

Time and Season Third Session Guide

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Open with Stillness

What are you grateful for?

Discussion Questions

Make it personal

Closing Prayer

Discussion Questions:

You Can't Take It With You, page 61

The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much, but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep. Ecclesiastes 5:12 (NIV)

Be content with what you have.
How hard or easy is this for you?

Stockpiling or Storing?, page 65

A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 (MSG)

Futility of Wealth

I came across a news article that highlights the irony of missing the value of what we already have because of the constant desire for more. A young man in Ottawa, Canada, robbed a bank. He held up a teller with his pistol and demanded all the cash she had. She emptied her till, and he ran out of the bank with \$6,000. He was later caught and sentenced to jail time. However, law enforcement later auctioned off his confiscated pistol to a museum. The young man's Colt pistol, a rare antique made by the Ross Rifle Company in 1918, was valued at

\$100,000. The lesson here is clear: in seeking wealth, he overlooked the greater value already in his possession. This serves as a powerful reminder not to risk what we already have by blindly chasing after more without recognizing its true worth.

What lessons do you take from this story?

We arrive empty-handed and leave the same way.

How do you interpret the idea that we are born empty-handed and leave the same way?

How do you define storing your treasures in Heaven?

Follow His Lead, page 69

Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil — this is a gift of God. Ecclesiastes 5:19 (NIV)

This verse teaches that true contentment comes from appreciating and enjoying God's gifts, not just receiving them. Happiness isn't found in material wealth alone, but in the ability to enjoy what we have. Accepting our circumstances and finding joy in daily life is a blessing from God.

Recall a recent moment of contentment. Was it from what you had or how you appreciated it?

To put this reflection into practice, pause each day to notice and write down the small things that bring you joy.

What simple joys do you overlook daily?

Is finding joy difficult for you?

By exploring these questions, you may notice that a grateful perspective transforms how we experience God's gifts—shifting us from a sense of scarcity to one of abundance.

Gratitude Exercise: Each morning, write down three specific things you're thankful for and note how they affect your mood or mindset throughout the day. Try sharing this practice with others to encourage mutual gratitude and support.

Who Knows?, page 73

"He who has God has everything. He who does not have God has nothing. He who has God and everything has no more than he who has God alone." - St. Augustine

Basically, this part of Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 has three parts.

- 1. Wealth, family, and even long life cannot truly satisfy apart from God.
- 2. Our deepest drives and desires remain unfulfilled without God.
- 3. Without God, life continues while we search in darkness for meaning.
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Building on the previous points, apart from God, life simply moves forward, leaving us searching in the dark for answers. Ultimately, we were created to know God. How does this make you feel as you look at your life's blueprint as it relates to "apart from God?"

This tension brings us to self-reliance versus God's reliance.

Where do you struggle with self vs. God reliance?

God is with us in every event of our lives and promises His loving care.

How does this affect you emotionally?

Eulogy Virtues, page 77

Death, the inevitable fate of every individual, is a truth that the living should embrace with reverence. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, death has been vanquished for each of us, and we eagerly anticipate the boundless possibilities that lie beyond this life. For Christians, death is not an end but a gateway to the most profound and transformative experience we will ever encounter.

What is your one-sentence eulogy that encapsulates this profound perspective?

Shelter of Wisdom, page 81

Let's circle back to the top of Ecclesiastes. Now, let's look at verses 1-12 from chapter 7 in the Message Translation.

A good reputation is better than a fat bank account. Your death date tells more than your birth date. You learn more at a funeral than at a feast—After all, that's where we'll end up. We might discover something from it. Crying is better than laughing. It blotches the face, but

*it scours the heart. Sages invest themselves in hurt and grief. Fools waste their lives in fun and games. You'll get more from the rebuke of a sage than from the song and dance of fools. The giggles of fools are like the crackling of twigs under the cooking pot. And like smoke. Brutality stupefies even the wise and destroys the strongest heart. Endings are better than beginnings. Sticking to it is better than standing out. Don't be quick to fly off the handle. Anger boomerangs. You can spot a fool by the lumps on his head. Don't always be asking, "Where are the good old days?" Wise folks don't ask questions like that. Wisdom is better when it's paired with money, especially if you get both while you're still living. Double protection: wisdom and wealth! Plus this bonus: **Wisdom energizes its owner.***

Building on these insights, we see that wisdom preserves those who have it. Ecclesiastes 7:12b (NIV)

With this in mind, seeing the world's wisdom and its outcomes modeled in Ecclesiastes as emptiness and that which has no lasting value should encourage us to embrace God's great wisdom as we live from day to day.

Eight truths about this portion of Ecclesiastes 7

A Wisdom-Led Woman

Knows the value of a good reputation 7:1 (Proverbs 22:1)

Views life through an eternal perspective 7:2-4 (Colossians 3:2)

Discerns the advice she receives from others 7:5-6 (Proverbs 12:15)

Desires integrity for her life and justice for those who are oppressed 7:7 (James 1:27)

Waits before acting – wisdom is exemplified by patience 7:8-9

Trusts God without complaining, knowing He is Sovereign. 7:10 (Acts 17:26)

Lives practically and prudently 7:11-12 (1 Timothy 6:7-9)

Where in your life do you sense a need for greater wisdom or discernment?

Consider that faith begins developing early. View this as an opportunity. Practice simple steps to strengthen your discernment.

In what areas do you desire growth in wisdom and discernment?