

Tab 1

LIFE UNDER THE ? SUN



IT ONLY MAKES SENSE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SON
AN ECCLESIASTES STUDY

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5-Day Devotional in Ecclesiastes

Week 2 | Ecclesiastes 1:12–2:26

Tab 2

Day 1: The Limits of Understanding

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:12–18

Theme: When Knowing More Doesn't Fix More

Solomon begins his search with wisdom, believing that if he could just understand life, everything would make sense. He applies his heart to knowledge, observation, and deep thinking—but instead of peace, he finds grief. The more clearly he sees the world, the more brokenness he recognizes. The problems multiply, not resolve. Wisdom exposes reality, but it cannot redeem it. This is where many of us live—we think clarity will calm us, but instead it overwhelms us. We overanalyze, overthink, and try to solve life like a puzzle that refuses to come together. Knowledge is a gift, but it was never meant to be a savior. It shines light on the mess, but it doesn't clean it up. That's why the gospel is such good news—Jesus doesn't just reveal truth; He is the truth who redeems what is broken. True peace isn't found in figuring everything out, but in trusting the One who already has.

Application Questions

- Where am I trying to figure out life instead of trusting God with it?
- How has increased knowledge or awareness ever led me to more anxiety instead of peace?

Prayer

Father, I confess how often I lean on my own understanding instead of trusting You. Thank You for the gift of wisdom, but remind me it is not my savior. Help me rest in Christ, who knows all things and holds all things together. Teach me to trust You where I don't have answers. Amen.

Day 2: The Emptiness of Pleasure

Passage: Ecclesiastes 2:1–11

Theme: When Enjoyment Becomes Exhaustion

Solomon turns from thinking to feeling. If knowledge didn't satisfy, maybe pleasure would. So he pursues everything—laughter, wine, possessions, experiences, relationships—and holds nothing back. This is not casual indulgence; this is full-scale pursuit. And yet, after reaching the peak, he looks back and calls it all vanity. The pleasure didn't last. The excitement faded. The satisfaction slipped through his fingers. This is the pattern of life under the sun—what feels fulfilling in the moment often leaves us empty afterward. Our culture constantly pushes this narrative: more experiences, more comfort, more indulgence. But the problem isn't pleasure itself—it's expecting pleasure to carry the weight of our souls. Only God can do that. When pleasure becomes our pursuit, it eventually becomes our disappointment. But when God is our pursuit, even simple pleasures become meaningful gifts.

Application Questions

- What pleasures am I tempted to look to for lasting satisfaction?
- How can I begin to enjoy the good things God gives instead of expecting them to replace Him?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the good gifts You've given me to enjoy. Forgive me for turning those gifts into substitutes for You. Help me find my deepest joy in Your presence, where true satisfaction is found. Teach me to receive pleasure rightly—as a gift, not a god. Amen.

Day 3: The Illusion of Achievement

Passage: Ecclesiastes 2:12–23

Theme: When Success Doesn't Secure Anything

After wisdom and pleasure fail, Solomon evaluates achievement. Maybe building something meaningful will give life purpose. But then reality sets in—death comes for everyone. The wise and the foolish share the same fate. Everything he builds will eventually be handed to someone else, and there's no guarantee they will steward it well. This realization crushes him. Work, success, and accomplishment are good—but they are not ultimate. They cannot secure our future or define our worth. Many of us quietly believe that if we just achieve enough, we'll finally feel secure or significant. But Solomon shows us that success without eternity in view is fragile. In Christ, our identity is secure, not because of what we build, but because of what He has already finished.

Application Questions

- Where am I tempted to measure my worth by what I accomplish?
- How would my work change if I saw it as a gift instead of my identity?

Prayer

God, thank You for the ability to work and build. But forgive me for placing my identity in what I accomplish. Remind me that my worth is secure in Christ alone. Help me to work faithfully, but to rest fully in You. Amen.

Day 4: Receiving Life as a Gift

Passage: Ecclesiastes 2:24–26

Theme: Enjoying Life Without Worshiping It

After tearing down every false savior, Solomon turns a corner. He realizes that enjoyment is still possible—but only when it's received as a gift from God. Eating, drinking, working—these are not meaningless when they are seen as coming from His hand. The difference is not in the activity, but in the perspective. When we make gifts into gods, they crush us. But when we receive them from God, they bless us. This is a freeing truth. You don't have to squeeze meaning out of life—you can receive it. You don't have to control everything—you can trust the One who gives everything. When God is central, life becomes enjoyable in a way it never could be otherwise.

Application Questions

- What gifts in my life have I been treating like ultimate things?
- How can I practice receiving everyday life as a gift from God this week?

Prayer

Father, thank You for the simple and profound gifts You give every day. Teach me to enjoy them without worshipping them. Help me live with gratitude, open hands, and a heart that recognizes Your goodness in all things. Amen.

Day 5: The Answer Found in Christ

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:12–2:26

Theme: From Emptiness to Fulfillment in Jesus

Ecclesiastes leaves us with a tension—life can be enjoyed, but it still feels fragile. Death still looms. Meaning still feels elusive. But this is where the story of Scripture opens up. What Solomon could not solve, Jesus came to fulfill. Where wisdom revealed the problem, Jesus became our wisdom and brought redemption. Where pleasure faded, Jesus offers fullness of joy that cannot be taken away. Where work becomes toil, Jesus offers rest for the weary. Where death overshadowed everything, Jesus defeated it completely through the resurrection. Life under the sun no longer has to feel meaningless because the Son has come into it. In Christ, we are no longer chasing meaning—we are receiving it.

Application Questions

- Where am I still chasing meaning instead of receiving it from Christ?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus reshape the way I view my life today?

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for stepping into a broken world and bringing redemption where there was only emptiness. You are the fulfillment my heart has always been searching for. Help me to stop chasing false saviors and rest fully in You. Let my life be shaped by the joy, hope, and meaning found in You alone. Amen.