

D6 EveryDay™ Parent Page

Date | **May 1, 2022** Family Theme | **The Search for Meaning**
Study Text | **Ecclesiastes 1:1-18**

Objective: Help children see that life apart from God is meaningless and empty and that we look to God and His ways for purpose and meaning in life.

How This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible: This lesson introduces us to the book of Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon around 934 BC. It joins the other Wisdom books that apply to all people of all time.

Bible Basics: Memorize John 3:16-17 this week and work with family members to do so as well.

Read the Word: Ecclesiastes 1:1-18

Disciple Your Kids

Help your children and grandchildren understand that life apart from God does not satisfy or provide meaning and purpose. Encourage them to walk with God to find meaning in life.



Key Truth: Apart From God, Human Activity Is Meaningless, Fleeting, and Monotonous (Ecclesiastes 1:1-11)

Ecclesiastes opens with a reference to the *Teacher or Preacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem*. No one fits that description better than Solomon. Solomon summarized life apart from God by using a word that conveys the emptiness or ineffectual outcome of something. It can be translated as vanity, worthless, meaningless, fleeting, or emptiness. Solomon challenged us to consider what life is really like under the sun apart from God. Solomon used the earth and its cycles, people's lack of satisfaction and fulfillment, and the passing of generations to illustrate the emptiness and monotony of life apart from God. Indeed, there is nothing new under the sun. Customs, languages, nations, and tools change, but the people involved are very much like those who went before or will come after. How could *anything* really matter, if that is all there is? We are not designed for meaninglessness, however. Nor are we designed to *find* or *create* our own meaning, either. We are built to live in the meaning and purpose for which God has created us. If we want something lasting and eternal, we will need to find it outside of this world of meaningless monotony. What we do and how we live are important because of God, not because of what we may find here *under the sun*.



Key Truth: Apart from God, Seeking Wisdom and Understanding Is Meaningless (Ecclesiastes 1:12-18)

Solomon certainly achieved much. He had the time and resources to learn whatever human knowledge or wisdom was available in his day. Did such wisdom free him or make him glad? On the contrary, it was a heavy burden. Solomon testified that all of the human activity he had seen or learned about was without lasting meaning. It was no more fruitful than chasing after a breeze. This is the perspective of a man whose heart had drifted away from God. We must recognize how serious what Solomon described really is. He did not mention God until describing the burden He has placed on mankind. It is indeed a heavy burden to understand that an entire life's activity, if done apart from God, will amount to nothing. What good are riches, wisdom, and knowledge if all we can do is disappear into the nameless ranks of those who went before us? We must not give in to the temptation to keep our view "under the sun." We must live life looking upward, to the Son, for our own good and that of those who follow us.

Discussion Starters

Use one or more of the following questions as discussion starters with family members this week. Questions in **bold** will be good to use with elementary age children.

- Why do you think human beings long for meaning in life?
- Where can we find lasting meaning in life?
- Why is life meaningless and fleeting apart from God?
- How can we pursue what is lasting and eternal rather than what is earthly and fleeting?
- Why do people find purpose and meaning when walking in close relationship with God?
- What will you do this week to find meaning in a close relationship with God?
- **Where do people in our culture turn looking for purpose and meaning?**
- **Why did Solomon feel like his life was meaningless?**
- **What is the key to having a meaningful life?**

Everyday Extras

Make bubbles by gently combining 1 quart water, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Dawn Dish Detergent, and 2 tablespoons of corn starch. Allow the mixture to sit for 10 minutes before you use it. Blow (or wave) bubbles through traditional bubble wands or go big with coat hangers and hula hoops. Talk with your children about how temporary the bubbles are. Solomon wrote about feeling that his life was empty and meaningless, just like the bubbles. He looked for purpose in wealth, pleasure, study, and work, but nothing lasted. Ultimately, he realized that knowing God is what gives life meaning.

Preschool Highlights for SQUARE 1 & ROUND 2

Today your child learned children have a special place in Jesus' heart. Some children wanted to come to Jesus, but the disciples tried to keep them away. Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to Him. He or she also heard a Webster Family story where Jamie, Rosie, and Annie learned **Jesus Loves Children** and they are important to Him.