will help us to behave with wisdom instead of foolishness. In 10:8-20, we will clearly see that **wisdom is "skill for living."** Solomon provides **four concrete ways that we can make wisdom work for us: first, apply wisdom in getting a job done (10:8-10), second, apply wisdom in controlling your words (10:11-15), third, apply wisdom in leading others (10:16-19), and lastly apply wisdom in withholding criticism (10:20).**

(Adapted from "Ecclesiastes" by Keith Krell)

Key Themes:

1. The fact that **our days are numbered** ought to motivate us to live earnestly for God. Solomon urges us to **make the most of our lives** because time and chance can overtake us.
2. **Wisdom, skill, and hard work can promote but not guarantee success.** This is true because "time and chance overtake them all. Wisdom may not bring accolades and popularity, but it tends to win the day. Sadly, wisdom frequently goes unrewarded.
3. Solomon urges us to **avoid foolishness at any expense**. Why does he harp on this? Ultimately, because he knows that foolishness can destroy our lives. Consider the following benefits to silence or at least to talking less: (1) you can listen carefully to what others say; (2) you have time to frame your thoughts; (3) your companions will value your words because you have listened to them; and (4) you run a much lower risk of saying something foolish.

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Chapter 9

Living While You Live (Ecclesiastes 9:1-12)

Death is certain (Heb 9:27)

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

Life is uncertain (James 4:13-15)

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.

Appreciate wisdom in others (9:13-18)

Godly wisdom is greater than strength (Ps 33:16-18)

6 The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength. 17 A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. 18 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness,

Godly wisdom is not always heeded (1 Cor 1:21-25)

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Godly wisdom can be overcome by sheer folly (Rom 1:21-23)

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Chapter 10

Avoid foolishness at any expense (10:1-7)

Dangers of foolish behavior (Titus 3:3)

3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Behave with wisdom instead of foolishness (Eph 5:15-17)

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Apply wisdom to life (10:8-20)

Apply wisdom in getting a job done (10:8-10) (Col 3:16-17)

16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Apply wisdom in controlling your words (10:11-15) (James 1:26)

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

Apply wisdom in leading others (10:16-19) (1 Kings 3:7-9)

7 "Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 "Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. 9 "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

Apply wisdom in withholding criticism (10:20) (Phil 2:14-15)

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world