

# USING TIME INSTEAD OF LIVING IN TIME

Ecclesiastes 3

## I. What can we observe about time?

Ecclesiastes 1-2	Ecclesiastes 3
<p><b>Opening statement:</b> Enigma of enigmas, all of life is an enigma (or "fleeting") (1:2)</p>	<p><b>Opening statement:</b> There is a time for everything (3:1)</p>
<p><b>Opening question:</b> What does humanity gain from all his toil under the sun? (1:3)</p>	<p><b>Poem:</b> All things find their appointed time in God's grand scheme (3:2-8)</p>
<p><b>Poem:</b> all things fulfill their purpose without gain (1:4-11)</p>	<p><b>Opening question:</b> What does the worker gain from all his toil? (3:9)</p>
<p><b>Narrative:</b> Experiences in gathering stuff (1:13-2:21)</p>	<p><b>Narrative:</b> Experiences in the limits of time (3:10-19)</p>
<p><b>Question of meaning:</b> What does a person get from all his toil under the sun? His task is so painful that he cannot even get rest! (2:22-23)</p>	<p><b>Question of meaning:</b> Who knows whether the spirit of humans ascends upward while the spirit of animals descends down into the earth? (3:20-21)</p>
<p><b>Counter-point:</b> We have nothing in ourselves to enjoy life. It is a gift from God. God is the one who gives wisdom and knowledge to enjoy the material aspects of life. (2:24-26)</p>	<p><b>Counterpoint:</b> There is nothing better than for humans to enjoy the times and activities of life, for that is his lot. (3:22)</p>

## II. God uses our finiteness to draw us closer to Him!!

## III. Are we using time or living within time?

- A. Do you feel like time can never be "wasted", it's too valuable a "resource"?
- B. Do you feel like you'll pop if one more thing gets added to your plate?
- C. Do you find yourself always eating fast or on the fly?
- D. How much are you multi-tasking?
- E. Do you find that you cannot enjoy the simple things of the present?
- F. Do you find yourself constantly re-hashing the past or dreaming of the future at the expense of today?

## IV. Living as a mortal in the presence of an eternal God.

- A. Living within our God-given limitations actually produces freedom!
- B. Too much to do with too little time can cause paralysis!
- C. Cultivate a habit of Sabbath rest!!
- D. The difference between *carpe diem* and a biblical *carpe diem* is the center!

### Study Questions for August 23

- 1. Read Ecclesiastes five times this week.
- 2. Read Ecclesiastes 4:1-4. Have you ever felt like the "Teacher" in the midst of unfairness? How so?
- 3. What is the contradiction in vv. 5-6? What do you think the Teacher is trying to drive us to with this contradiction?
- 4. What does the Teacher value in vv. 7-12 in the midst of struggle, oppression and unfairness? What does he say about the person with, and without, a friend?