

Does Life Have A Purpose?

The Big Seven, part 1

Pastor Bob Johnson, April 28th, 2019

Solomon's Lack of Purpose:

(Ecclesiastes 1:1-2)

Solomon's Grasp For Purpose:

1. **S** _____
(Ecclesiastes 1:13-14, 17-18)

2. **F** _____
(Ecclesiastes 2:1-2; 2:8b; 2:3; 2:8a)

3. **W** _____
(Ecclesiastes 2:17-19)

4. **S** _____
(Ecclesiastes 4:14-16)

5. **M** _____
(Ecclesiastes 5:10)

Solomon's Reflective Conclusion:

(Ecclesiastes 12:12-13, Psalm 147:11, Proverbs 9:10)

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV)

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This Week's Discussion Guide:

Welcome to week 1 of our spring small group season! It is our prayer at GPC for our Sundays and small groups to provide the encouragement we all need to support each other as we desire to grow closer to God and build friendships in the coming weeks. This small group season will be for 7 weeks and wrap up the week of June 9th. In the weeks ahead, we'll be discussing some insights from our current series "The Big Seven".

May God stretch, encourage and equip us as we discuss these questions related to how we view God, ourselves and our world.

Getting Started:

For our first week, let's spend a little more time than we usually will in the coming weeks to get to know each other a little better.

What is something about you that most in our group might not know yet about you?

What other experiences have you had in small groups in the past? What did you like? What did you not like so much?

What helps make a great small group?

What are some benefits that we can look forward to in the next seven weeks as we invest time together?

Solomon's first two attempts to grasp purpose was "study" (pursuit of knowledge) and "fun" (pursuit of immediate pleasure). Speaking of study and fun ... growing up or more recently, what did you or do you enjoy studying and learning about? What do you like to do just for fun? If you won a free trip anywhere in the world, (it could happen) where would you like to go (for fun) and what would you enjoy about it???

Let's look back over the five pursuits that Solomon pursued in his quest lasting fulfillment and read the related verses from Ecclesiastes.

Study: (Ecclesiastes 1:13-14, 17-18)

According to these verses, why was Solomon disappointed with his pursuit of knowledge?

What would you say to someone who says, "As a committed Christian, I think we should only read the Bible."

Fun: (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3, 8)

According to these verses, why was Solomon disappointed with his pursuit of pleasure?

What would you say to someone who says, "Life is short and there is a lot to do for God, so we should not take time off from serving God and seek shallow entertainment."

Did Jesus ever take some 'time off'? (hint: Mark 6:30-31)

What do you think he did for fun either alone or with his disciples?

Work: (Ecclesiastes 2:17-19)

According to these verses, why was Solomon disappointed with his pursuit of career accomplishment?

God encourages us to work hard at whatever responsibilities we are given.

(read Proverbs 22:29, Colossians 3:23-24, Proverbs 21:5)

How can we know when working hard at our careers becomes an unhealthy compulsion or obsession?

Status: (Ecclesiastes 4:14-16)

According to these verses, why was Solomon disappointed with his pursuit of fame and power?

Nowhere in the Bible are we discouraged from not appreciating (even enjoying) the respect, admiration, appreciation etc. from others. But Scripture does encourage us to avoid being a 'people pleaser'.

(read Galatians 1:10, Proverbs 29:25, John 12:42-43)

What are some symptoms that we might be leaning toward pleasing others more than pleasing God?

Money: (Ecclesiastes 5:10-12)

According to these verses, why was Solomon disappointed with his pursuit of wealth?

What would you say to someone who says, a Christ follower should always give most of his money away because it is not right to have more when others are going without?

Related to Solomon's conclusion after pursuing these five pursuits ... read Ecclesiastes 12:12-13.

Why is fearing (honoring, revering) God and obeying (trusting Him more than we even trust ourselves at times) the best purpose in life?

Have you seen fulfillment grow in your life as a result of putting God first in your life?

If you are new to all of this (or not so new) ... what is a good next step to honoring and following God with your life?

Before we wrap up, let's share some prayer requests and pray for each other and the rest of our small groups as we launch into this new series together.