

ECCLESIASTES

*Enjoy Life
and Fear God*

Sept. 10, 2026 • Week 1 • Ecclesiastes 1

This semester, we're studying the book of Ecclesiastes, most likely written by Solomon, the son of King David. This book is a treasure trove of wisdom, and we get to discover it together this fall.

1. Share your name and one thing you're either enjoying now or looking forward to in this season.

READ ECCLESIASTES 1:1, 12, and 16

- 2a. List everything Solomon tells us about himself.
- b. Based on what Solomon has shared about himself, why might he be someone worth listening to?

READ ECCLESIASTES 1:2-11

- 3a. What does Solomon notice in the world around him?
- b. What does Solomon seem to be wrestling with in this passage?
- c. In what ways does the repetition described show up in your ordinary life?

READ ECCLESIASTES 1:13-18

4. According to verses 13 and 17, what did the author devote his life to pursuing?
5. How do you personally pursue wisdom?
- 6a. What are your first impressions of Ecclesiastes?
- b. What is a question you hope to have answered by the end of the study?

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Sept. 17, 2026 • Week 2 • Ecclesiastes 2

Before beginning your study questions, prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 2.

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11

1. Consider Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 along with 1:13. Summarize what Solomon was seeking to do.
 - 2a. Paraphrase verses 1 and 2 in your own words. Christ Chapel teaches from the ESV. However, reading verses in different versions of the Bible, such as NIV, NLT, and NASB, can be a helpful practice when passages are challenging to understand.
 - b. Does Solomon's assessment of pleasure in verses 1 and 2 surprise you? Why or why not?
 - 3a. Skim verses 3-11 again to observe where Solomon looked for meaning and satisfaction. List as many as you see.
 - b. Intently consider verses 10 and 11. What did Solomon conclude?
 - c. Reflect on something in your life you turned to for meaning and satisfaction that ultimately left you unfulfilled. Describe your experience and what you learned.
4. Based on what you learned in chapters 1 and 2, write your own definition for two phrases that Solomon repeats through the book: "vanity/vanity of vanities" and "under the sun/under heaven." As you study this semester, feel free to refine your definitions.

Vanity/vanity of vanities:

Under the sun/under heaven:

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:12-17

- 5a. Compare and contrast Solomon's specific observations of wisdom and folly.
- b. In one or two sentences, summarize Solomon's thoughts and conclusions about wisdom and folly.
- c. In what ways do you resonate with Solomon's observations and conclusions?

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:18-23

- 6a. List words from the passage that reflect Solomon's emotions about his toil and work.
- b. What reasons does Solomon give for his frustration with his toil and work?

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:24-26

- 7a. According to these verses, is joy possible? If so, where does Solomon say joy comes from?
- b. Contrast Solomon's emotions and perspective in verses 24-26 with verses 1-23.
- c. Which phrases in verses 24-26 show why Solomon's outlook changes?

- 8a. Read Matthew 11:28-30 and Romans 15:13. What can we experience in Christ?
- b. St. Augustine, one of the most influential theologians in church history, said, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” What are some of the things Jesus brings rest from?
- c. Have you experienced meaning and satisfaction in Jesus? If so, describe how life for you “under the sun” is different with Him than apart from Him.
- d. According to verse 24, eating, drinking, work, and many other things listed in chapter 2 can bring joy. Select one thing from Ecclesiastes 2 that Solomon pursued to find meaning. Describe how you have experienced joy in that thing when you have sought it with Jesus.

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

We'll end each week with this same question. While the question stays the same, your answer will likely vary from week to week as we discover new facets of the wisdom of life with God, and the emptiness of life without Him.

Summarize this week's passage.

Write a brief recap of the main events or key ideas to help remember the story as we continue the study next week.

Personal Prayer Request

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Sept. 24, 2026 • Week 3 • Ecclesiastes 3

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 3.

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

- 1a. Read verse 1 along with Genesis 8:22 and Daniel 2:21. Consider the seasons God established. What aspects of His character are revealed?
- b. Just as the seasons of nature continually change, so do the seasons of our lives. Reflect on your current season. How does the knowledge that this season is temporary, combined with what you know of God's character, influence the way you view and respond to those circumstances today?
- 2a. Reread Ecclesiastes 3:2-8. Solomon uses 14 pairs of opposites to mark the seasons of our lives. Why do you think he begins this list with birth and death?
- b. Verses 1-8 display God's sovereignty, His absolute power and authority over all creation. Looking back, where have you seen God's sovereign care in a season you could not control? How does this deepen your faith for current and future seasons?
3. The remaining verses in chapter 3 describe the experiences we will likely encounter between birth and death. Thinking about your current season of life, which pair of opposites resonates most with you, and why?

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:9-15

- 4a. While the first eight verses of Ecclesiastes highlight the fleeting nature of life, verses 9-16 point us toward a life of purpose. According to verses 9-10, what truth do you learn about your work (both paid and unpaid)?

- b. Look at the following portions of scripture and record the truths you find about God's purpose for your work.

Proverbs 16:3

Matthew 5:16

Colossians 3:23-24

1 Peter 4:10

- c. In light of God's purposes for our work, with what attitude should we approach our daily responsibilities?

5a. Consider verse 11. What knowledge is unattainable for us?

b. How does the inability to fully comprehend God sometimes make it difficult to trust Him?

c. How does the inability to fully comprehend Him sometimes lead you to deeper trust?

d. How do the truths in verses 12-15 encourage you to trust God's sovereignty and purpose? How can you use those truths to encourage others?

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:16-22

6a. Solomon turns his attention to the injustice he sees in the world. As you consider the injustice in the world today, what burdens your heart the most?

- b. Because God loves justice, His children should too. How can we actively pursue justice in ways that glorify Him and point others to Christ?
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- 7. While Ecclesiastes highlights similarities between humans and animals, Genesis 1:26-28 reveals a key difference. What makes humans uniquely different from animals according to these verses?
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- 8. As you reflect on Ecclesiastes 3, what truth stands out to you most and how will it shape your daily life?

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week's passage.

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Oct. 1, 2026 • Week 4 • Ecclesiastes 4:1-5:7

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 4:1-5:7.

1a. Thinking back on our study so far, what are some of the things Solomon has said are vanity, striving after the wind, and/or evil under the sun?

b. What does he add to that list in this passage?

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:1-3

2a. Look up the definition of “oppression.” What relationship do you see between oppression and power in this definition?

b. Ecclesiastes 4:1 laments that there is no one to comfort the oppressed. In what ways can the oppressed find comfort in the Lord? Also read Exodus 22:21-23; Psalm 103:6; Isaiah 1:17; Luke 4:18-19.

c. What practical steps can you take to help share His comfort with the oppressed?

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:4-6

3a. According to Solomon, what is often the motivation for work?

b. Explain the metaphors in verse 5 and verse 6 in your own words.

- c. How do these metaphors relate to the topic of work?

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:7-8

- 4a. What is the “vanity under the sun” in these verses?
- b. Since neither envy, greed, nor workaholism seem to be good motivations for work, what do you think should motivate our work?
- c. Give honest thought to what usually motivates your work. In what ways do you need to reorder your relationship to your work (paid or unpaid) so that you can find a better balance? If you feel you do have a good balance, how did you find it?

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

- 5a. According to these verses, what are some of the dangers of isolating yourself? What are the benefits to having other people alongside you?
- b. Share a story of a time when community helped lift you up, encouraged you, and/or held you accountable.

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:13-16

- 6. This passage tells the story of an old, foolish king being replaced by a youth. How do you think this relates to the verses right before? What point do you think Solomon is trying to make?

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7

- 7a. What are all the things Solomon says not to do in these verses regarding worship?
- b. What does he say worshipers should do?
- c. Read the following passages to better understand sacrifices, vows, and words in worship: Deuteronomy 23:21-23; 1 Samuel 15:22; Matthew 6:7-8; Romans 12:1-2. Combined with Solomon's teaching in 5:1-7, how would you summarize what the Lord wants from us in worship?
- d. What role does listening to God play in your personal worship? How do you incorporate it and/or what practical steps would you like to take to listen more?

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week's passage.

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Oct. 8, 2026 • Week 5 • Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:12

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:12.

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:8-9

1. Throughout Ecclesiastes, Solomon has been searching for where true satisfaction can be found. As you begin this week's passage, where does he turn his attention in verses 8-9?
 - 2a. What relationship do you see between power, wealth, and oppression in these verses?
 - b. Why do you think Solomon tells us not to be surprised when we witness injustice?
3. In week 3 we learned about God's sovereignty – His absolute authority over all creation. When you encounter injustice you can't change, how does remembering His sovereignty help you respond faithfully?

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:10-17

- 4a. What observations and illustrations does Solomon use to describe the emptiness of pursuing wealth?
- b. What dangers does Solomon identify about loving money or placing our hope in wealth?

- c. Read Matthew 6:19-21 and 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19. How does the New Testament reinforce Solomon's teaching about money and contentment?

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:18-20

- 5a. What does Solomon say is God's gift?
- b. How does Solomon's perspective in verses 18-20 shift from what he says in verses 10-17?
- c. Solomon offers this wisdom: wealth, work, food, and possessions aren't bad. Instead, he says they are gifts from God to be enjoyed. What's the difference between enjoying God's gifts and expecting them to satisfy your heart?

READ ECCLESIASTES 6:1-6

- 6a. In your own words, describe the tragedy Solomon presents in this passage.
- b. What messages does our culture send us about where contentment is found? Where do you hear or see these messages most often?

READ ECCLESIASTES 6:7-12

- 7a. What observations does Solomon make about human desires and our limitations?

- b. In what area of your life are you most tempted to believe that "just a little more" would make you content?

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:8-6:12 AGAIN

- 8a. Throughout this passage, Solomon shows us that wealth, possessions, and human striving cannot ultimately satisfy the heart. Read John 6:35, John 10:10, and Philippians 4:11-13. What do these passages teach us about the satisfaction only Jesus can give?

- b. Share about a season in your life when God taught you to find your contentment in Him rather than in your circumstances or possessions.

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week's passage.

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Oct. 15, 2026 • Week 6 • Ecclesiastes 7

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 7:1-29. Both adversity and prosperity can be beneficial depending on our responses. Solomon begins chapter 7 with a series of proverbs contrasting wise and foolish responses.

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:1-2

- 1a. A good name can refer to a good reputation, character, or memory. What do you want others to remember about you after your death?
- b. What are some ways attending a funeral rather than a party might direct you toward wise living?

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:3

2. One way to paraphrase verse 3 is a sorrow shared may bring more peace and contentment than an evening with shallow revelers. Share a time you experienced this to be true.

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:4-6

- 3a. What wise and foolish responses to pain do you find in these verses?
- b. In times of adversity, why do you think we sometimes avoid wise counsel and instead listen to the “song of fools” which Solomon says has the substance of vapor?
- c. Often we learn much about God and ourselves in times of difficulty, failure, or sorrow. Record some truths you have learned during these hard times. Also read Romans 5:3-5.
4. Choose one of these verses (7:7, 7:8, or 7:9). What obstacle to wisdom does it name? Then share specific ways it might trip you up.

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:10

5. What might be some dangers in longing for the “good old days”?

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:11-14

- 6a. Solomon concludes this section (7:1-12) with verses 13-14. Consider what these verses say about God, then explain verse 13 in your own words.
- b. In what ways might we benefit when we are trusting and using the responses given in 7:14?

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:15-18

- 7a. We cannot control God with arrogant self righteousness, nor should we join the world with reckless and foolish behavior. In verse 18, what is the answer for avoiding both extremes?
- b. What are some practical ways fearing (worshipping, following, acknowledging with reverence and awe) God has given you a proper perspective on living wisely in this world?

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:19-22

- 8a. What is the human problem according to 7:20?
- b. Describe the good news we have today with regard to our sin problem. Also read Romans 3:22-26 and Romans 5:8.
- c. Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 gives an example of our unrighteousness. Think of some positive ways you can handle criticism or unkind words.

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:23-24

9a. As Solomon grows more wise, what is his ultimate understanding?

b. What does this teach us about God and about ourselves?

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:25-26 ALONG WITH PROVERBS 9:13

10a. Folly here might be personified as a woman. List the negative descriptions of folly.

b. How can you escape such folly?

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:27-29

11. God has a good design for us but we tend to want our own way. What one lesson or truth from chapter 7 has or will change your daily responses in your life with God?

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week's passage.

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Oct. 22, 2026 • Week 7 • Ecclesiastes 8:1-17

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 8.

READ ECCLESIASTES 8:1-9

1a. What qualities does Ecclesiastes 8:1 reveal about a person who possesses godly wisdom?

b. In what ways can pursuing godly wisdom transform how you relate and react to others?

2a. We all live under governmental authority. According to verses 2-6, what traits are evident in one who lives under authority in a God-honoring way?

b. Throughout Scripture, God's people often lived under flawed and unjust leaders. Read the following passages and identify the godly wisdom reflected in their responses.

Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers and unjustly imprisoned in Egypt.

Genesis 50:15-21

Nehemiah, who rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem and led God's people back to faithful obedience.

Nehemiah 1:1-6

Daniel, who was captured as a young man and pressured to abandon his convictions in a foreign country.

Daniel 1:5-9

3a. What key truths does Ecclesiastes 8:2-6 reveal about navigating unjust authority with godly wisdom?

- b. Looking back on what you've learned, how can you respond more wisely to any unjust authority in your current circumstances?

READ ECCLESIASTES 8:10-13

- 4a. In verse 10, Solomon observes that some people are publicly honored despite living ungodly lives. Consider where you see this in the world today. What emotions or questions does it stir in you?
- b. According to Ecclesiastes 8:11–13, what dilemma arises when evil seems to go unpunished?
- c. Look closely at verse 12. Despite the injustice Solomon described, what truth does he confidently affirm? To whom does it apply?
- d. Read 2 Peter 3:8–10. What truths help us trust God when life seems unfair?

READ ECCLESIASTES 8:14-17

- 5a. Ecclesiastes 8:14 raises the age-old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people?" What response does Solomon offer in verse 15?
- b. What does it look like to choose joy amid an unjust world? What does that choice reveal about your faith in God?
- 6a. Throughout Ecclesiastes, Solomon repeatedly reminds us that we cannot fully understand God's work. In chapter 8, he raises this truth again. Do you find this comforting or challenging? Why?

- b. Godly wisdom differs from worldly wisdom. What do the following passages teach us about the nature of true wisdom?

Proverbs 1:7

James 1:5

James 3:17

7. How do the truths found in Ecclesiastes 8 challenge you to trust God more when life seems unfair, confusing, or beyond your understanding?

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week's passage.

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Oct. 29, 2026 • Week 8 • Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 9:1-12.

1. Take a moment to review your summary from last week and read Ecclesiastes 8:16-17. What conclusion did Solomon come to at the end of chapter 8?

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:1

- 2a. Although Solomon admits that we cannot fully understand God's work, what truth does he affirm about God?
- b. Even knowing this truth, why can it be so hard to surrender control of our own circumstances to Him?

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:2-6

- 3a. Solomon lists examples of both those who do good and those who do evil. Regardless of which category they fall into, what do all people have in common?
- b. In verses 4-6, what reasons does Solomon give for valuing life "under the sun," even in a world marked by death and uncertainty?

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:7-10

- 4a. What actions does Solomon command or encourage in verses 7-10?
- b. Why do you think Solomon commands us to enjoy simple gifts (food, drink, clothing, marriage, and work) immediately after his reflections on death?

- c. List some of the everyday gifts God has given you. Which of those do you most often take for granted, and how might remembering that life is temporary deepen your gratitude for that gift?

- d. Scripture calls us both to enjoy God's gifts and to exercise wisdom and self-control. Read Proverbs 23:20-21, Proverbs 25:16, 1 Corinthians 6:12, and 1 Timothy 6:17. What practical measures can you put into place so that you enjoy God's gifts without being controlled by them?

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:11-12

- 5a. What reality is Solomon pointing out in verse 11?

- b. What do you think Solomon means by "time and chance happen to them all"? (Chance here means occurrence or misfortune.)

- c. Read Psalm 31:14-16 along with Ecclesiastes 9:1. Though we cannot guarantee outcomes through our wisdom, strength, or skill, what comfort is offered?

- 6. Ecclesiastes 9 reminds us that death is certain for everyone. How does the resurrection of Jesus change the way Christians view death and the hope we have beyond "life under the sun"? Also read Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58; and 1 Peter 1:3-4.

7. Ecclesiastes 9 also reminds us that life “under the sun” is uncertain, brief, and often difficult to understand. How do the following truths from this passage either encourage, challenge, or reshape the way you view life?

God is sovereign, even when life feels uncertain:

Life is brief, and death is certain for everyone:

God calls us to enjoy His gifts while we have them:

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week’s passage.

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Nov. 5, 2026 • Week 9 • Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20.

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:13-17

- 1a. Solomon had witnessed a city in turmoil. Describe this city before and after its rescue in your own words.
- b. Compare the great king to the poor man in the city.
- c. What truths do you learn about wisdom from this story?

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:18-10:1

- 2a. Look up the definition of sinner. How many sinners are needed to destroy much good according to 9:18?
- b. Look up the definition of folly. How much folly is needed to ruin what is good according to 10:1?
- c. How might the beliefs and actions of foolish people (dead flies) outweigh godly wisdom and honor (perfumer's ointment)?

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:2-4

- 3a. Solomon continues to compare the benefits of wisdom and the consequences of foolishness. Read Ecclesiastes 10:2 again along with Psalm 16:8. What is Solomon's point in 10:2?
- b. Read Ecclesiastes 10:3 along with Proverbs 13:15-16. What is Solomon's point in 10:3?

- c. Read Ecclesiastes 10:4 along with Proverbs 16:14,32. What is Solomon's point in 10:4?
- d. Based on these verses, what specific changes can you make to grow in wisdom?

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:5-7 ALONG WITH PROVERBS 11:14

- 4. Solomon is a witness to role reversals brought about by the reckless will of rulers. How do you think these unwise decisions would bring about evil?

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:8-11

- 5a. Solomon's listed tasks could have dangerous outcomes. What is he teaching about the best way to approach hard work in our lives?
- b. How do you pursue wisdom in your daily tasks to avoid harmful consequences?

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:12-14

- 6a. We can learn a lot about people from what comes out of their mouths. Contrast the results of a wise person's words with the results of a fool's words from these verses.
- b. Read the following verses about our speech. Write out the verse that is most helpful to you. Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6; James 1:26; Proverbs 12:18; and Proverbs 15:14.

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:15

- 7. Both the words and works of a fool are without merit. What do we learn about fools from this verse? Why might this be true?

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:16-20

- 8a. In your own words, describe a kingdom led by a bad king from verses 10:16, 18, 19.
Describe a kingdom led by a good king from verse 10:17.
- b. What warning do we find in 10:20 for those who are aware of the deficiency of their king?
9. Consider what you have learned in this week's passages. In one sentence each, define a wise person and a foolish person.

Wise person:

Foolish person:

As you reflect on this passage, what stirs in you a longing for Jesus, or points you toward Him?

Summarize this week's passage.

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Nov. 12, 2026 • Week 10 • Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:14

Prayerfully read Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:14.

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:20-11:6

- 1a. What words and phrases describe humanity's limited knowledge and control?
- b. In contrast, how is God described?
- 2a. What does God command us to do in verse 11:6, even though life is unpredictable?
- b. In what ways do you find it difficult to focus on your responsibilities given how uncertain life can be?
- c. How do these verses encourage you as you engage in the work God has given you to do?

READ ECCLESIASTES 11:7-12:8

- 3a. Based on 11:7-8a, how does Solomon want us to view life?
- b. Reread verses 11:9-12:1. List the commands given to those who are young.

- 4a. According to 12:1-6, aging brings some difficulties. How can you serve well someone in your life experiencing some of these challenges? Or if you are experiencing difficulties related to aging right now, share with your small group a way they can pray for you.
- b. According to verse 7 what happens at the end of life?
- c. How does 1 Corinthians 15:54–57 encourage believers when thinking about death?
5. Read verse 8 again along with your early definition for “vanity of vanities” in week 2, question 4. What do you think Solomon wants the reader to understand about life through his frequent emphasis on “vanity of vanities” in Ecclesiastes?

READ ECCLESIASTES 12:9-13

- 6a. Describe the teacher and what he tried to accomplish.
- b. What knowledge and wisdom do you want to remember and apply from the book of Ecclesiastes?
- 7a. In one or two sentences, summarize the whole book of Ecclesiastes. Consider looking back at your answers in the colored boxes at the end of each week’s questions.

b. Paraphrase verses 13-14 in your own words.

c. Why is this an effective conclusion to the book of Ecclesiastes?

8a. In what areas in your life are you tempted to find meaning and purpose apart from God?

b. Having studied Ecclesiastes, what have you changed, or are working to change, in approaching life as God intends?

9. If you were talking with someone struggling with finding meaning in their life, what truth from Ecclesiastes could you share with them?

10. How has your study of Ecclesiastes made you long for Jesus or pointed you toward Him?

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