

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11 / AUGUST 23

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read and Pray

This week begins our journey through Ecclesiastes, a book that asks some of life's hardest questions without settling for easy answers. As a group, read Ecclesiastes 1:1–11, which introduces the book's central question: What lasting meaning can we find in life "under the sun"? After reading, spend one minute in silent prayer. Then ask: What stood out to you? What might the Spirit be pressing into your life?

Sermon Recap (to *apply*, not rehash the sermon)

Review the sermon with your group, focusing especially on these points:

- "Hevel" describes life as vapor: unpredictable, frustrating, and impossible to control.
- Life "under the sun"—without God and eternity—cannot provide the lasting meaning we crave.
- Accomplishment ("humanism"), self-made meaning ("existentialism"), and pleasure ("hedonism") all fail when we ask them to give us ultimate purpose.
- God's good gifts are meant to be enjoyed, but they become empty when we turn them into gods.

Group Discussion

1. The sermon describes "hevel" as vapor—something that looks solid but slips through your fingers. Where have you experienced life feeling unpredictable, frustrating, or outside of your control?
2. Look at verses 2–11 again. What words, phrases, or ideas are repeated throughout these verses? What picture of life "under the sun" does the Teacher seem to be painting?
3. Verse 3 asks, "What does a person gain for all his efforts that he labors at under the sun?" What is the Teacher asking us to wrestle with through this question? Why can't accomplishments or a legacy provide the lasting meaning we want?
4. Verses 8–9 describe our inability to satisfy our desires: Our eyes and ears always want more. What does this reveal about trying to find ultimate satisfaction through pleasure, experiences, possessions, or other good gifts in this life?
5. Pastor J.D. emphasized that a worldly pleasure can be a great gift but a terrible god. What good gift are you most tempted to depend on for your identity, happiness, or sense of meaning? What would it look like to enjoy that gift without worshipping it?
6. The sermon ultimately calls us to stop looking for permanent meaning in temporary things. What is one area of your life where living with eternity in view would change your priorities, decisions, or perspective right now?

WEEKLY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFLECT:

What is one thing in your life that you've been treating as if it were permanent when it is actually hevel?

RESPOND:

What would it look like this week to enjoy that thing as a gift from God?

REACH:

Who in your life do you need to share the hope of this message with?

PRAYER

- ☐ Ask God to reveal which temporary things you've been asking to provide permanent meaning.
- ☐ Thank God for his good gifts in your life, and surrender your need to control or keep them.
- ☐ Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live with eternity in view, rather than defining your life only by what happens "under the sun."