

USING LIFE INSTEAD OF LIVING LIFE

Ecclesiastes 1-2

I. An introduction to "the Teacher" (Qoheleth) and some of his key thoughts.

- The "teacher" is looking at "life under the sun" (1:9; 2:11, etc...); that is, our material existence. He is looking at life apart from God's relevance.
- The "teacher" is talking to everyone.

II. Can I use life to get to somewhere else?

- *Hebel* does not mean "meaningless" - "vapor" with the idea of fleeting, ephemeral, temporary (see Psalm 39:5; Psalm 144:4; Proverbs 31:30).¹
- The "Teacher" (Qoheleth) asks a simple question in vs. 3: "What advantage/gain (can we get a leg-up) in all of our labors *under the sun*?"

III. And now for some revolutionary counsel from God → You may be trying to use life instead of live life!!

- Ecclesiastes 2:24a, lit. "There is nothing good *in* human beings to eat and drink and enjoy his work"

IV. What does a "Life-user" look like?

- A. Are your goals all about you?
- B. Is upgrading assumed?
- C. Have we become a "producer"?

V. How does a Christian worldview radically change this direction?

- A. Learn the spiritual discipline of celebration!
- B. We double-check our "consumer" mentality!
- C. Embrace the point of Jesus!

Study Questions for August 16

1. Read through Ecclesiastes 3 five times this week.
2. What similar themes, concepts and questions do you see in Ecclesiastes 3 that you saw in Ecclesiastes 1-2? How are some of these similarities different?
3. Ecclesiastes 3:11 literally reads, "He has made everything *beautiful* in its time..." which may be appropriate, or fitting. How does 3:1-8 describe that? Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. What does 3:11 tell us about our attempts to grasp eternity? What does that look like in the way we behave?
5. Why does God set us in the finiteness of time, according to 3:14? How do our limitations prompt us to worship God?

¹Provan, Iain, *NIV Application Commentary- Ecclesiastes/Song of Songs*, Zondervan, 2001, pp. 51-52