



SERMON SERIES RESOURCE BOOK

# ECCLÉSIASTES

Fear God. Live Right.



WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH (SINGAPORE)

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# FOREWORD

**Dear Wesleyans,**

How are you? You are remembered in my prayers as I pray for God's protection and peace to be with you in this challenging season. Like the wise teacher in the book of Ecclesiastes, we may be grappling with the realities of this uncertain and volatile pandemic world and wondering if everything is meaningless (cf. Eccl 1:2 NIV). We may be anxious, fearful and even resigned to what is to come.

I am praying that our fears may be turned to faith, for there is a living hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:3). For when Christ is at the centre of our lives, it is not meaningless. Instead, there is God-given purpose!

This is why the book of Ecclesiastes offers us such divine wisdom. We are invited to realign to the centrality of God in our lives so that we may truly fear God, obey His commandments and live right for Him (Eccl 12:13-14).

I am delighted to present this Ecclesiastes sermon series resource book as an invitation for you to embrace and apply the truth of God's Word. Through the sermons and the reflection questions, my prayer is that you may return to a reverential worship and fear of the Lord for that is the beginning of true wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). As you fear the Lord and live right with Him, may you be truly and deeply rested in Him.



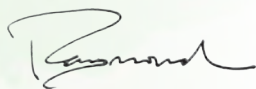
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May God's promise of His sovereign goodness (Eccl 3:11), His gifts for satisfaction and enjoyment from life (Eccl 2:24-26) and His divine and eventual justice (Eccl 12:14) be an anchor for our souls. May you find and encounter His grace and peace to say, "It is well. It is well with my soul."

May you be deeply blessed by this book which is a joint initiative of our Communications Ministry and the Glowing Years Ministry. Let's thank the Lord for their excellent labour of love in putting this together.

Take good care. Stay well and safe.

God's shalom be with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raymond', with a stylized, flowing script.

Yours in Christ,

**Rev Raymond Fong**

Pastor-in-Charge



# Chasing Wind? Introduction to Ecclesiastes

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 1 (NIV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



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**10/11 JULY 2021 |**

TRADITIONAL AND PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICES

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | The author of Ecclesiastes begins with the proposition that everything we pursue in life is chasing the wind. You can't catch the wind. Like vapour, it is without substance, transient and elusive. In an earnest reflection on the purpose and meaning of life, the wise teacher asked; 'What does a man gain from his labour at which he toils under the sun?' (Eccl 1:3) The answer – nothing.

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SERMON NOTES**



### *Meaningless?*

Three reasons why it seems meaningless:

1. The wearying course of Nature that changes nothing (v4-8). Nature shows that while it is constantly in motion, nothing changes.
2. There is nothing new under the sun (v9-11). The more things change, the more they stay the same. There is no remembrance of the past and future.
3. The foolishness revealed by wisdom (v12-18). However wise we think we are, it is all in vain. What is crooked cannot be made straight and what is lacking cannot be counted (v15).

### *Chasing wind?*

Wind cannot be caught, however hard the chase.

Paradoxically, we may only see the point, when we ask, 'What's the point?' It is only when we realise how futile life can be, do we turn to the one who gives true meaning in our lives. The sombre observations in Ecclesiastes invite us to search deeper for something more than just the pursuit of the things in life.

## Chasing Wind?

### Introduction to Ecclesiastes

#### READ | Lessons

#### SERMON NOTES



1. Embrace the reality of *Hebel* (Hebrew word for breath) to be humble before God. Life is brief and fragile. Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow (Ps 144:4). We are here today and gone tomorrow. We do not know what the future holds. Only with true humility can we embrace our fragility and acknowledge our utter need for God.
2. Live a life centred on God to find true meaning in God. When God is at the centre, there is a godly contentment that comes from knowing that he is right there with us. Then there is meaning and purpose in life. We find simple contentment when we recognise that everything is from God.

The repetitive movement of nature is not meaningless. It glorifies God (Ps 104, Job 38-41)! It is also not true that there is nothing new under the sun, because God can make and do something new (Isa 42:9, 2 Cor 5:17)!

The future is as bright as the promises of God (Adoniram Judson). When we allow God's Word to transform us, we will find true purpose and meaning in life. There is a new hope and redemptive possibility.

Let us humble ourselves before the Lord and make God the true centre of our life. Instead of chasing the wind, let's chase a worthy God who holds the wind in His hands (Prov 30:4).

*(Sermon Notes by Denis Koh)*



1. "Meaningless, everything is meaningless!" (NIV, v2). To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Teacher?
2. In verses 8 to 11, the Teacher asserts that nothing is new "under the sun". Share your reflections if this is true for you.
3. What are you pursuing for meaning and satisfaction today? Take time to reflect and share.
4. If life and all we pursue is indeed like "breath", here today and gone tomorrow, how does that impact the way we live? How will that affect our relationship with God?
5. What does it mean for God to be at the centre of your life? Do you truly believe He is the source of true meaning? If so, how will you practically and intentionally pursue Him?
6. Spend time in silence to rest in God. Take time to pray for each other.

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**

## Introduction to Ecclesiastes

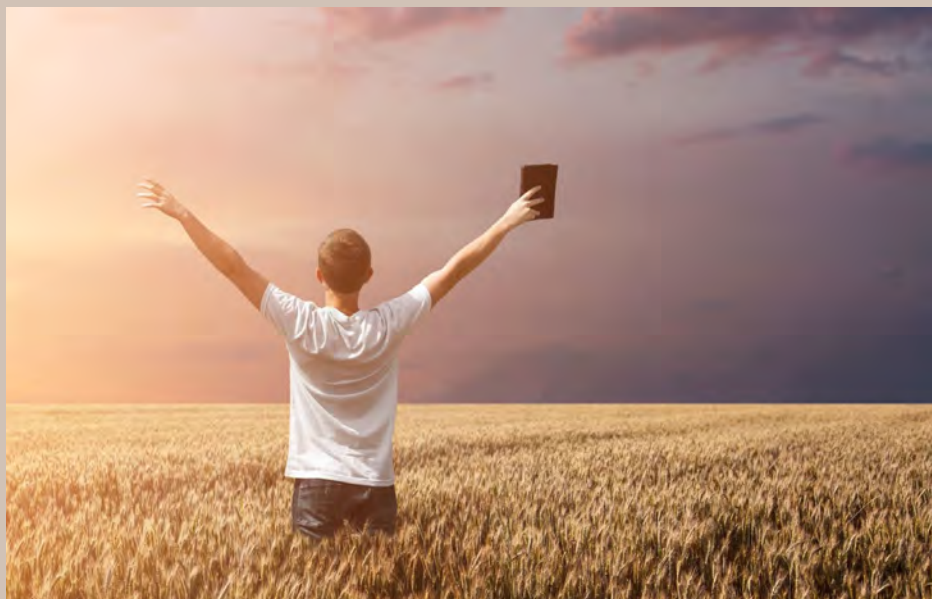
## NOTES



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# Wisdom, Pleasure And Joy

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 2:1-26 (NIV)** ]

Rev Benjamin Lau



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**17/18 JULY 2021 |**

TRADITIONAL AND PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICES

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**Summary |** Ecc 2 reveals the writer's struggles to find true satisfaction in life. He pursued pleasures, wealth, power, prestige and concluded that they are all worthless and meaningless. Such desires are insatiable and do not truly satisfy. Where do we find meaning and significance in our lives?

### **Three observations made by the writer:**

#### **1. The Reflection of Life (v1-11)**

One word that is repeated many times throughout the reflection is "I". The writer looks back on his life without God, a life that is self-directed, self-sufficient and inward-looking. Such a life is bound for misery and disappointment. Selfish pursuits lend themselves to exploit others leading to broken relationships and hearts. We are created to be channels and not reservoirs of God's love. Things of the world never truly satisfy as they are all temporal.

#### **2. The Reality of Life (v12-23)**

The writer noted that the wise and wealthy will die, just like the fool. He hated life with all its meaningless striving and labour, yet he was afraid to die. We may feel empty especially in this pandemic as we struggle with health and mental issues, conflicts, uncertainties, etc. Carefully made plans have to be changed and aborted because of changing conditions. There are moments in our lives when we can relate to v21-23 and everything appears pessimistic at this point.

#### **3. The Renewed Perspective of Life (v24-26)**

Everything changes when we accept what life should be – be grateful to God, enjoy Him and give all glory to Him. We should read Ecc with the New Testament in mind to

### READ | SERMON NOTES



see the complete picture. The apostle Paul had everything but realised that all is rubbish compared to God (Phi 3:8). He had much joy when he pursued Jesus and remained in Him (Jn 15:9-11). Joy is not an emotion but sustains and strengthens us in tough times as we remain in Christ and live as true disciples of Jesus. Happiness comes from circumstances but joy comes from Christ. Christian ministry that is dependent on human effort and not centred on God is also meaningless. Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain (Ps 127:1). God created us to love Him, serve Him and fellowship with Him. Apart from God, life will be meaningless.

Some suggestions on how to lead meaningful lives:

- **Cultivate a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving** (Col 3:15-17). Be grateful and give thanks for the little things in life, even in difficult times.
- **Work for the Lord** (Col 3:23-24). Include Jesus in all work, pleasure and interaction; do everything to please and glorify God.
- **Delight in the Lord and enjoy His presence** (Ps 37:4, 16:11). When we delight in God, He aligns our desires to His and we will find in His presence fullness of joy, even though there will be challenges.

What would truly satisfy us? Do we strive for wisdom, pleasure or happiness through human effort or find fulfilment in God? There is only one way – fix our eyes on Jesus, give Him priority in life and abide in Him.

*(Sermon Notes by Woo Choi Yin)*

1. What is your key take away from today's message?
2. How are you feeling towards your work and life today?  
Are you finding meaning in what you do?
3. Share a challenging period of your life, and how did you overcome it?
4. How can we have renewed perspective of life? What are practical steps you can take to include Jesus Christ in your work and life daily?

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**



## NOTES





## NOTES





## In His Time

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 3:1-15 (NIV)** ]

Rev David Ho



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**25 JULY 2021** |  
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**Summary** | Being mere mortals who are time-bound, we have no control over the ever-changing seasons of life. As such, there is a sense of tyranny in our experience of time [The Tyranny of Time]. Despite the messiness of life in time, the Teacher discerns that there is a Sovereign God who is weaving the different strands of life, both good and bad, into a beautiful tapestry [The Tapestry of Time]. The right posture to take, amidst our fragility and the uncertainties of time, is to receive God's good gifts with gratitude and to revere God, who is the grand weaver of time [The *Telos* (Purpose) of Time].

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**Tyranny of Time** (vs. 1-10) – There is futility in human striving. The opening poem portrays a tapestry of human experience. It shows in 14 pairs of opposites that indeed there is a time for everything. In summarising life's experiences like a clock that is independent of our wishes, the Preacher is not making a statement on ethics or morality. We are not given licence to kill, hate or start a war. Rather, the intent is to show that the seasons of life are beyond our control. There will be times of pain and sorrow. As such, there is a sense of being entrapped or imprisoned in our experience of time on this side of eternity. Those who continue a relentless pursuit for self-gain or strive for control will find it futile.

**Tapestry of Time** (vs. 11, 15) – He makes everything beautiful in His time. Only when God is put into the equation of life do we realise that nothing is random or meaningless. God has sovereignly woven our tapestry of life, though events may not necessarily be pleasant or good. God sees from the perspective of eternity while we are bound within time and space. God has set eternity in the human heart. Unlike the rest of creation, humans recognise a Divine Weaver. Arising from that sense of divine destiny, believers in times past and present have given their lives to share the Good News, serve the needy and

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seek justice. However, we do not have the full blueprint of our times. There are messy and painful issues that only God can see as a complete picture from the lenses of eternity. Corrie Ten Boom's poem describes life as a cross-stitch. On one side are the ugly knots and hanging threads. On the other side, there is beautiful embroidery. We only see one side at the moment, but God knows what He is weaving. Our response is to cling on to Him in trust and faith, as we wait for Him to reveal the beautiful side in His time.

**Telos (purpose)** of Time (vs. 12-14) – live rightly in time by receiving His gifts gratefully and through reverence. As we recognise the fragility of life, allow God to apprentice us to:

1. Receive His gifts. Many look for something more in life, in order to be happy or satisfied. We are to live in the present without hankering for the past or pining for the future. Receive each day as a gift from God. In a recent America's Got Talent episode, Jane (her stage name is Nightbirde) shared about her poor prognosis as her cancer recurred. She shared of her relationship with God and that "You can't wait until life isn't hard anymore before you decide to be happy." Jane has received satisfaction and peace in the Giver of life. She could sing in spite of her ill health and disappointments. Let us not strive but receive each day with gratitude.

2. Revere God. As we recall the tyranny and tapestry of time, we realise our helplessness and our need to depend on God. Then we stand in awe of Him and worship Him. Joni Eareckson Tada has lived with paralysis from the neck down since she was a teen. She shares that "these hardships are God's way of helping me to get my mind on the hereafter... the true reality." She discovered the truth in Isaiah 40:31 where hope in God renewed her strength daily.

Set God as the Master of our lives, for He gives contentment and hope amidst uncertain times. Trust in our Sovereign God who laid aside His sovereignty to enter into our tapestry of life to die for us. "At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom.5:6). God is always on time!

*(Sermon Notes by Angela Goh)*

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### **PONDER | REFLECTION QUESTIONS**



- 1a. Read verses 1-8. What observations can you make about the poem? What do you think the Teacher is trying to tell us through the poem?
- 1b. What might be the reason(s) for the Teacher's question (that immediately follows the poem): "What do workers gain from their toil?" (3:9)
- 2a. How do you understand the phrase, "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (3:11a)?
- 2b. The Teacher discerns that, although God has "set eternity" in our hearts, "yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (3:11b). What does it mean to have "eternity" set in our hearts? What does verse 11 tell us about how God has created us?
- 3a. What is the Teacher encouraging us to think, do, and feel in 3:12-13 (considering the preceding verses)?
- 3b. While we can find some satisfaction in the simple pleasures that God allows in our present lives, our deepest satisfaction is found in God. How do we do that?

- 4a. In 3:14a, the Teacher expresses the enduring nature of God's work. What does this verse tell us about the acts of God?
- 4b. In 3:14b, the Teacher also says, "God does it so that people will fear him." What does "fear of God" mean and how is it intended to affect the way we view life?
- 5a. Take time to reflect on the implications of Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 for your own life today. Consider and share what might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in his gracious promises.
- 5b. What is a specific situation in your life right now in which you need to trust God in the face of fear or uncertainty? Pray for one another after sharing.

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**



## In His Time

## NOTES





## NOTES





## A Time For Everything

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 3:1-15 (NIV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



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**24/25 JULY 2021 |**  
**PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE**

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**Summary |** There is a time and season for everything and we can respond to life by trusting God for the uncontrollable, acting in faith for the intentional and preparing for eternity in the present.

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### *Characteristics of Time*

Ecclesiastes 3 presents human experience as a tapestry of time in pairs of opposing actions. These actions have 3 characteristics: 1) They have a Literal and Metaphorical meaning; 2) They demonstrate Undesirable yet Appropriate qualities, i.e. every activity has its place in the grand scheme of things; and 3) They are also Uncontrollable yet Intentional, e.g. we often have little control over situations but at other times we have to make intentional choices. How do we respond to the different seasons of life? There are three golden lessons we can learn (T.A.P).

1. **T**rust Him for the Uncontrollable because God has made everything beautiful for its own time, (v.11a) i.e. everything accomplishes a purpose in its own time. We may feel helpless and frustrated when things beyond our control happen, e.g. the explosion of Covid-19 cases, the shocking incident of violence at a school, and we ask if any good can come of these seemingly ugly things. But God says "Trust me." He is in control, and in its right time, things will be made beautiful because His purposes will be accomplished.

## A Time For Everything

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2. **Act in Faith** for the Intentional choices we have to make. We need to know when the right time for the right choice is. To do this, we need to seek His Countenance (presence) and His Counsel (wisdom). Only when we are in His presence and receive counsel from Him, will we know His purposes and can act in faith.
3. **Prepare for Eternity** in the Present because God has placed eternity in the hearts of men (v.11b). We want to know the eternal big picture even though we can't fully grasp the ways of God. We know one day there will be a time for eternity, and we can start to prepare for it right now by - a) Resting in the portion of life from God (v 12-13), i.e. being content with what He's given us; and b) Fearing (revering) God and doing good (v 13, 14), i.e. putting God at the centre of our lives and acting justly by helping the least, the last and the lost.

#### *Our Prayer*

Heavenly Father, we know You hold time in your hands and every season belongs to you. Help us to fully trust in You especially for things which are beyond our control. We know that in Your own time, You can transform the ugly to the beautiful, restoring and bringing all good works to completion.

*(Sermon Notes by Desley Khew)*

1. There is a time and season for everything. Take a few moments to reflect on Eccl 3:1-8. Pick one set of opposites (e.g. v7b silence vs speaking) and share how that has been applicable for you.
2. Verse 11a declares "He (God) has made all things beautiful in His time." How have you experienced this truth in your life? How does this verse give you hope when unexpected and unpleasant things happen in life?
3. If there is a time for everything, how does that affect the way we make our daily choices?
4. If our lives and the ability to enjoy our work, leisure and find satisfaction is a gift from God, how does that cause us to live a God-centred life with the fear of the Lord?
5. Take time to pray for each other to surrender the past, and trust in the sovereign goodness of God for the future.

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**



## A Time For Everything

## NOTES



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# Better Than Wealth, Prosperity & Fame

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

## Better Than Wealth, Prosperity & Fame

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 4:1-16 (NIV)** ]

Rev Adrian Ng



[LISTEN | SERMON VIDEO](#)



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**01 AUGUST 2021** |  
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**Summary** | Sufficiency, friendships and wisdom are better than wealth and fame. The Teacher weaves between wisdom and the realities of life with the goal to help us understand that a life defined by earthly wisdom, pursuits, materialism and wealth is futile, for worldly goods are never good enough. Human desire to place all hope in achievement through work is often met with dashed dreams and disappointment, as we are learning in these Covid times.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 laments the despair of uncomforted oppression, and preferring nonexistence over existence. Like animals, they slave and they die (Ecc 3:18-20).

Therefore, don't put all your hopes in work.

1. Better less but adequate than none or much, for much is never enough. Verses 4-6 advise working to provide sufficient against idleness or overwork. Sadly, Singapore has been polled to be among the most overworked and unhappiest workforce globally.
2. Better to invest in relationships than to be rich and lonely (vv7-8). Without family or friends, for whom does a lone person toil?

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## Better Than Wealth, Prosperity & Fame

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3. Better to be in a community than being solo; solo Christianity does not exist (vv 9-12). Two are better than one, to provide support and to counter isolation and loneliness. A threefold cord is not quickly broken (v12).
4. Better meekness than working for fame and recognition (vv13-16). Better to be born poor and wise than to end up old and foolish.

The good things in life are not rated by price or scarcity; rather, loving God and one another is highly valued in the kingdom stratum, above seeking satisfaction in earthly fame and success. People strive to outdo one another as individuals, generations, and nations. Matthew 6:19-21 reminds us that treasures on earth can be destroyed and stolen but treasures stored in heaven are both indestructible and heart-binding.

Heavenly Father, help us to humble ourselves, recognise how lost we are, learn to discern heavenly treasures, and turn our hearts back to You, to bring pleasure to You.

*(Sermon Notes by Kwun Pillai)*

1. Describe a time where you found yourself sincerely working hard for something, but came up to nothing. What did it make you realise?
2. How do you relate to Ecc 4:6? Would you agree that it's better to settle for slightly less or push yourself to achieve more?
3. If you were to choose between wealth and family, which will you prioritise? Looking back in life – how would people around you describe your choices? (Ecc 4:8)
4. Do you think spiritual community and relationships are important? Why? Will you be such a person to someone? (Ecc 4:9-12)
5. Is fame and legacy important to you? What would you like to be remembered as? (Ecc 4:13-16)
6. What is better than Work, Wealth, Prosperity & Fame? (According to the sermon & text)

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QUESTIONS**



## Better Than Wealth, Prosperity & Fame

## NOTES



NOTES



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## Oppression, Vanity & Community

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 4:1-12 (NIV)** ]

Rev Gladwin Lee



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**01 AUGUST 2021 |**

**PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE**

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**Summary** | In Ecclesiastes 4:1-8, the Teacher observes a miserable community comprising of oppressors and oppressed victims, successful workaholics and slackers alike, who have no comforter (v1), for whom nothing is worthwhile (v8) so that it seems better if they were not born. His reflection reveals a wretched community of people without Sabbath-Rest – depressed because their pointless striving gives neither true satisfaction nor comfort.

*What causes such misery?*

1. **When power is misused.** Power can either be used for good or bad. When power is misused, power becomes oppressive. Through poor management, wicked injustice and corruption, power that fails to steward responsibly for the people in its care, results in a frustrated population that suffers from lack of necessary essentials. To the extent that words and actions are used wisely and responsibly, individuals too have power to affect the livelihood and wellbeing of their neighbours.

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2. **When a prevailing work culture is self-centred.** Work pursued for self-gain never truly satisfies even if they are challenging and well-paying. Self-inflicted toil, unlike pleasurable hard dribbling in a soccer match that ends exactly 90 min after it starts, is costly to the ambition-hungry who unrelentingly plan and strive endlessly until forced retirement or when the body fails. Though it may seem like worldly success to the onlooker, such lonesome toiling is ultimately “chasing after the wind” for the one with whom there is no one to enjoy wealth with. (v4,6,8) Like the self-inflicted toiler, a self-slacker also suffers loss when the lazy folding of his hands, despite the call to meaningful work, leads him to ruin (v5).

*What’s the solution to miserable meaninglessness?*

Seeing how every misery-afflicted person described here is without a **friend**, we can infer from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 that our God-given church **community** is actually an important resource for REST, REFLECT AND RENEW - necessary Sabbath-Rest ingredients for purposeful living. Oftentimes we regard community as behind-the-scene (**BTS**). A Wesley small group is not an ordinary club but a place of opportunity for us as a church to live up to God’s ideals to care well for each other, and look to God in our suffering. In our highly competitive society, what potential does the church have in the community?



*Qualities God Wants His Church to Grow*

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1. **Bring the Best Out of Each Other** (v9) – In a community that WORKS WITH YOU, friendship bonds develop to grow dividends as members believe in each other and serve the LORD God as their greatest purpose. Progress is multiplied when members work in tandem with their individual gifts and talents. It is amplified when they purposefully give their best to God their Master. Let us learn to see each other as Jesus graciously does -- ordinary disciples building His church to overcome injustice and promote social holiness. Believe the best in each other to do better, speak honestly, lovingly urge one another to pull our weight and succeed, God's way.
2. **Treasured Friendship** (v10-11) – Like nomads warming each other to survive cold desert nights, a community that WALKS WITH YOU in your struggles can together uplift and listen, offer one another emotional support and comfort against the coldness of this world. For example, parents who bond and rally together to pray for their children's safety, mental health, and exam preparations, hold each other accountable and offer life-giving friendships.
3. **Sacrificial protection** (v 12) – A community that STANDS BESIDE YOU is like a chord of three strands, not easily broken. They can together speak up for the oppressed at work or in school, pray against social injustice, foster love, or speak the truth in toxic conversations. Jesus demonstrated John 15:13 for His church as a community, when on the cross He laid down His life for His friends.

## Oppression, Vanity & Community

### READ | SERMON NOTES



Jesus commands His disciples, "Love each other as I have loved you." There is no greater purpose in life than being in community to selflessly care for one another.

Who do you have in your life who is lifting you up? Who helps you grow and make your dreams a reality? Who makes you a better disciple of the LORD Jesus? We need not be left outside in the cold, nor fear anymore the likelihood of straying away when walking alone. By joining a small group at [smallgroup@wesleymc.org](mailto:smallgroup@wesleymc.org) we will intentionally connect with someone in a church family, encourage and be encouraged to be a BTS buddy that sticks and trains together to overcome life's giants. There are still two-third of our Wesley members who are not yet in a small group, and hence need to be "strangely warmed" in our small groups. As God's chosen community, let's offer genuine friendship to one another, live purposefully as God's people who *bring the best out of each other, offer treasured friendship, and protect sacrificially.*

*(Sermon Notes by Marjorie Tan)*

1. Recall scriptures and sayings that have guided you personally on how power can/should be stewarded.
2. Does oppression still exist today? Share examples of modern-day oppression, if any.
3. Recall scriptures and sayings that have guided you personally about work.
4. According to the sermon, how does a good community offer us Sabbath-Rest?
5. What are 1 or 2 practical steps that you may take to be the kind of person mentioned in Eccl 4:9-12?

**PONDER |  
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## Oppression, Vanity & Community

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## The Fear Of The Lord

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7 (NIV)** ]

Rev Lilian Ang



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**08 AUGUST 2021 |**  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | Taking a different perspective from earlier chapters, the Teacher encourages us to experience God's presence to find true meaning and satisfaction in life. The passage appears to be a digression, but it alerts us to the meaning of the text – which is the imperative to fear God. This is the key attitude to inculcate in us.

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Given the vanity of life, the Teacher argues it is very sensible to fear God, to have enjoyment in life. Ecclesiastes concludes that fearing the Lord and keeping His commandments is the duty for all mankind. (Ecc 12:13) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10).

In the Old Testament, the fear of the Lord occurs in three distinct ways: (1) Religious piety and faith in God. It was a religious system of worship. (2) Personal piety and the act of worshipping and obeying God. (3) Identifier of a religious person, as a worshipper of God.

*How do we cultivate the fear of the Lord?*

**Walk Carefully (v1)** – God is the focus of worship. When we worship, we guard our steps, listen with reverence, pay attention to our demeanour, preparedness and readiness to obey. God cannot be approached casually. We are to grow in the fear of the Lord. We are to listen to God and rest in His presence, instead of merely wanting to be seen as offering sacrifices as part of a religious activity. God wants us to hear Him and respond. It is essential to prepare our hearts to respond to his Word. (Gen 22; Deut 10: 12-13, Acts 9:31, 10:1-2)

## The Fear Of The Lord

### READ | SERMON NOTES



**Talk Sparingly (v2-3)** – Talk less and listen more, especially in our prayer lives. When we fear God, we are aware of God's presence. We are cautious and will pause to listen. Let us not utter anything hastily before God, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. (Matt 12:34) The words reveal the condition of our hearts. We are ultimately to account for what we say before God. (Matt 12: 35-37)

**Vow Reverently (v4-7)** – It is a matter of integrity to fulfil the vows made to God. It is better not to make a vow that we cannot keep. Failing to keep a solemn vow is a sign of insincerity. We are to take God and our actions seriously.

In Ecclesiastes, there is a tension between two competing world views. If there is no God, life has no value and it does not matter how we live. But if God exists, life has a purpose and meaning. We had better fear God and give priority to the worship of God. "The fear of God is the fear of a life without God". (John Piper)

Does the fear of the Lord shape the way we live? Fearing God means to revere, honour, exalt, esteem, worship and obey God as Creator and Judge. It will cause us to draw near and listen and not be rash with our mouth. There are no lame excuses for failing to keep our promises. When we are convinced of who God is, we stand in awe of him.

*(Sermon Notes by Denis Koh)*



**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
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1. What is your understanding of the fear of the Lord?
2. How is the fear of the Lord evidenced in your life personally?
3. Reflect on these 2 quotes:
  - The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25 - NKJV).
  - "We fear man so much, because we fear God so little." (William Gurnall, author of The Christian in Complete Armour)

What areas in your life (marriage, parenting, job, etc) have been hindered because you have feared man over God? How can you eliminate your fear of man and increase your fear of the Lord?

4. What are some areas in your life (thought-life, relationships, speech, job, ministry, attitudes, etc) that are lacking in the fear of the Lord?
5. What changes do you need to make to walk in the fear of the Lord? List a few practical steps you can take to make the changes.

## The Fear Of The Lord

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## The Fear Of The Lord

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7 (NIV)** ]

Rev Benjamin Lau



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**07/08 AUGUST 2021 |**  
PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | To walk in the fear of the Lord, we need to guard our steps by checking our hearts, draw near to Him to listen intentionally to Him, serve with the right motives, and keep our vows.

**READ |  
SERMON NOTES**



**What does it mean to fear the Lord?** It is when we are in such awe and reverence that we submit ourselves fully to God. There are four ways in which we can do this.

**1. By Guarding our Steps (v.1a)**

Guarding our steps means to take care and pay close attention to the condition of our hearts and our walk with God. Ask ourselves honestly – are we spiritually dry? Are we walking right with God? Are we spending sufficient time communing with our Lord?

**2. By Listening to Him (v.1b)**

The act of intentionally listening to God will help us to take a step back and pause and surrender ourselves to Him – to hear what He wants to say to us and not just what we want to hear. To discern the voice of God, we must regularly read His word. We have a God who is a living God and wants to speak to us – we just need to open our hearts.

### READ | SERMON NOTES



#### 3. Serving Him with the Right Motives (v.1c)

When we serve God, it should be for His glory, not ours. It is natural to want the recognition of people, but this is not the right motive for serving. We can go through the motion of doing good works outwardly without obeying Him. To God, it is better to obey than to sacrifice. If we fear the Lord, we will be serious with our intentions and how we live our lives – we will come to Him with openness and humility.

#### 4. By Keeping our Vows (v.2-6)

Have we kept our marriage vows, our church membership vows, or other personal promises to God? Keeping our vows is important in the eyes of God. If we truly fear the Lord, we do not make rash or empty vows and we will have the courage to fulfil and honour them. But if we don't think we can fulfil it, then we should not make them.

**Choose to fear God.** Even when we fail to keep our promises, God does. He is an ever-faithful God and it is because of this that we can and should worship Him with awe and reverence. At the end of the day, we serve who we fear. "If you fear God you serve Him. If you fear man you serve man. You must choose." (John Bevere). Will you choose to walk in a holy and reverent fear of the Lord?

*(Sermon Notes by Desley Khew)*

1. What does the fear of the Lord means to you?
2. If you were to do a spiritual check up on your life today, how would you describe your current relationship with the Lord?
3. When was the last time you listened to God? Share a time in your life when you heard God speak to you.
4. Share a time where you made a vow or promise to God? And have you kept to your vows?

**PONDER |  
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## The Fear Of The Lord

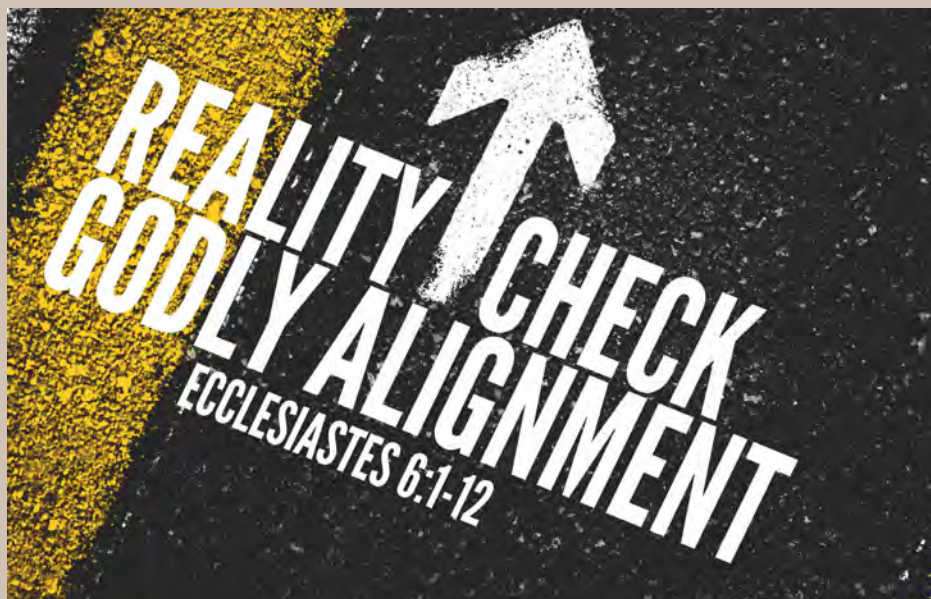
## NOTES





## NOTES





## Reality Check, Godly Alignment

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 6:1-12 (NIV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



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**15 AUGUST 2021** |  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](http://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary |**

**Three spiritual reality checks from Ecclesiastes 6:**

1. *The inability to enjoy the good life unless God allows (v1-6).*

The 5 C's which were perceived by many to be the good life have been redefined as cash, career, convenience, cultural proficiency and credibility. In ancient times, abundance of possessions, long life and many children were indicators of a good life. The reality is we cannot enjoy unless God allows us, and strangers may be the ones enjoying our blessings. Charles Swindoll identifies some of these strangers as:

- enemies that take the spoils of war.
- unexpected events beyond our control (e.g. health crises, natural disasters).
- time commitments that do not permit us to enjoy life.
- family conflicts that destroy all the hard work.

A good life means nothing if God does not give us the privilege to enjoy it.

2. *Futility of our labour because our appetites cannot be satisfied (v7-9).*

The Hebrew word for appetite is "nephesh" which means soul. There is an emptiness of the soul which cannot be filled by these appetites. Isaiah 55:2 – why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?

3. *The incapacity of man to change his nature or determine his destiny (v10-12).*

God named the first man Adam which came from "adamah" which means earth in Hebrew. The naming of man by God shows God's sovereignty over him. The fact that man will return to the earth as dust symbolises man's weakness before God and we cannot contend with God who is the stronger one (v10). Despite our best efforts we cannot know or control what will happen in the future, just like this pandemic. There is no certainty of good health nor true satisfaction despite all our striving.

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### These reality checks invite us to the following three godly alignments:

1. *Hold lightly to the earthly, be rich in the heavenly.*  
Do not be like the rich fool (Lk 12:21) but be rich toward God as heavenly treasures are eternal and surpass all the 5 C's. Jim Elliot – "he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." To build up heavenly treasures:
  - love God and others,
  - choose to give time and priority to grow right and godly relationships.
2. *Practise godly contentment.*  
Only God grants contentment. Contentment is to be practised. We start by being rested in God and staying much in the presence of God who can deliver us from discontentment and the sin of complaining. Resting in Jesus leads to a transformation of lifestyle - buy less, borrow less, give more, simplify, be more thankful, trust God more.
3. *Live today well. Surrender tomorrow better.*  
We do not know what is good but God knows. Micah 6:8 – "He has shown us what is good. And what does God require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly."

The urgency to live well (Eph 5:15-16) is great as we live in perilous times. God's grace empowers us to bless others and seek His kingdom.

We need to search our hearts every day and let the Spirit reveal to us areas where we need to change course. What are you pursuing in life? What does the good life mean to you? May we live well and be found faithful by our truly faithful and good God.

*(Sermon notes by Woo Choi Yin)*

1. Ecclesiastes 6 presents three reality checks. The first is the inability to enjoy the good life unless God allows it. The second is the futility of our toil because of our insatiable appetite. The third is the inability of man to change our nature and destiny. Which of these three reality checks impact you deeply? Why? Share your reflections.
2. Let's perform a heart check. What is your treasure? For where your treasure is, there your heart will be (Matt 6:21). What can you do to be rich in God and build heavenly treasure? Share practical ways.
3. How contented are you? Are you pursuing godly contentment or are you still striving for more? Are there practical ways which you can practise godly contentment? How can you declutter and simplify your life in order to be a blessing to others?
4. Reflect on Micah 6:8. How does that guide the way you live your life well daily? What's preventing you from living each day well? Share your struggles. Pray for each other.

**PONDER |  
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## Reality Check, Godly Alignment

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## Contentment In An Age Of Discontent

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 6:1-12 (NIV)** ]

Rev David Ho



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**14/15 AUGUST 2021** |  
PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](http://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)



**Summary |** Contentment in this age has become a rare commodity. Singapore, with one of the highest GDP per capita in the world, high life expectancy, best airport, etc., is placed 32nd on the Happiness Index. Despite our material progress, we are living in an age of discontent.

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**1. The Discontent (v1-6)**

A common predicament amongst humanity is man's inability to enjoy his prosperity and his appetite is never satisfied, which is the evil of chronic discontent. People have everything, the mark of success in the ancient world, yet they are unable to enjoy them. A biblical patriarch has 100 children and a long life, yet he did not have a proper burial because his children deserted him and were busy fighting for his inheritance. These realities are observed in our world today. Siblings fighting in court over their parent's inheritance or parents cheated by their own children. How are we to have contentment when our children are the ones who rob us? The marks of success that we strive for not only do not guarantee contentment, they may be the cause of anguish and heartbreak. The Teacher provokes us to reflect deeper on what the

### READ | SERMON NOTES



important things in life are. Are we really living for what matters? The goal of advertisements is to fill our hearts with a passion for possession. We buy things we do not want or impress people who do not care for us. That is the state of affairs in a society with so many idols.

#### 2. **The Depravity** (v7-8)

The appetite in our soul and in our hearts are never satisfied. The unrelenting quest for cheap thrills is reflected by the decadent and deviant behaviour of the rich and powerful we see in the news so often. Our heart's problem is not because we do not have enough or do not get what we want. The problem is the fallen and depraved desires of the human heart. The Teacher warns against seeking wrong solutions. Do not take things, even good things, (like our careers, families, love, etc.) and make them into ultimate things, thinking they will grant contentment. The addiction that we see (money, sex, power, etc.) hijacks our lives and drives us down the cliff and shipwrecks our faith. We have seen the best and the brightest, the young and the old, in the news falling because of their insatiable appetites. The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart and that needs to be addressed.

#### 3. **The Divine** (v9-12)

Practical advice from The Teacher: Enjoy the good gifts before you however small or humble they may seem. Be content with simple joy, than look elsewhere and being obsessed with getting more. In v10, there is an allusion to the "Adam" in Genesis, pointing to the origin of discontent. The 1st sin was not violence, lust, murder, etc., – it was discontent. Adam and Eve had the best of the best, but

they were not contented. They thought they knew what would satisfy themselves better than the God who created them. That is the delusion from the pits of Hell! The Teacher highlights the futility of chasing after our desires when we do not have control over our fate. The journey towards Christian contentment begins with surrender, dependency, humility before our great God. This surrender is not found in our own strength, but in Christ because "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:12-13). Christ is the divine solution to our discontent, and it is only through Him that we can learn to be contented in every situation. Jesus took on the sins of the whole world when He is totally innocent. He is the only one who is entitled to be discontented! Yet, instead of grumbling, he extended grace. Jesus went to the Cross so that we can be free from the curse of discontent i.e. the Cross makes it possible for fallen humanity to enter into a relationship with the Triune God.

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Let us stop chasing rainbows and placing our hopes on wrong solutions that will never grant us contentment. In this Year of Sabbath Rest, ask ourselves if there is any addiction, any pursuit that has become essential that we will feel life is meaningless without it. Is there anything that absorbs our heart and imagination more than God himself? Let us come to the foot of the cross and pray, "Oh Lord, crush the impurity in my heart, crush the insatiable desires and yearnings. I want to be clean with a pure heart that I may drink from the streams of living water. Only in Christ can we find contentment in a discontented age. Amen."

*(Sermon Notes by Honey Vreugdewater)*

### PONDER | REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. What are the marks of success in Hebrew society mentioned in Ecclesiastes 6? What are some marks of success in today's world? How much do you desire or strive after them?
2. Is the teacher really against the marks of success in Ecclesiastes 6? What might he be trying to tell us about their ability to give us contentment?
3. Ecclesiastes 6:7 states that "Everyone's toil is for their mouth, yet their appetite is never satisfied." Why does our unceasing labour and striving to acquire more and/or for control not satisfy our souls?
- 4.1 Read and discuss the follow quotation:  
"An idol is anything more important to you than God. Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Anything you seek to give you what only God can give. Anything that is so central and essential to your life, that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living." (Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*)
- 4.2 What are some possible 'idols' that you might have discerned in your life? What might the Lord be saying to you?

- 5.1 List the ways Ecclesiastes 6 teach of the sovereignty of God (6:10-12).
- 5.2. Read and discuss the following quote on 'contentment' by Arthur W. Pink.  
*Contentment, then, is the product of a heart resting in God. It is the soul's enjoyment of that peace that passes all understanding. It is the outcome of my will being brought into subjection to the Divine will. It is the blessed assurance that God does all things well, and is, even now, making all things work together for my ultimate good.*
6. What are some spiritual practices that you may adopt and/or steps that you can take to grow deeper in contentment in Christ?
7. Discuss how you may support and encourage one another as a small group in your journey towards deeper contentment in Christ.

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## Contentment In An Age Of Discontent

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## A Better Choice

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 7:1-12 (NIV)** ]

Rev Michael Tan



**LISTEN | SERMON VIDEO**



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**22 AUGUST 2021 |**  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)



**Summary |** In this passage in Ecclesiastes, the phrase “is better than” appears numerous times (vs. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 10). This age-old way of teaching lays out the better choice of two alternatives, in a way that captures one’s attention. This same approach is used 21 times in Proverbs. Jesus, our Master Teacher, also used such comparisons (e.g. Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:6,8,9; 19:10; 26:24; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2; John 11:50, etc.). Many of the New Testament writers similarly used this style of teaching.

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Verse 1 compares a good name with a fine perfume. A God-centred person who is affirmed and approved by God is far better than a life centred on man-made things, fleeting in significance and appreciated by some only. “The day of death better than the day of birth” may sound strange as one normally associates birth with joy while death is filled with sorrow. Two common idioms used in Chinese funerals are: 名垂青史 and 千古流芳. Translated “a good name goes down in history” and “a thousand ages of flowing fragrance”, they hint at what is good about death. For believers, death heralds the end of earthly constraints. We have completed our God-given tasks and it is a day of thanksgiving as we are ushered into an endless bliss with God. Is this not better than starting life-long hardship, facing uncertainty and striving for transient gains?

Verse 2 teaches us that through mourning, sorrow and tears, our hearts are softened and awakened to the reality of God. On the other hand, wining and dining numbs our mind to what really matters in life. This is re-emphasised in verses 3 and 4. Frustration and sorrow force us to recognise the brokenness of this life. It is a reality check on our finiteness. The Sermon on the Mount teaches a similar lesson: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matt. 5:4). In our pain, we turn to God, from whom we receive comfort. Laughter refers to those who avoid the realities of life. Living in denial of the world’s brokenness and our need for God, any laughter will be short-lived.

## A Better Choice

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Verse 5 and 6 compares the rebuke of a wise person with the song of fools. The wise carry messages of care and concern from God. May we be humble in accepting wise rebuke, for “blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matt.5:5). Conversely, the laughter and song of fools refer to the flattery, falsehood and fallacy commonly seen in the world.

Verse 7 warns of dangers of bribery and extortion. We are blessed in Singapore that these dangers are not rampant. However, if tempted, pray for courage to stand firm to make the right choice.

Verse 8 compares the end of a matter with its beginning. Through faith in God, we know the outcome lies with Him. Even through hopeless situations, we know God is refining us so that the final product will be as precious as fine gold. Patience is needed to persevere in our trust in God. In contrast, there is human pride and self-confidence when we take matters into our own hands. The result will be disappointment and dire consequences.

Verse 10 does not contain a comparison. We are simply told not to long for the good old days. Do not linger on regrets and lost opportunities. The reasons are given in verses 11 and 12. Though money is useful and needed in this life, there is a danger that love of money will lead us astray. On the other hand, wisdom recognises that God works in all situations. Look forward and not backwards.

Recognise that God is in control of our broken world. Focus on Him daily and make a better choice to trust Him and live a life pleasing to our Creator.

*(Sermon Notes by Angela Goh)*

1. How would those who know you well describe you? What legacy would you hope to leave behind? (v.1)
2. In this our day and age, death is still a taboo and morbid subject, even for some Christians. Do you talk about it with others? Why or why not? (v.1-4)
3. Share a personal experience of your being 'rebuked by a wise person' and the result of it? (v.5)
4. In your work or business, have you ever been 'extorted' by persons in authority demanding from you to bribe them? How did you respond to them? (v.7-9)
5. Share your view of how a 'healthy' review and reflection on past experiences and events can have a positive impact on our future? (v.10)

**PONDER |  
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## A Better Choice

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## For Better Or Worse

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 7 (NIV)** ]

Ps Clement Ong



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**22 AUGUST 2021** |  
PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | Ecclesiastes 7 brings a change in the perspective of the author. He begins to acknowledge the God-given wisdom that helps make sense of life, understand God's hand upon all situations and find contentment in God's providence.

Here are three observations to consider as we wrestle in our faith journey that God is indeed good all the time.

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1. **God uses even the worst circumstances in our lives for our betterment. (v1-14)**

The author considers how seemingly negative situations in life are actually God's means of grace to help us examine the direction of our lives and realign to God's Word and His intent. We need to be aware of our mortality in order to live well in the Lord. For God is sovereign over all, and uses every circumstance for His will and purpose.

2. **No one is better than another, nor should they feel like they are worse off. (v15-17)**

These verses bring a warning against pride and self-righteousness which causes us to depend on self rather than God. Does Satan have an **OCD** stronghold in our lives?

- **Obsession** is thinking only for ourselves all the time.
- **Comparison** feeds pride and fills us with envy.
- **Defensiveness** points out the mistakes of others but does not recognise flaws in ourselves.

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3. **Better a godly companion than a fate worse than death (v25-29)**

We cannot fully understand the position of the author but commentators think that perhaps he personally struggled to find an upright companion for his better half. However even if it's a rare find, we are reminded of the need to seek the Lord for a godly companion in choosing our own life partner.

So how do we respond to the Lord from chapter 7? Let us **PET**.

- **Persevere** through trials, for God can straighten what has been made crooked. In such times, we turn our eyes towards Jesus and experience His grace more acutely. (James 1:12)
- **Experience** growing in faith with another: Pray for your spouse, and be fully part of the church community by seeking godly companions.
- **Trust** in God's heart and sovereignty over every season and circumstance in our lives be it for better or worse. God is indeed good!

*(Sermon Notes by Frances Lim)*



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1. Ecc 7:1 tells us that a good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth.

***What do you want others to write on your tombstone?***

2. Ecc 7:5 - It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise person than to listen to the song of fools.

***When was the last time you were rebuked and how did you respond then?***

3. God uses even the worst circumstances in our lives for our betterment.

***How did God speak to you through the trial? Did it encourage you in your Christian walk?***

4. ***What is one thing you took away from this passage and sermon that has impacted you in discipleship and to make a change in your life?***

***Do share and pray for one another.***

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## Who Is Like The Wise?

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 8:1-17 (NIV)** ]

Rev Chia Chin Nam



**LISTEN | SERMON VIDEO**



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**29 AUGUST 2021 |**  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | Wisdom is God-guided, God-fearing, God-centred and gives true joy in life.

Wisdom is useful and gives strength, yet it has limitations, cannot provide all answers and leaves life incomprehensible.

The solution is to search God's word for His wisdom and yield control over every situation, for God's wisdom is the only one sure thing.

The Preacher shows how to respond wisely to three important areas of life we often struggle with:

- 1. Dealing with people in authority – v2-8.** We can disobey, desert, devise evil, or obey. Verses 2 and 5 point to obedience, wise discernment and appropriate action toward authority whom God in His sovereignty has put over us. In the flurry of confusion over Covid measures, how are we responding to the efforts of our government who has been placed in authority by God?
- 2. Dealing with injustices in the world – v9-13.** When evil is not swiftly punished, wrong behaviour is indirectly encouraged and we quickly adopt a nonchalant attitude and cease to fear God. What should we do? Fear God, be attuned to his presence, so that all will be well with us. Listen to Rev Lilian Ang's sermon on 'Fear of the Lord' (5th sermon in the series).

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## Who Is Like The Wise?

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- 3. Dealing with the mysteries of life; v14-17.** The secret things belong to God, but the things that are revealed belong to us, that we may do the words of the law (Deu 29:29).

In conclusion, the Preacher commended enjoyment even when we fail to make sense of life. A God-fearing, God-centred perspective enables thankful enjoyment of life in the presence of God, yielding refreshment and celebration, even in the midst of toil and trouble. Do not be like the village grouch who wasted 80 years of his life chasing happiness, only to give up at 80, to enjoy life instead, and in so doing, found happiness.

Wisdom says, choose Joy. Enjoy life which itself is a gift from God!.

*(Sermon Notes by Kwun Pillai)*

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### PONDER | REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. **"Wisdom is useful to those who have it when dealing with life's tough questions, but it has its limitations and cannot provide all the answers to them." (The Preacher's conclusion)**
  - a. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the statement above?
  - b. How have you been applying wisdom in your daily living?
  - c. Share an area in your life that you find difficult to apply wisdom. Why?
2. **"Whoever obeys the authority, obey God. He will avoid evil and do what is right at the right time because he wisely recognises that there are many things outside his control including the time of his death" (8:5-8 paraphrased).**

- a. How much of the admonishment above is evident in your life?
- b. How are you responding to the government's directives in managing the Covid-19 pandemic? What changes in attitude, thought and behaviour would you make to align with this admonishment?

**PONDER |  
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QUESTIONS**



**3. In the face of injustices in this broken and sinful world, the Preacher declares, "Even though a person sins a hundred times and still lives a long time, I know that those who fear God will be better off" (8:12).**

- a. How do you think the Preacher make such a remarkable statement of faith despite seeing the prosperity of the wicked?
- b. Would you declare the same? Why?
- c. In what way do you think would be better off for those who fear God?
- d. Why do you think God is not punishing the wicked as quickly as we wish He would?

**4. Life is riddled with mysteries that cannot be understood or explained (8:14-17).**

- a. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. 29:29 ESV)
- i. How does this verse speak to those who "die-die" must know and understand everything under the sun?
- ii. What is God saying to you about the things that He has graciously revealed to you?
- b. Is your quest to understand and explain everything in life hindering you from being joyful?
- c. What would it take for you to choose to enjoy life which itself is a gift from God?

## Who Is Like The Wise?

## NOTES

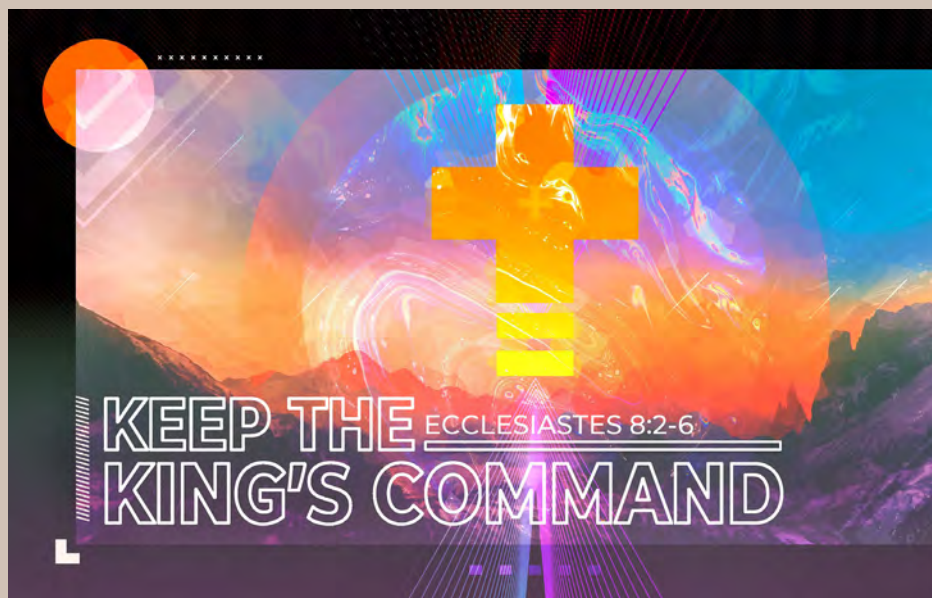




NOTES



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## Keep The King's Command

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 8:2-6 (NIV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



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**29 AUGUST 2021** |  
PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | The LORD Jesus Himself said, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." (Mark 12:17) Therefore we must not disregard, rebel or openly challenge the authority of the day, but wisely "keep the king's command". (Ecclesiastes 8:2 ESV)

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Why do we submit to prevailing authority?

- 1. To express our trust in God as LORD** – Rulers are placed where they are by God from whom all authority originates, whether by His active action or passive permission. Not submitting to governing authorities is punishable rebellion against what God has instituted. Romans 13:1-2
- 2. To avoid unnecessary punishment** – Do not be hasty to leave the king's presence or stand up for a bad cause (v3) but do what is right in every law of the land, not wrong or foolish. There is no fear of punishment when we do right by the law. Romans 13:3-4
- 3. To keep a clear conscience** – Having integrity is being right before God when no one sees. Instead of fearfully hiding from being caught and punished, we experience peace from giving what is due whether taxes, revenue, respect or honour. Romans 13:7
- 4. To surrender to God's divine purposes** – Every earthly authority has its God-given season, subject to God's will. For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter though a person may be weighed down by misery. (Ecclesiastes 8:6) One such illustration is when God drove the Babylonians out and made Cyrus the Persian king His shepherd to rebuild His holy city, Jerusalem. Isaiah 44:28

## Keep The King's Command

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Biblical examples of when we must not obey an authority:

- **When instructed to kill someone** – Midwives refused the Egyptian king's command to kill Hebrew newborn boys. (Exodus 1:15-21)
- **When compelled to engage in false worship** - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down before King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. (Daniel 3)
- **When our Christian practice is disallowed** – Daniel continued his usual practice of kneeling to worship God despite a strictly enforced law that only the king could be worshipped. (Daniel 6)
- **When sharing of the Gospel is banned** – Peter, John and other apostles refused to obey the command by the ruling council to never again speak or teach in the name of Jesus. (Acts 4:17-20, 5:27-29, 40-42)

**"Submit"** (*Hupotasso* in Greek) is to be willingly arranged in order under someone superior. It is not blind or absolute obedience to authority, but submitting to the plans of an orderly God. **"Obey"**, (*Hupokouo* in Greek) on the other hand, is to conform, follow a command, or give in to an authority. In Romans 13, Paul used "hupotasso" and not "hupokouo" when he said, "Everyone must **submit** to the governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God." So, if we have to deliberately not obey laws that are unjust or in conflict with God's commands, we should still submit to the authorities by accepting the legal consequences of our action.

Civil disobedience can only be the last resort after exhausting all other means of redress and reform. It should never be acted on individually but as a faith community, without violence, and with willingness to face any legal consequences.

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**How can we put to practice Ecclesiastes 8:2-6 and supporting scripture?**

1. **Appreciate** – As John Piper says, “Government is a great gift in a world of fallenness, restraining evil and bringing some kind of order.” Let’s not take for granted God’s provision of order, peace and security through good governance, and bless also our civil servants.
2. **Pray** – We are to petition, pray, intercede and give thanks to God for “kings and all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Timothy 2:1-2) Pray they may fear the LORD and be wise in His way.
3. **Engage** the authorities – to protect the least and last so that migrants, the poor, helpless, orphans and widows are not denied justice in a lawsuit, or mistreated and oppressed in any way, but are rescued and delivered from the grasp of evil people. (Exodus 22:21, 23:6, Deuteronomy 27:19, Psalm 82:3-4) Even a simple letter can spark a movement of transformation and care for those in need. Surrendered to God, and engage constructively, humbly, affirmatively, and respectfully.

## Keep The King's Command

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4. **Be responsible** – *Count on Me, Singapore*, to work and pray for the peace and prosperity of our city, for its welfare will determine our welfare. (Jeremiah 29:7) Comply so that as a body of Christ, our cooperation glorifies God!

If we can't submit to earthly authority, which is right and reasonable, what makes us think we can submit to God Himself? Submission is part of our discipleship to Jesus our King of Kings. For when all earthly kingdoms fail and fade, God's perfectly just Kingdom will perpetuate. So, submitting declares our faith in God who is Almighty to reign over our government, even as we seek His grace to do our part for the peace and prosperity of the land. To God be all honour and glory!

*(Sermon Notes by Marjorie Tan)*

1. What does “keeping the King’s command” mean to you? What do you wrestle with concerning submission to the authorities?
2. If authorities are instituted or used by God as His servants to carry out His sovereign purposes, how does that change your perspective and attitude toward them?
3. How can we play our part to assist the authorities in carrying out God’s purposes?
4. In this season of the COVID-19 pandemic, what does submission to the authorities mean? How can we be good witnesses for God through our submission?
5. Reflect on the application points: Appreciate, Pray, Engage, Cooperate. What are some practical things you can do to apply what you have learnt from God’s Word? Take some time to pray for the authorities.

**PONDER |  
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QUESTIONS**



## Keep The King's Command

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## Life Is A Gift, Enjoy It

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 9:1-10 (NIV)** ]

Rev David Ho



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**05 SEPTEMBER 2021** |  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | The tapestry of life comprises the sweet and the sour. When we choose to see the good and not just the bad, to delight in what we have and not despair over what we don't, we can still see a world of beauty and live life joyfully and fully.

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The passage contemplates death. Verses 1-6 emphasise the certainty of death, while verses 11-12 note the unpredictability of life. Meanwhile, as part of the chiastic structure, verses 7-10 focus on enjoying the gift of life fully. It is precisely because death is certain and life is unpredictable, that we must live life to the fullest (v9). The Christian life is more than just merely existing. We are called to fulfill the destiny that God has for us in Christ.

There are seven references to enjoying life in Ecclesiastes. The call is most urgent and elaborate in Chapter 9. There are five imperatives – to go, to eat, to drink, to enjoy and to do.

In grappling with the meaning of life, the Teacher's call to live life to the fullest shows that he is not anti-life. We are to value the gift of life that God has given us. Amidst the depravity of the world, sin has not cancelled out the goodness of God's creation. God is not against us, He is for us, and He is for joy.

**Enjoy God's gifts with thanksgiving. (v7-8)** – We are to go eat with joy and drink with a merry heart and be grateful for what God has provided. In Genesis, God provided the first humans with an abundance of food for their enjoyment. Let us adopt a posture of gratefulness for what the Lord has given us. Instead of being disheartened and disgruntled, the teacher reminds us to be thankful and joyful people.

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**Exalt the gift of marriage and community. (v9)** – Scripture upholds marriage as a God-instituted covenant. Life is short, love your husband/wife and family. Squandering our lives on fleeting pleasures and self-gratification inevitably leads to brokenness in families and lives. The Teacher calls us back to God's framework of joy to be found in marriages and community. In the New Testament, joy is also found in the church which is our new spiritual family.

**Embrace the call to work. (v10)** – We are to wholeheartedly undertake the work entrusted to us by the Lord. God had put Adam to work before the fall. Work exists not because of sin, but because it is integral to who we are as the image-bearers of God. We need a purpose in life, the divine assignments that God has for us. By loving, caring, blessing, offering a listening ear or compassion to others, there is joy to be found. God gives us true joy and peace regardless of our circumstances.

Because of Christ, we need not live a life of futility, but can have peace, joy and restedness. Food, drink, garments we wear, family and friends, work are all good gifts from the Lord. They are but a foretaste of a greater feast that is yet to come.

Let us live our lives with joy, knowing that the Lord is with us as we go forth to light up the world with His joy and glory.

*(Sermon notes by Denis Koh)*

**PONDER |  
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1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how would rate your 'enjoyment' of life (or contentment in life) presently? Share your reasons.
- 2.1 Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-6. What is the 'evil' in verse 3 that the Teacher is referring to? Why do you think the Teacher is so outraged by this 'evil'? Do you agree with him?
- 2.2 What insights about death can you glean from verses 1-6 that might give you greater urgency to cherish the blessings of life today?
- 3.1 List down the 'imperatives' that the Teacher makes to his readers in Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 i.e. Go, Eat, Drink, Let, Enjoy, Do!
- 3.2 Discuss the underlying attitudes and priorities that they encourage. To what extent do you agree that practising them would help you to enjoy life more fully?
4. Consider and discuss how you may apply the imperatives in Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 in your personal context, so that you may grow in your enjoyment of life.
5. Is there anything that is hindering you from experiencing the joy of life more fully? Are the issues more internal or external? What are some steps that you can take so that you may experience more joy and contentment in your heart?
6. Take some time to count your blessings, and to give thanks for what the Lord has blessed you with.

## NOTES



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ECCLESIASTES 9:1-12

# MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE

## Making The Most Of Life

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 9:1-12 (NIV)** ]

Rev Edmund De Souza



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**05 SEPTEMBER 2021 |**  
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**Summary** | Regardless of who we are and how we live, we all share a common destiny - we will all one day die. However, while we are still on earth, the author of Ecclesiastes shares three tips on how we can make the most of life - enjoy life, seize life's opportunities and prepare for life's uncertainties.

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- 1. Life is to be Enjoyed. (v.7-9)** – God has given us life and it is therefore meant to be cherished and celebrated, whether it is to eat, drink or find satisfaction in our work (though not in an indulgent and sinful manner). Life is a gift and blessing which God has given us, and we should take the time to enjoy it with the people we love rather than focus on the darkness around us.
- 2. Life's Opportunities are to be Seized. (v.10)** – While we have life, we must give our best in whatever situation God has placed us in. But more than that, we should make time for God and involve Him in our endeavours so that we can really make our life count for Him.
- 3. Life Can Be Unpredictable. (v.1, 11-12)** – We can make careful plans in life but we are not always in control, and things do not always fall neatly into place. As we make the most of life, we also have to prepare for the uncertainties of life, for example: a) Expect the unexpected; b) Don't wait to repent; c) Save for the future; d) Trust in God's mercies. No matter what comes our way, we know that God will be in control.

## Making The Most Of Life

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**Our Prayer** – Lord, you made this beautiful world for us to enjoy. You want us to live productive lives and shine for you. Though the future is uncertain, we know we can trust you. We give you thanks and praise and want to walk with You all the days of our lives on earth.

*(Sermon notes by Desley Khew)*

1. As Christians we face the tension of seeking to live sacrificially for the Lord, yet enjoying God's blessing at the same time. How do you deal with this tension?
2. God wants us to make the most of the life we have. Are there some things the Lord may want you to attend to?
3. Have you ever expected some good things to happen to you but it turned out badly? How should we respond to these kinds of situations?

**PONDER |  
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## Making The Most Of Life

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## Don't Be A Fool

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 10:1-3; 12-15 (NIV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



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**12 SEPTEMBER 2021 |**  
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**Summary** | Foolish acts can result in fatal consequences.

There are 3 categories of foolishness commonly identified:

1. **"confident ignorance"** – when people engage in risky action without knowledge.
2. **"lack of control"** – obsessive, addictive behaviour like computer games.
3. **"absentmindedness"** – when distracted, lack skills, e.g. adding salt instead of sugar in food.

The wise teacher in Ecc offers some insights apart from the above. In the Bible, a fool is not one with below-average intelligence but one who lacks proper fear of the Lord (Ps 14:1) and therefore goes the wrong way in life.

Three warnings in the text – Don't be a fool:

1. To let a small act of folly destroy everything (v1) – A small act of foolishness can destroy all that is built e.g. in a marriage or career.
2. To choose the wrong way and so make your foolishness obvious (v2,3). In the Bible, the right signifies goodness, favour and protection, while the left signifies what is wrong, inferior and to be rejected (cf Mt 25:31-46). A fool cannot see, he does not know the way to town even though there are well-marked roads (v15).
3. To ruin yourself and others with your words (v12-14). Arrogant, careless, unkind and destructive words will ruin self and others.

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Choose to be wise. Three postures of the wise:

#### 1. **Be wise – To guard the vulnerable moments as we are prone to be foolish when vulnerable.**

We are spiritually vulnerable when

- idle, e.g. King David's act of folly in idleness led to the deaths of Uriah and David's son (2 Sam 11). We should use our time to pursue God and do His assignments.
- complacent. Thinking we are doing well in our walk with God leads to pride, complacency and subsequently folly (1 Cor 10:12).
- emotionally stressed. When stressed, we are prone to indulgences leading to ungodly habits, foolishness and sin.
- physically tired, e.g. Esau, tired after hunting, foolishly sold his birthright for a bowl of stew (Gen 25).

What should we do? Guard these moments

- stay watchful (the evil one is like a prowling lion)
- stay rested (create margins in life in all respects)
- stay pure (don't flirt with sin, flee from it)
- stay accountable (to a spiritual friend, mentor and seek help)



**2. Be wise – To speak graciously and control our tongue.**

Gracious in Hebrew translation means to bring favour to ourselves. May we speak words that sustain and refresh the weary (Is 50:4) and may our conversation be full of grace, seasoned with salt (Col 4:6), i.e. few but effective and healing. Reflect on our conversation at home. Do we express impatience, unkindness, anger, past wrongs and fail to communicate hope? We need to seek God's wisdom to speak less, listen more and deep.

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Some instances when we should hold our tongue:

1. in the heat of anger (Eph 4:26).
2. when you don't have all the facts (Prov 18:13).
3. if there is no love (Eph 4:15). Love qualifies us to speak the truth and we sacrifice our own interest to speak at the right place and time in surrender to God.
4. if you are going to lie (Prov 12:22). Occasional lying leads to habitual lying with eternal consequences (Rev 21:8).
5. if you have to make a promise that you can't keep (Ecc 5:5-6). Better not to promise if you can't keep it.

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#### 3. Be wise – Choose the right way and walk in it (Jer 6:16) –

Andy Stanley has this to say - "Direction, not intention, determines our destination". The right way is often not easy but necessary. It is the way of the Cross, the only way to the crown.

Unless we have the fear of the Lord, on our own we will fail and persist in foolishness. In Christ, He becomes our wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). Choose to be in Christ so we will have true wisdom to live wisely in these challenging times.

*(Sermon notes by Woo Choi Yin)*

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1. Read and reflect on Ecclesiastes 10:1-3, 12-15. What strikes you about the fool and his foolishness?
2. Do you know or have you experienced an occasion when a little folly has destroyed all the hard work put in?
3. What are your vulnerable moments when you know you may give in to temptation (e.g. to flare up in anger) or fall into error? How may you guard these vulnerable moments? What is your reflection from the sermon on this?
4. Reflect on the use of your tongue. When have you been careless? Share practical examples of how you may control your tongue or bless your colleagues, family members and friends with kind and gracious words.
5. The right path is often the challenging but wise one. What paths are you on today? Are they to the left (foolish) or right (wise) [v 2]? Pray for each other to have the fear of the Lord, choose the right path and walk with God in humility and surrender.

## Don't Be A Fool

## NOTES



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## True Wisdom

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 10:1-14 (NIV)** ]

Rev Lilian Ang



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**12 SEPTEMBER 2021 |**  
PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)



**Summary |** We live in a world of information overload. Is all this information making us wise or just knowledgeable? Knowledge is the accumulation of information, while wisdom is the application of knowledge. True wisdom is to be able to exercise sound judgement based on knowledge, understanding and discernment to pursue a godly course of action.

The greatest wisdom known to scripture is the Skill of Living Well. We are to live in accord with God's word and to be in tandem with God's heartbeat. Ecclesiastes 10 contains practical advice for everyday life on how to cultivate true wisdom.

### **1. Our Walk (v1-3)**

Preserve our walk with God even in little situations. In our daily life, a small mistake can mess up a wonderful reputation and outweigh all the good. Sin begins with little things. Little inconsistencies, if not checked, undermine the whole character. Folly is a heart problem. We live according to who we are on the inside, and it shows in our character and conduct. True wisdom is about choosing to walk in Godliness, letting the Spirit, not the flesh, control us. The proof of true wisdom is in our actions. When a fool stays at home, no one realises his foolishness. When a fool goes out into the world, everyone he meets knows that he is a fool!

### **2. Our Way (v4-7)**

Protect our way of life with gentleness even in difficult situations. A calm response can resolve a touchy situation. Take time to examine the situation and not act rashly, and we may find that what seemed to be a great offence is just a minor thing. It is not wise to answer back – just quietly accept and it will soon pass over. Pray for God's spirit to guide our response so that we have the

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wisdom of God. Pray for those in authority so that they will act as good and wise leaders. Do not make things difficult for those under us. Things may not turn out the way we expect. We often run away from difficult situations, e.g. divorce, job hopping, church switching, etc. Do not walk away because it takes time for trust to be restored. No matter who we think is at fault, it is wise to mend a relationship. The wise gently work things out.

#### 3. **Our Work (v8-11)**

Prepare our work with great care in view of unforeseen situations. Every day activities can have unforeseen results and the best intentions may backfire on us. Things may backfire if that is not supposed to be what we are doing. When we have wisdom, our actions are sharper, and we will be able to accomplish our goals better. Wisdom has the effect of making the wise more efficient and effective in living in the fear of the Lord.

#### 4. **Our Words (v12-14)**

Proclaim our words with grace in everyday situations. Fools are destroyed by their own words. They say things without consideration and destroy others with their speech. Foolish words yield unfavourable outcomes. We practise wisdom when we speak words of grace and love towards others. It requires us to think how our words will affect others. What comes out of our mouth is an overflow of what is in our heart. Selfish attitudes in our hearts often manifest in hurtful words. It is only when we put God's truths into practice in every area of our lives, that we begin to see wisdom take shape in us.

True wisdom is living in the light of God – the source of all wisdom.

*(Sermon notes by Honey Vreugdewater)*



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1. How is wisdom different from knowledge, understanding and discernment?
2. Ecclesiastes 10:1 says “a little folly outweighs wisdom.” How have you seen this principle in your own experience? When have you seen small foolish decisions bring damaging effects?
3. How is wisdom manifested in your walk with God, your way of life, your work and your words?
4. In what ways are the words of the wise and the words of fools contrasted in Ecclesiastes 10:12-14.
5. Identify one leader you know serving in the civil service, community, your workplace or at church. Ask the person what the position involves and how you can pray for him or her. Pray for the leader daily for the next two weeks.

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## NOTES





## Casting Bread

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 11:1-6 (NIV)** ]

Ps Clement Ong



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**19 SEPTEMBER 2021** |  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

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**Summary** | Uncertainty, a theme throughout Ecclesiastes, is mentioned in verses 2, 5 and 6 of chapter 11. "You do not know" reminds us that man can never fathom God's ways. There is an inevitability of life as seen by the events that are beyond our control. Uncertainty can create fear, anxiety or helplessness. On the other hand, it can move us towards God. The Teacher moves from wrestling with the meaningless in life to see meaning through the lens of wisdom, which is mentioned 30 times in the last six chapters of Ecclesiastes. The passage uses three images to help us navigate through the inevitabilities and uncertainties of life.

1. **Sea merchants.** V1 (NIV) states: "Ship your grain across the sea; after many days you may receive a return". Risk is taken to send one's grain or produce across the seas, with the intent and hope of gaining good returns. Apart from risk-taking, another meaning can be found in the ESV: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days." It may seem strange to imagine blobs of bread floating in water. Such a waste, we may conclude. And how would we find this soggy mess after many days? "Cast" implies giving or sending away. With open hands or spreading out, we are reminded that as God's stewards, we are to give generously and step out of our comfort zone. Release back to the Lord what He has provided. We also need to let go and trust that even though we do not know what will happen, we should give unconditionally. Let us not be calculative in our giving; let there not be any strings attached. As Charles Swindoll said, "Don't put your bread in deep freeze...or store up... don't hoard, thinking it needs protecting, release it." Embrace God's way of giving - "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). What is the bread that He wants you to release?

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2. **Sowing seed (v4).** Farmers would look for the best conditions before sowing their seeds. Yet the Teacher implies that we should not over-consider these conditions. For if we wait for perfect conditions, we will never get anything done. During the planting season, farmers go out to sow their seeds. They do not abandon hope that rain will come. Likewise, we must proceed with faith and act upon what God has placed in our hearts. Even in the midst of unfavourable conditions, step out in faith, for otherwise, we may miss opportunities in sowing seeds of the Gospel. Waiting around may result in idleness (v6). Recall the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30). Let us not be like the servant who squandered the opportunity given by the master.
  
3. **Baby in mother's womb (v5).** It is amazing how a baby is formed. Though science can explain some details of human development, there are many aspects which are unknown. Indeed, we cannot know all of God's mysteries. God alone can take what is messed up to make it good (Rom. 8:28). In our discipleship journey, we learn how to surrender to His will, even as He reveals Himself through the seasons and circumstances of our lives.

It is our act of worship to release and find joy in giving; our act of discipleship to persevere in our discipleship journey; and our act of obedience to surrender and delight in His mysterious ways.

Live wisely and boldly for God!

*(Sermon notes by Angela Goh)*

1. The first imagery is an instruction by the preacher to cast our bread upon the waters like a sailor or sea merchant would with his goods or produce. What is the preacher teaching us to do with our bread?
2. The second imagery is a farmer who watches the weather and sowing only during best of conditions. Consider the opportunities that you have missed, or would miss in the sowing of the gospel if everything has to be perfect in its setting.
3. The third imagery is a baby being formed in a mother's womb. Were there seasons in our lives when we struggled to understand God's work and ways? How can we grow in faith as we submit to God's sovereignty?
4. How has the passage impressed in your heart about God and encouraged you in your faith journey? Share with another person and spend some time praying for each other.

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## Casting Bread

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## NOTES





## Bread Upon The Waters

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 11:1-6 (ESV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



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**19 SEPTEMBER 2021** |  
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[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)



**Summary** | The wise teacher embraces risk, not recklessly, but with full confidence, as a faith venture.

1. **Be bold in your generosity (v1-2)** The expression 'casting bread upon the waters' speaks of ancient merchants sending goods off to sea with the hope of great gain or more often, great loss - a risky venture! We are urged to be bountiful in generosity for there are great rewards for us too. (Prov 19:17). We are actually lending to God! When we sow generously we will reap generously! (2 Cor 9:6). Let us be willing to give our 5 loaves and 2 fish!
2. **Be diligent in every opportunity (v3-4, 6)** If the farmer waits for perfect weather to sow or reap, he may never start his work. Don't fall to paralysis by analysis! Seize opportunities when they present themselves without waiting for perfection.

As we enter into a faith adventure with God, we allow Him to shape and mold us: the process of discipleship! This too is risky; therefore, we must allow God to lead!

3. **Be surrendered in faithful risk-taking (v5)** As we acknowledge that God is greater than us and His thoughts higher than ours, we surrender and trust God. There is an element of risk; therefore, we must have faith. There are many examples in the Bible such as Moses, David or Esther but also ordinary unnamed people who took the risk. In Matt 25:14-30, why was the man who hid his talent (unwilling to take risks) condemned? Because he did not know the heart of the master!

## Bread Upon The Waters

### READ | SERMON NOTES



He failed to understand that his master was an aggressive investor. We are called to know that our Master expects faith-filled risk-taking. Jesus took the ultimate risk for us and prayed "Thy will be done"! Our God is a faithful God who takes the risk to offer His love to us when we are free to reject Him and therefore we are to surrender and follow Him in obedience and faith. Faithful risk-taking means obedience to the Word, following the leading of the Spirit, in consultation with the Church Community to the Glory of God!

What is God calling you to cast on the waters? We are held back by fear of failure and losing control. As you face fear, relocate your identity in God's glory; as you wrestle with the need for control, humble yourself in God's providence (Timothy Keller). We are not in control but be comforted that the one who is, loves you so much that He died for you! Let us cast our bread upon the waters and indeed, we will find it after many days!

*(Sermon notes by Frances Lim)*

**Read and reflect on Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 (ESV).**

1. What does it mean for you to “cast your bread upon the waters” (v 1, ESV)?
2. How can you be boldly generous (including giving time and effort)? Share specific examples. What holds you back from being so? How does God’s Word encourage you to be courageous?
3. Was there a time when you missed an opportunity (e.g. for work, building relationships, ministry) because you waited for perfect conditions which never came? What is one area in your life for faithful risk-taking?
4. We do not understand the “work of God who makes everything.” (v 5, ESV). Even without understanding God’s sovereign work, how can we continue to trust Him? How does God’s love shown in His Son invite you to a fresh surrender to His sovereign goodness? Pray for each other to grow in faith.

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**



## Bread Upon The Waters

## NOTES



## NOTES





# Remembering God In Our Youth(s) Before It Is Too Late

ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8

## Remembering God In Our Youth(s) Before It Is Too Late

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8 (NIV)** ]

Rev Adrian Ng



**LISTEN | SERMON VIDEO**



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**26 SEPTEMBER 2021** |  
TRADITIONAL SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)



**Summary** | The Preacher interweaves wisdom and the realities of life to help us understand that life defined by earthly wisdom and its pursuits is futile, for worldly goods can never be enough. Moody Institute's George Sweeting wrote that the finest attractions of this world become deadly when we become overly attached to them. The danger of delayed surrender of a pleasure may well bring our destruction.

READ |  
SERMON NOTES



Two important points to note:

- 1. Remember God (serve God) in our youth before it is too late!** – Ecc 8:15's seeming commendation to enjoy life, when read together with Ecc 7:26, is not a licence to self-indulge but advice to remember God and to be content with what is given us. Praise and serve God, not the world. Who are of the world? Those who find no pleasure in serving God (v1), unconcerned about end times (v2), and is gender- and class-inclusive (v3). When is too late? When life grinds down, and all life-sustaining symbols of silver thread, golden bowl, water pitcher, well-wheel are broken (v4-6). Not even the strongest of bodies will survive the end when we revert to dust and spirit in futility (v7-8). But to remember and to serve God reminds us that God is sovereign and we have a citizenship in heaven and a glorious body hereafter (Phil 3:20-21).
- 2. Remember God in our youths (serve, disciple them) before it is too late!** – Pastor Adrian, starting his 5th year in Wesley, and overseeing the Youth Ministry, has joy and privilege in developing future leaders to know and experience God. Today's 10/30 window comprises the largest unreached age group, awash with free-flowing information, yet are more personally disconnected.

## Remembering God In Our Youth(s) Before It Is Too Late

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Online Church outreach is poorly received by them. Poll studies reveal that their top priority is strong family relationships and that trusted relationships shape their worldview and character as they mature in life. A video showed evidence of how different age groups worked with the one below them, sowing, watering and nurturing them. Serve before it's too late before a generation is skipped. When we serve others, we are nourishing a symbiotic relationship of mutual benefit. When we love God, we will naturally want to serve others, and we will ourselves be drawn ever closer to God. Respond only to God who is the one calling you.

*(Sermon notes by Kwun Pillai)*

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**



1. Recall & share of a time in your youth when you felt God's grace strongly. How has that impacted you?
2. How would you describe your relationship with God in the days of your youth? If you could re-live your youth again, what would you change?
3. Take time to reflect together on Ecc 12:2-5, picturing it describing you where an end of life seems imminent. What thanksgiving or confessions/regrets would you share?
4. Considering Ecc 12:6-7 in your own experience (while you were younger) – what/who kept you in the faith "before it is too late"?
5. How can you help our youths (and next generation) remember God "before it is too late"?

## Remembering God In Our Youth(s) Before It Is Too Late

## NOTES



NOTES



Lined area for taking notes, consisting of 25 horizontal lines.



## Remember God In Your Youth

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 11:9-12:1-8 (NIV)** ]

Rev Benjamin Lau



[LISTEN | SERMON VIDEO](#)



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**26 SEPTEMBER 2021** |  
PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICE

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | Being multi-generational is the Church's clarion call. Pass on the faith of our fathers!

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**SERMON NOTES**



As a church, we have the important role of nurturing the next generation. With information at their fingertips, and being text-savvy and highly knowledgeable, Gen Z-Post-millennials (born after 1996, currently below 24 years old) are living in an increasingly fast paced, uncertain world with social norms more diverse than what their predecessors have had to handle. Perspectives change across generations and along with it the moral fabric of society. Young ones are becoming more questioning and distrusting of authority. What support network are we providing our children and their children to thrive in God's kingdom?

*Insights For All Generations of Christ Followers to Consider*

1. **Enjoy Our Youth** – 11:9 (NLT) “Young people, it’s wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do.” To partake of the joys of youth is to be happy, and not stress oneself unduly with exams, or the need to grow up very quickly, or to anxiously seek acceptance by others. Within the boundaries of God’s will, youth is that time of life to explore, make mistakes, learn and grow. It’s not an age to satisfy sinful desires, but a unique season to embrace with enthusiasm the challenge of being a change-maker for God.

Outreach, Bible Study, mission trips, youth conferences, church camps. There is much joy and fun growing up in the LORD! It’s never too young to serve and make a difference for Christ. With energy to give and capacity to learn, our youths do well to keep healthy in mind, soul and body, grow in the knowledge of God by forming good habits and spiritual disciplines for the long run. As Paul encouraged young pastor Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look

## Remember God In Your Youth

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down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

2. **Remember Our Creator** – 12:1 (NLT) "Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honour him in your youth before you grow old and say, "Life is not pleasant anymore"". While we still can, we ought to find pleasure thinking about God with the intention of obeying Him. The Israelites learnt to love the LORD God with all their heart, soul and strength when parents talked to their children using visual reminders even to remember God's faithfulness. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Besides parents, every older church member ought to create opportunities for the young to experience God and grow in faith. Only God can transform hearts but we as Christ disciples, can facilitate godly change. To make a difference for God in the world, prayerfully consider how we can serve to disciple young ones in the Children's and Youth ministries at Wesley. Since values are caught more than taught, children observe us to see if we walk our talk. Is what we teach consistent with our priorities so that attending church and YM services takes precedence over tuition, for example?

3. **Make Each Day Count as We Age** – 12:3-7 illustrates realistically the aging process and therefore our need to live like we were dying. Arms may tremble, feet bow, teeth grind, desires and appetites fail, yet shall we still remember our Creator God and serve Him "before the silver chord of life is cut." Whatever our age and generation, life does not stop till we return back to God. So let us make each day count. Teach us, LORD, to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Ps 90:12



We live well looking forward, but we live wisely looking backwards to learn from past experiences. Sans strength or speed in old age, we can still live purposefully by passing on our stories and God experiences to the next generation. "Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation." Joel 1:3

## READ | SERMON NOTES



Judges 2:10 warns us that "After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel." To avoid losing an entire generation in the church, we must declare God's power and faithfulness, "His mighty acts to all who are to come." Psalm 71:18

Across the generations, let us listen to understand, love and encourage one another. Believe and invest also in the younger generation. This is how we lay the church's foundation for lifelong discipleship that glorifies God, our Rock of ages.

*(Sermon notes by Marjorie Tan)*

1. Share your experiences in your journey of faith when you were a youth growing up? (If you were not a Christian yet, what was life like without God in the picture?)
2. How do you practically remember God in your life daily?
3. What can you do to facilitate the young either in your family or in church to have a personal experience of God in their life?
4. How can you make each day count for the Lord as we grow in age? Are there people that God is leading you to invest your life in?

## PONDER | REFLECTION QUESTIONS



## Remember God In Your Youth

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## NOTES





## The End Of The Matter

Scripture Passage: [ **ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14 (NIV)** ]

Rev Raymond Fong



**LISTEN | SERMON VIDEO**



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**02/03 OCTOBER 2021 |**

TRADITIONAL AND PRAYER & PRAISE SERVICES

[wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes](https://wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes)

**Summary** | Do we fear being without God and cannot imagine a life without God? This question has to do with the notion of the fear of the Lord.

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The end of the matter in Ecclesiastes is clear – fear God and keep His commandments. To fear (*yare* in Hebrew) means to deeply revere, stand in awe and have a dreadful fear of something.

Contemporary Christianity often downplays the awesome dreadful fear of God. We use words like reverence, honour and respect to describe the fear. Our understanding is shaped by the portrayal of God as an approachable friend, a loving God who is kind, patient and generous. God is indeed like that; but we also need to appreciate the utter holiness of God and just how unholy we are.

The ancient Hebrew understood and was in terror of God because God is absolutely holy; and he knew he was absolutely sinful and needed God's mercy.

To fear God is to have a proper regard for who He is, His character and His awesome deeds. We are to be in utter reverence and worship of Him, recognising that He has to take the first and central place in our lives.

The biblical understanding of the fear of God is more than just reverence. Through reverence, there must be transformation. The teacher invites us to have a fear of God that brings about this holy transformation.

*Why do we need to fear the Lord?*

### **From Ecclesiastes:**

1. God is the giver of life and its meanings. Life is meaningless unless God is in it. The pursuit of wisdom and wealth is futile. (e.g. 2:12-16; 3:11; 4:7-8; 5:10-17; 6:1-6)

## The End Of The Matter

### READ | SERMON NOTES



God alone grants the ability and opportunity to enjoy the blessings and pleasures of work, life and food. (e.g. 2:24-25) Life is a gift from God. Without God, who can find true meaning in life? Therefore let us humble ourselves, turn to God and put Him at the centre, as we learn to be contented in Him.

2. God is the master of death and its effects. The teacher calls us to understand the temporal nature of our existence and fragility of our being. Death comes to everyone and renders everything accomplished and accumulated futile. (e.g. 9:1-6; 2:17-23) God alone knows the time we have on earth.
3. God is the mover of history and its purposes. There is a time and season for everything. (3:1) God moves us from one season to another and makes everything beautiful in its time. (3:11) We fear and trust God because our times are in His hands. (Ps 31:15)
4. God is the deliverer of judgment and its justice. God will judge every deed. (12:14) There is a comfort that every evil deed will be judged. Evil doers will not prosper forever because God's divine justice will prevail. (3:17; 8:12-13; 11:9) We are called to fear and live right with Him, because one day we will be called to account.

At the end of the matter, when everything has been heard, all is clear – fear God. We cannot entirely comprehend the utterly good news of Jesus Christ if we don't first have the utterly great fear of God. "The fear of God is a fear of a life without God." (John Piper, paraphrased) A fundamental fear of the Lord is that unless God is with us, it will all be in vain. (Ps 127:1)

*How do we fear the Lord?*

The fear of the Lord is when we acknowledge our utter need for Him. The heart of the matter is that we need to 1) **seek** the Lord in revelation (Prov 9:10; Ps 25:14) and repentance (Prov 3:7), 2) **obey** in devotion (Neh 11:1; Ps 112:1) and discipline (1 Tim 4:7) and 3) **surrender** in trust (Prov 3:5-6) and transparency (Mk 9:24).

The end of the matter is clear.

When we fear the Lord, we have nothing else to fear.

*(Sermon Notes by Denis Koh)*

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1. What does the fear of the Lord mean to you?
2. As we review what we have learnt through the book of Ecclesiastes, how is the concluding commandment to fear the Lord and obey His commandments a fitting end to the book? According to the book, why do we need to fear the Lord?
3. How does the fear of God cause us to better appreciate the wondrous saving truth and love of the gospel?
4. Seek, Obey and Surrender. How do these express the fear of the Lord? How can we actively seek the Lord every day? What areas of your life is God calling you to deeper obedience? What do you need to readily surrender to the Lord?
5. Pray for each other to have the fear of God to seek, obey and surrender.

**PONDER |  
REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS**


## The End Of The Matter

## NOTES





# UPDATE OF YOUR PERSONAL PARTICULARS

In this unprecedented season fraught with uncertainty and restrictions on in-person gatherings, it is so important that we stay connected with each other. The past pandemic year has shown that it is vital we keep our community connections strong as we reach out to pray for and encourage one another. We sincerely hope to be able to provide care and support to you and your latest particulars will enable us to stay in touch with you.

There are many ways that you can update your membership particulars.

Below are ways to do so:

1. Call the church office (6336-1433).
2. Send an email to the church ([memupdate@wesleymc.org](mailto:memupdate@wesleymc.org)).
3. Fill up a hardcopy form available on request and drop or mail signed copy of form to WMC.
4. Via Wesley MC website

**<https://wesleymc.org/care/members-information-update>.**

More recently, we have also launched the Membership Online Portal (MOLP) where members can check and update their personal information lodged with the Church.

You would have received a letter from the church recently regarding MOLP. In the letter, you will find your Member Unique ID (UMID) as well as your registered name in our church database. You may wish to set up your MOLP access\*, to view information that is kept in the church database and update your personal particulars. It is important that you keep record of your UMID, because this will be your identification number with the church. Your UMID is an alternative to your NRIC which we are not allowed to use other than for Official Records.

\*To access the MOLP, please key in the following URL in your browser:

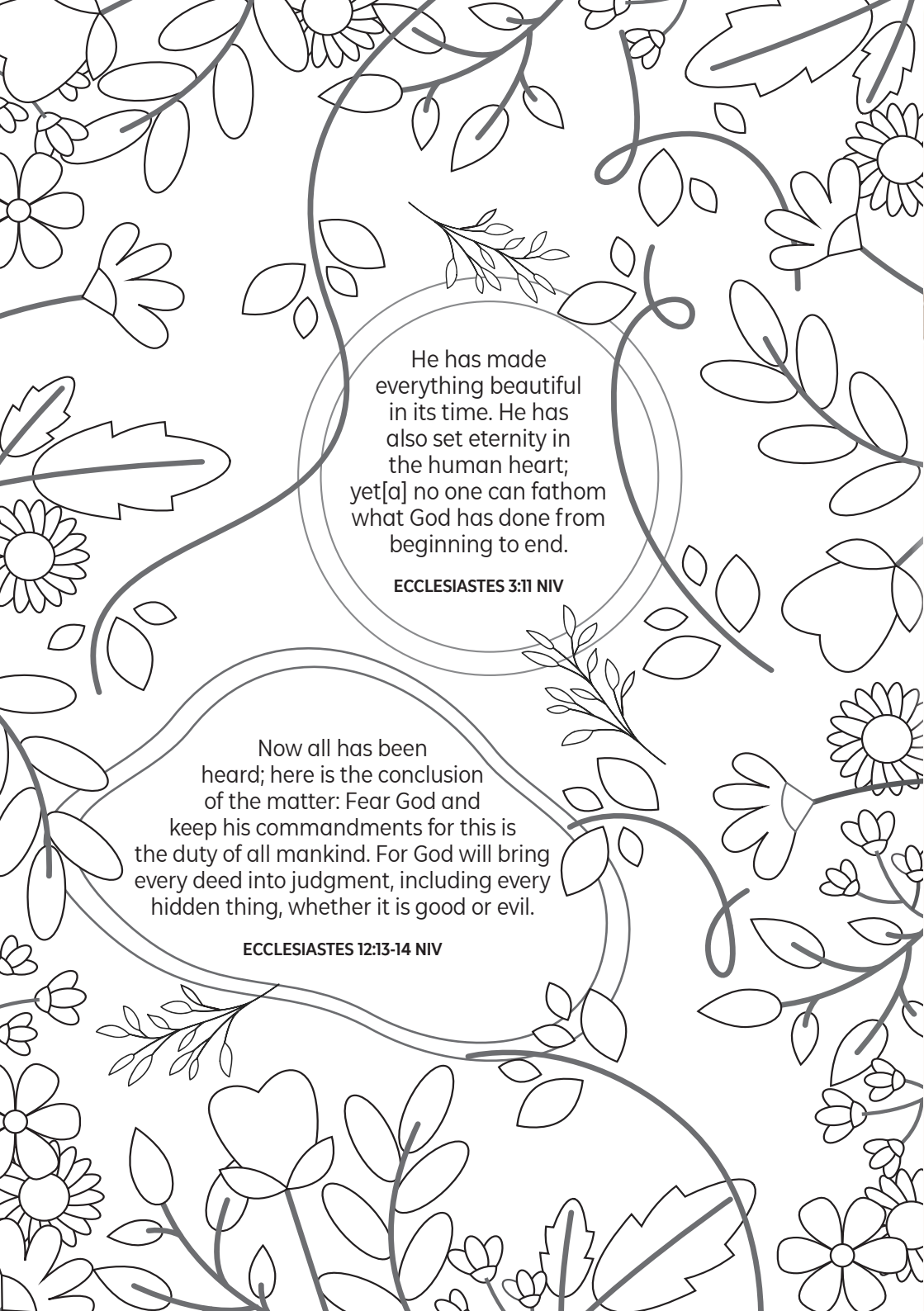
<https://membership.wesleymc.org>

Or scan the QR code:



We encourage you to log in to MOLP, but if you find it difficult and a challenge, please use other ways to update your personal particulars. Our prayer is that this exercise will glorify our Lord as He delights in us doing our best to stay together as a faithful community. If you have any queries or require assistance, please send us an email at: **[membership@wesleymc.org](mailto:membership@wesleymc.org)** and quote your **UMID** and **Registered Membership Name**.





He has made  
everything beautiful  
in its time. He has  
also set eternity in  
the human heart;  
yet[a] no one can fathom  
what God has done from  
beginning to end.

**ECCLESIASTES 3:11 NIV**

Now all has been  
heard; here is the conclusion  
of the matter: Fear God and  
keep his commandments for this is  
the duty of all mankind. For God will bring  
every deed into judgment, including every  
hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

**ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14 NIV**



Here is a colouring page inspired by the beauty of nature created by our Almighty God. Go ahead and add colours to it. Be creative. When completed, share it with a family member or a friend.



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