

Ecclesicistes

A Resource Booklet on the Overview of Ecclesiastes as well as daily BRD Reflections on the Book.

Join us for the church's 13-part **Sermon Series on Ecclesiastes** from 11 July to 3 October 2021. Together, let us explore issues on the meaning and purpose of life in the context of work, possessions and pleasure. Let us also seek God's wisdom for this unprecedented season we are in.

wesleymc.org/ecclesiastes

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LETTER FROM PASTOR-IN-CHARGE

My dear Wesleyan and friend

I pray for the peace and protection of God to be with you in these trying times. You are dearly remembered in our prayers. I miss seeing you in person but I know God is watching over you as you continue to stay faithful to Him.

We have begun a three-month sermon series on Ecclesiastes and we hope to glean godly wisdom with regard to the meaning and purpose of life, especially so in these uncertain times. It is our sincere prayer that this sermon series will lead us to trust God more deeply, surrender to God more wholly, and love Him more dearly.

We would like to bless you with this booklet which is specially compiled for you because you are dearly loved by us. In it is a transcript of the Overview of Ecclesiastes which outlines the key themes of the book and approaches to Bible study. We have also included 12 devotions and reflections on Ecclesiastes written by our leaders which I hope will encourage and edify you.

If you need any help or would like someone to pray with you, please do not hesitate to contact us by calling the church office at 63361433 to leave a message and we will be in touch with you. We are here for you as we persevere together through these challenging times.

Take good care, stay safe and well. May God's enduring love fill your heart and His joy be your strength as you hold steadfastly to the hope in Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Journeying with you,

Cammo

Rev Raymond Fong Pastor-in-Charge Wesley Methodist Church



ECCLESIASTES/OVERVIEW Word Alive! Mid-Week Teaching Series

By Rev Raymond Fong, Pastor-in-Charge, Wesley Methodist Church

n this Mid-Week Teaching Series on Ecclesiastes on 8 July 2021, Rev Raymond Fong provides an overview of the Book as well as the themes and approaches for Bible Study.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR?

Ecclesiastes 1:1 (ESV, NKJV) says, "The words of the Preacher (*Qoheleth*" in Hebrew), the son of David, king in Jerusalem."

The Hebrew word "*Qoheleth*" can mean "one who assembles, a teacher, preacher, or one who gathers truths and opinions." So *Qoheleth* is someone who gathers in an assembly, probably to listen to truths being spoken or preached.

Who then wrote Ecclesiastes?

Verse I says "the son of David", so perhaps this suggests it was Solomon who wrote the book. According to Jewish tradition, Solomon wrote

- 1. Song of Songs when he was young;
- 2. Proverbs when he was an adult; and
- 3. Ecclesiastes when he was old and bitter.

However, most scholars take the view that Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon. The author is likely to be an unknown wise preacher or teacher. He refers to the persona of Solomon as a literary device, a parody of the pursuit of wisdom and wealth. Solomon was known for his wisdom and wealth. So the writer parodied this by saying: "What is the point of pursuing wisdom and wealth when everything is but a breath; everything is meaningless?"

DATE AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Scholars agree that Ecclesiastes was written after the Jews had returned from exile, well after the reign of Solomon. That would put the date at about 539 BC. This agreement is based on the following evidences:

- 1. The stylistic form of Hebrew used.
- 2. Literary parallels to Phoenician wisdom literature (600-400 BC).
- 3. Allusions to Ecclesiastes found in the writings of Ben Sirach (around 180 BC).
- 4. Parts of Ecclesiastes found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (2nd Century BC).

The post-exilic date would mean the Persian period (539–332 BC) and Hellenistic period (332–63 BC). Both periods were times of turbulent socioeconomic change:

- 1. Monetary currency was being introduced.
- 2. Aggressive systems of taxation.
- 3. Economic vulnerabilities and volatility for the people concerned.

Wealth in the new monetised economy could come quickly and go just as quickly, justice was uncertain, and the ordinary citizen was vulnerable to power structures. These can be discerned from the following passages: Ecclesiastes 3:16; 4:1-6; 5:8, 10, 13-17; 6:1-2; 8:1-9; 10:5-20).

The wise teacher in Ecclesiastes reflects the anxiety of the people at that time – the hopes, the lack of security felt by the ordinary citizens, the futility of their toil, the futility of their lives - and that is why the message of Ecclesiastes is in many ways reflective of the historical context.

GENRE:

Ecclesiastes is one of three wisdom literature books, the other two are Proverbs and Job. Characteristics of wisdom literature:

- 1. Shares the art of navigating the complexities of life and discerning God's ways in life.
- 2. Contains instruction that is theologically charged and morally pragmatic.
- 3. Has structures ranging from short sayings to lengthy discourse.
- 4. One topic that all three books (Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and Job) have is "the fear of the Lord" (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Proverbs 1:7, 29; Job 28:28).

Ecclesiastes stands out as an example of wisdom literature:

- It is rife with contradictions.
- It offers no neat maxims like Proverbs, but instead acknowledges and grapples with the mystery of life and God.
- It challenges traditional Jewish wisdom (eg, the concept of afterlife, 3:19-21).

LITERARY STYLE AND UNITY

Scholars have called Ecclesiastes an "autobiographical treatise". It is a sophisticated reflection and is autobiographical in style, a mix of personal ruminations, reflections and instructions.

Style of Reflection by the wise teacher:

- 1. Observation(s) is/are stated.
- 2. Considered from several points of view.
- 3. Followed by a conclusion.

See Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 as an example.

²⁴ A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see (**observation**), is from the hand of God,

(**consideration**) ²⁵ for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? ²⁶ To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (**conclusion**)

One style of Ecclesiastes is that it is characterised by opposites and contradictions.

One such literary style is what we call Antithetical Parallelism, an example of which can be found in Ecclesiastes 10:2 – "The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left."

Two hearts, two directions. The wise differs completely from that of the fool, in completely opposite directions.

Notice the various contradictions in Ecclesiastes:

- 1. Wisdom vs Folly.
- 2. Good vs Evil.
- 3. Light vs Dark.
- 4. Love vs Hate.
- 5. Life vs Death.
- 6. This World vs The Afterlife.

An example of contradiction:

The dead are more fortunate than the living (4:2).

The stillborn child is better off than the patriarch who begets a hundred children but does not receive a burial (6:3). A living dog is better than a dead lion (9:4).

Does the teacher favour life or death? He doesn't really resolve the contradiction. On one hand he encourages one to embrace life, but at the same time he also wishes the relief of death for those who are being oppressed.

How do you explain these contradictions? Scholars have come up with the following explanations:

- 1. Pessimistic skepticism: The wise teacher is simply a sceptic or a pessimist.
- 2. Traditional Jewish wisdom and challenge to it (quote to refute).
- 3. A dialogue between teacher and student.
- 4. A life's journal (conflict in fallen mankind).

I would like to suggest that these contradictions can perhaps be explained by viewing Ecclesiastes as the teacher's journey and quest for meaning. Perhaps the teacher is on a journey of reflecting, understanding and pursuing what it means to live in life. Hence the reflections will contradict, almost intentionally so. The observations of the teacher remain tentative and are continually transformed until he gets to the end of the book, in Chapters 11 to 12, where he offers a conclusion of his reflections. The Teacher's ruminations are designed to provoke a movement of reflection and dialogue with the reader, rather than to reach or teach quick conclusions.

There is, however, a unity in Ecclesiastes, which can be seen through the following recurring words and expressions:

- 1. "vanity" ("hebel") breath, vapour, cloud of steam, smoke.
- 2. "under the sun" the earth where we live.
- 3. "time" God's appointed and fixed times.
- 4. "toil" or "work" God's work and the work he gives people to do.
- 5. "evil" Points also to the painfulness of a situation as well as the moral wrong.
- 6. "portion" or "share" The material blessing that we can have in this life.
- 7. "fear God" to revere, stand in awe, honour, be awed.

THREE MAIN THEMES

Ecclesiastes assumes the existence of a God. It was written within the stream of Old Testament faith.

1. Futility of human quest and pursuit

"Vanity of vanities...all is vanity." (1:2). All is *hebel*, futile, or meaningless in NIV. Empty and transient. NIV calls it: "Chasing after the wind."

The pursuit of wisdom is futile because wisdom cannot give us a comprehensive explanation of the reality we face and provide us with the means to control it (eg. 1:1-18; 2:12-16; 3:11; 7:23-29).

The pursuit of wealth is futile for even if one attains it, one cannot guarantee that one will be able to keep it, use it, or pass it on to one's descendants. The possession of wealth does not inevitably lead to the possession of fulfilment and joy (eg. 2:1-11, 17-23; 4:7-8; 5:10-17; 6:1-6).

2. Fragility of human existence

Our lives are fragile. We are incapable of saving ourselves from the indiscriminate onslaught of death. Death is an inevitable eventuality. Men are unable to secure themselves against the inevitable eventuality of death.

Death brings the wise man and the fool to the same place (2:12-16). Death comes to everyone, whether righteous or wicked, good or bad (9:1-6). Death is the ultimate reality of life. Death negates all that we have accomplished on earth.

3. Fulfillment of life in God

In the final message of Ecclesiastes, the writer invites us to fear God and to keep his commandments. Inherent in this, is the message that it is God who gives us the sense of fulfilment. For the teacher, God is at the central place of fulfillment in life. And you can see this throughout the book when the teacher makes mention of God as the one who grants us the gift of contentment and fulfilment:

- 1. God is the one who enables the eating, drinking and enjoyment of work (eg. 2:24-25).
- 2. God grants the gift of the days when joy can be found, and when enjoyment and contentment may be experienced (eg 3:12-13; 5:18-20).
- 3. God is the one who approves our activities (9:7-10).
- 4. God is the one who ultimately judges (eg 11:9-10).

The three themes are summed up in Ecclesiastes 12:13 where the teacher comes to the conclusion of the matter: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind."

The final theme of 'fulfilment of life in God' is the central theme that leads us to humility, and to a place where we say, "God, without you my life is fragile. Without you, my life is futile. And I need you in my life".

APPROACHES FOR STUDY OF ECCLESIASTES

A good framework to approach Bible Study is: Observe, Interpret, Apply.

Observe: We observe what is being written in the text.

- **Interpret:** We interpret what is being observed. Interpretation involves going back to the historical and cultural contexts. It goes back to understanding the context of the passage within the larger message of the book.
- **Apply:** We glean lessons or principles by which we can apply into our lives. Application can mean not just personal, but also for the family, the church, and even the nation.

Application must flow from good interpretation, and interpretation is grounded on acute observation.

Let me share a few approaches for study, especially in the area of interpretation:

1. Interpret as a whole taking into account the genre and literary style of the book.

Be careful not to draw a conclusion just from a passage without understanding the full message of the book.

2. Embrace the complexity of the issues raised without needing to find an explanation or resolution.

Don't expect a black and white treatment of or resolution to the issues raised.

Eg Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 (NIV)

¹ Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed – and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors – and they have no comforter. ²And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive. ³But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun.

In these three verses, there is no clear explanation for the issues raised, for example why the dead are happier than the living. Is that the case? That is the complexity of the book and we will have to embrace it.

3. First reflect on what the Teacher says to gain perspective before trying to interpret his sayings in the light of the rest of Scripture.

Eg Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

Is it really better not to be born than to be oppressed? What does that mean? How does that impact the way we view the sanctity of life? But instead of rushing to interpret, take time to look at what the teacher is trying to raise and ask the deeper questions.

4. Re-examine the sayings of the Teacher in the context of revelation from the rest of Scripture for lessons for application.

Eg Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

Is death really the way to deal with injustice and opposition? The wise teacher may have his reason but the answer or truth is No, because we have the resurrection and hope in our Lord. Ultimately there will be justice when Christ returns.

5. Focus on going deeper in the application of lessons for discipleship.

Take time to allow space for reflecting, sharing, empathic listening and prayer.

LESSONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

1. Our earnest searching

This Book is spot on in terms of our earnest searching. This issue of our earnest searching relates to the question of what we are pursuing for meaning and satisfaction. In these pandemic times, as we move into some degree of normalcy, we are still a world pursuing for some meaning and satisfaction.

The first two chapters of Ecclesiastes highlight the things that humans seek for meaning and satisfaction:

- 1. Wisdom, Eccl 1:13-18.
- 2. Pleasure, Eccl 2:1-3.
- 3. Possession of wealth, Eccl 2:4-8a.
- 4. Sexual pleasure, Eccl 2:8b.
- 5. Fame and popularity. Eccl 2:9-11.

Yet the Book tells us that we are not satisfied. (Eccl 6:7). Our appetite is never satisfied. Take time to explore what you are searching for today. What are some of the deeper issues within your heart as you pursue the things that satisfy your deepest longings? Are you truly satisfied with more possessions, more pleasure and more achievements? What truly satisfy us?

Do we turn to God or do we turn to the things of the world for our source of true and lasting satisfaction?

Isaiah 55:2 ²Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.

2. Our sincere wrestling

There is also a part of our journey with God where we will wrestle with God with the issues in life. We wrestle with God's purposes and will when we see evil and injustices. We cannot fathom his ways. We struggle with the reality and inevitability of death. We struggle with the injustice that comes with death,

We can have sincere doubt and even question God. And the wise Teacher does that. Ecclesiastes gives space and expression for that.

You can bring to God your struggles and your sincere doubts. You can tell God: "I believe, help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)

3. Our ready contentment

Contentment is a gift from God – enjoy it when and where you can (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; 3:12, 13, 22; 5:18; 8:15; 9:7-9).

Pursue godly contentment (1 Timothy 6:6-9).

4. Our reverential worship

Who is God in our lives? Is there a genuine fear of the Lord? Does that really shape the way I live?

"The fear of the Lord is the fear of a life without God." (John Piper, adapted

CONCLUSION

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (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."

SCHEDULE OF SERMONS ON ECCLESIASTES

Traditional and Prayer & Praise Services

1.	11 Jul 2021	Chasing Wind? (1:1-18)
2.	18 Jul 2021	Wisdom, Pleasure and Joy (2:1-26)
3.	25 Jul 2021	In His Time/A Time for Everything (3:1-15)
4.	1 Aug 2021	Oppression, Vanity and Community (4:1-18)
5.	8 Aug 2021	The Fear of God (5:1-18)
6.	15 Aug 2021	The Vanity of Wealth (6:1-12)
7.	22 Aug 2021	Counsel for a Good Life (7:1-29)
8.	29 Aug 2021	Keep the King's Command (8:1-17)
9.	5 Sep 2021	Living in the Face of Death (9:1-18)
10.	12 Sep 2021	True Wisdom (10:1-20)
11.	19 Sep 2021	The Mysterious Work of God (11:1-10)
12.	26 Sep 2021	Remember God in Your Youth (12:1-8)
13.	3 Oct 2021	The End of the Matter (12:9-14)

Note: Sermon titles for 1 August onwards are subject to change.

To register for on-site worship services:

Phone Registration:

• Call 6837 9201, 6837 9202, 6837 9203

Monday and Tuesday (10am to 4pm)

Online Self-registration: www.wesleymc.org/onsite-worship | Monday (10am) to Saturday (midnight)

To join the WMC Zoom Worship Services: https://wesleymc-org.zoom.us/j/86909077987 Meeting ID: 869 0907 7987 Passcode: WorshipFH

BIBLE READING DRIVE 2021 Daily Reflections on the Book of Ecclesiastes

n support of the Sermon Series on Ecclesiastes, church members began reading the Book during our Bible Reading Drive from 2 to 13 July 2021. The purpose is for members to read the Book once through before the start of the Sermon series.

Also, over those 12 days, our pastors and church leaders took turns to write daily reflections on each of the 12 chapters. They were posted on Telegram every morning. You may read their reflections over the remaining pages of this booklet. Although these are personal reflections of the writers, we do hope that they will encourage and edify you.

If you have not read the Book of Ecclesiastes, we would like to encourage you to do so. Read it once through. Or read one chapter a day, over the next 12 days by following the daily BRD reflections. Better still, write your own reflections in a journal. Ask yourself: What is God saying to you through the different chapters of Ecclesiastes.

Let's journey together as we study the Book of Ecclesiastes as a church.



BIBLE READING DRIVE 2021 Day 1 • Reflection: Friday, 2 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 1; Psalm 24**WRITER:**Rev Raymond Fong, Pastor-in-Charge**TITLE:Chasing Wind?**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 1, Psalm 24

OBSERVE:

The wise teacher or preacher, being the author of Ecclesiastes, declares that all in life is vanity which means all is like mere breath and mist: temporary and without substance. You simply cannot hold on to it.

The teacher is on a quest for meaning and purpose in life. He observes the patterns of Nature's processes: the rising and setting of the sun (v5), the circuits of the wind (v6), the flow of water to the sea; and concludes that it is nothing but meaningless repetition. He questions the meaning of our toil (v3), he wonders about the lack of satisfaction (v8) and laments the lack of anything new "under the sun" (v9) which means all that is on the earth. He has diligently searched for wisdom but yet concludes much wisdom and knowledge is vexatious (v18).

All is vanity and a chasing after the wind. Is that truly the case?

APPLY:

Through the teacher's musings, I come to my own place of sombre reflection. I am humbled to acknowledge that on my own, nothing can truly satisfy and is of true meaning. I will only be chasing the wind if all of life's striving and accomplishment is without God, the King of my life.

I am reminded that it is God who alone grants true purpose and meaning to my life. He is the one who grants satisfaction for my toil and He alone is able to create all things new (Isaiah 43:19).

Psalm 24 exhorts me to welcome the King! This King owns the earth and all that is in it (Ps 24:1). He is the only one who can bring true delight and meaning to His creation, to which I belong. May I always allow the King of glory into my life (Ps 24:7). May I have clean hands and a pure heart (Ps 24:4) so that I may live my life not as a meaningless pursuit, but a consecrated posture of worship and service to my King.

DO:

I will start the day with my heart centred on God through the spiritual disciplines of silence, meditation on Scripture, and worship.

I choose to obey His Word and surrender my day and work to God for His glory.

I rest in the assurance that He alone grants true purpose and meaning for my daily assignments, work and relationships.

PRAYER:

Lord, I confess I wrestle with the purpose of life at times, especially when there is so much evil and suffering in the world today. The pandemic has reminded me of the brevity of life and only You can grant lasting spiritual significance and meaning to all I do and undertake.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill my heart with Your presence. Cleanse me from my sin. Let me be surrendered to You and may my life be consecrated for Your purposes and glory. AMEN.



Day 2 • Reflection: Saturday, 3 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 2; Psalm 25**WRITER:**Aw Choon Hui, Lay Leader**TITLE:What Finally Counts**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 2

OBSERVE:

In Ecclesiastes 2, the teacher or author writes about his great experiment and makes conclusions as to what has lasting value and meaning in life – "Let's look for the 'good things' in life." (v1, NLT). The pleasures that he tests are:

- 1. Laughter
- 2. Wine
- 3. Landscaping & building projects
- 4. Amassing slaves & wealth
- 5. Indulging in sexual pleasure
- 6. Achieving fame & greatness

As the king over Israel in its golden age, he denied himself no pleasure as he had almost unlimited resources to get everything that he desired, and more. And for all the human pleasures that he indulged in, his conclusion was that everything was meaningless.

Even whether one is wise or foolish, both will still die and be remembered no more.

The crux is in vv24-26 where the writer concludes that real meaning is found by recognising that the source of all these pleasures is God. When we seek to please Him, He adds wisdom, knowledge and happiness, as well as the wealth gathered by sinners.

APPLY:

It is important to note that there is nothing wrong in the pleasures themselves as they are all God's gift to us. The danger is when I live solely to attain these pleasures and thereby let them take over my priorities in life, to the extent that my choices are no longer honouring or pleasing to God. The scary thing is that all this can be subtle and easily justifiable. But if I truly desire to please God, the Holy Spirit reveals the true motives of my choices, thereby causing me to repent and seek first His kingdom daily.

Verse 23 also struck me: "our days of labour are filled with pain and grief; even at night our minds cannot rest". It has been over a year of living under the pandemic, and I must admit that the challenging working environment and blurred lines between work, rest and church responsibilities have led to some weariness. And there are some nights where my mind is unable to fully rest, thinking about work, the health of family members and a long list of yet-to-do items. I take comfort in what Pastor Raymond Fong shared in his sermon, that the battle is the Lord's and although my best may not be good enough, God is telling me, "I alone am enough!".

A man of God once told me that at the end of the day, only 2 things will remain – the word of God and people. Everything else would be burnt up and become meaningless. Thus, investing in the word of God and helping people should be my overriding objective.

DO:

I want to live each day in a way that honours and pleases God in everything I do and say, such that it counts for His kingdom. So, at the close of each day, I will reflect on the following:

- 1. What did I do today that pleased God?
- 2. What did I do today that helped or encouraged someone else?

PRAYER:

Father, give me eyes to see and a heart of gratitude for the simple pleasures that you provide for me each day. Help me please you in all that I do and give me opportunities to help and encourage others. For I ask this in the name of my saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!



Day 3 • Reflection: Sunday, 4 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 3; Psalm 26**WRITER:**Alvin Chia, Associate Lay Leader**TITLE:Relish Each Moment Of Our Lives**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 3 and Psalm 26

OBSERVE:

Ecclesiastes 3 can be quite a depressing passage. It highlights the drudgery and toiling of our daily life. That everything appears to repeat itself in history and we will all go through the process of birth, constant changes in life, peaks and valleys, different experiences of joy, peace, pain, toiling and eventually death. Everything seems meaningless.

The latter part of the chapter covers God's judgement for all, a time to judge every deed. We are also poignantly reminded of the mortality of all living beings. Humans have no advantage over animals. "All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return." v20.

APPLY:

As I read the passage several times, I asked the Lord what are the messages He has for me? Upon meditation and pondering, I centred on the following key messages:

1. God is Sovereign and in control of all circumstances

I am reminded that our Almighty God is the Alpha and Omega. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. Regardless of the situation, He is in control. I need to learn to accept and be ready for different seasons and experiences of my life. I need to trust Him and believe that He will make all things beautiful in His time.

2. God will judge everyone and all things

I am reminded of personal accountability and to fear the Lord. To watch out for my own actions and not try to take matters into my hands. For moments when I feel aggrieved, to leave it at the foot of the cross and allow God to be the Judge in His time.

3. Nothing on this earth is permanent

I am reminded not to place my hope on earthly temporal things, including my family, above God. There will come a day when we will be separated on earth. I need to prioritise the matters of my life, especially work. More importantly, I need to be imbued with the right attitude to enjoy each moment as a gift from God and not be overly negative in handling challenges.

DO:

I will commit to:

- 1. Live one day at a time. To enjoy each day and each moment of my life with God. To allow His Sovereignty and Control to dictate and guide me in all that I do.
- 2. Refrain from being judgmental and allow God to deal with situations that cause me to feel aggrieved.
- 3. Prioritise and allocate time for impactful and godly tasks to glorify God.

PRAYER:

Father Lord, I thank You for Your Sovereignty and love for mankind. Thank You for reminding me that You are in control of all things and You will make all things beautiful in Your time. Life is hard and challenging. Please help me to abide in You so that I can learn to enjoy each moment of my life on earth, always remembering to give thanks for all things, good or bad. I entrust my life into Your hands. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



Day 4 • Reflection: Monday, 5 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 4; Psalm 27WRITER:Angelyn Peh, Associate Lay LeaderTITLE:Competition, Greed, Power And Authority

READ:

Ecclesiastes 4, Psalm 27

OBSERVE:

From the limited point of view of "under the sun", the writer pointed out 10 things that are "meaningless", out of which three are discussed in Chapter 4.

- 1. v4: "... I saw people try to succeed and be better than other people. They do this because they are jealous. They don't want other people to have more than they have...";
- 2. v8: "... I saw a man who has no family, he continues to work very hard. He is never satisfied with what he has...";

heir **26** BIBLE READING DRIVE 2021 | Daily Reflections tots, bis are 2"And based multitude v13-16: discussed about People, Politics, and Popularity – A young leader who is poor but wise will be popular with many people following him. But the ending is the same: later "those same people will not like him". (ERV)

APPLY:

My grandparents came from China before World War II, settled down but struggled through life as farmers. With the extremely limited income, they were constantly short of money to feed the family. Their poverty had also led them to being bullied, accused and oppressed. Needless to say, money was essential for daily survival. However, despite the hostile environment, they held fast to their ethical values then, and left us a lot of their golden teaching, for example:

- Never look down on people, never envy others' wealth. Just need to work hard, work smart with a clear conscience.
- Rather be let down by others, and never let others down.
 Don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you.
- Remember kindness and not hatred, always return with gratitude.

I love their teaching and took for granted that everyone should be like this during my younger days.

As I grew older, I realised that in real life, as mentioned in v4, people compete with jealousy, they rejoice when others lose their possessions, suffer in their relationships, and fail where they used to win. They find pleasure in the pain of others.

v8 truly describes our busyness in coping with many tasks, one after another to fight for more possessions, never ending..... until the pandemic hit us. We managed to slow down and reflect. I am reminded not to be soaked in busyness, but to treasure relationships now. v16 reminded me of the dirty games out there, fighting for political power and authority in order to grab more wealth. Although the name of GOD is not mentioned in this chapter, we can still relate to the teaching that man's power and authority is temporary, only GOD's wisdom is forever.

DO:

- I am living in a super competitive world now with lots of unknown factors. However, I believe that in real life, the biggest fear is not about competition, but jealousy. With God's guidance, I want to be able to compete, excel and be pleasing in His eyes with a pure heart.
- 2. I cannot see people with their tears without comforting them. I must be able to share others' worries and joys. As Paul teaches in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."
- 3. Continue to seek GOD's wisdom to lead me in all my trials and challenges, and not to let me fell into the trap of human power and authority.

PRAYER:

O LORD, You are my light and my salvation, You are the stronghold of my life. Today, as I learnt about competition, greed and power, please let me hold fast to your wisdom and guidance.

Your face, LORD, I will seek, please teach me your way, lead me in a straight path. Amen.



Day 5 • Reflection: Tuesday, 6 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 5; Psalm 28**WRITER:**Benjamin Kan, Chairperson, Finance**TITLE:Grateful Gifts, Diligent Steward**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 5; Psalm 28

¹⁵Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands. Ecclesiastes 5:15

¹⁸This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labour under the sun during the few days of life God has given them – for this is their lot. ¹⁹Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil – this is a gift of God. ²⁰They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart. Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 ⁸The LORD is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one. ⁹Save your people and bless your inheritance; be their shepherd and carry them forever. Psalms 28:8-9

OBSERVE:

Ecclesiastes contains the author's observations of the meaning and purpose of "life under the sun", that is, life apart from God. Chapter 4 ended with, "This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind." In Chapter 5, his two main messages were to fulfil one's vow to God without delay and that wealth, by itself, is meaningless.

My main observations are firstly in verse 15, we came into this world with nothing and as we come, so we will depart taking nothing of the earthly gains made from the many sleepless nights of toiling.

Secondly, in verses 18-20, the author observed that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labour under the sun. Also, gifts from God are not just their possessions but include the "few days of life God has given them" and their abilities to enjoy the possessions and be happy in their toil. Every step, from enjoying my career, to being fruitful in my career, to having good health, family and friends, to enjoying the fruits of my labour, is a gift from God.

APPLY:

God is the Author of my life and apart from Him, all my toils are meaningless or are just vapours that will soon disappear into nothingness. If I recognise my toils, possessions and being alive to enjoy them as gifts from God, I must be grateful for His blessings in my life and I must also enquire of God His higher purpose for such blessings. I must be a dutiful and diligent steward of such blessings. God wants me to enjoy His gifts of a fruitful career, possessions earned and good health to enjoy them, but it must not be to such extremes as to compromise either my well-being or the well-being of those around me. I must remember that all that I have are gifts from God and as such I have a duty to employ these gifts in accordance with His commands and desires. The greatest of His commands is to love God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my mind and to love my neighbour as myself. This passage also reminds me of a principle of our founder John Wesley, "Gain all you can, Save all you can and Give all you can."

DO:

Remind myself that all I have are gifts from God and I am to be grateful for His gifts and also be a good and diligent steward of them. Some of these gifts are for my enjoyment as He is my loving God and I will gratefully enjoy these gifts but these gifts are also given to me to further His kingdom work on earth and to bless others, especially those in need. I must be a grateful and careful steward of these gifts for I will have to account for them to God.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your amazing love and abundant grace. Teach me to be a grateful and diligent steward of Your rich gifts, to graciously enjoy Your beautiful blessings and more importantly, lest I forget, to mindfully bless those that You have placed in my path, sharing Your wonderful love and blessings with them. In the glorious and wonderful name of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen!



Day 6 • Reflection: Wednesday, 7 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 6; Psalm 29**WRITER:**David Mok, Chairperson, Discipleship & Nurture**TITLE:A Chase After The Wind**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 6

OBSERVE:

Ecclesiastes 6 paints a stark and bleak picture of the futility of life. The author wrote of how he saw a man whom God had given riches, wealth and honour, lacking in nothing of all that he desires, and yet the man had no capacity to enjoy them. Instead, a stranger succeeded him and enjoyed his wealth! What travesty!

The author also asked what is the point of living if one be endowed with many children but yet found no satisfaction in life? Moreover in the end, he did not even get a decent burial! This meaninglessness is like both the wise men and the fools, toiling for their desires but never satisfied. What is the use of being wise when both the wise and the foolish end up the same, chasing the wind? What the writer is trying to show, is the conclusive pointlessness in living "under the sun" - a life ignoring and living apart from God, in the face of the mysteries and realities of life.

APPLY:

I have experienced life ignoring God. Those were the days when I backslid. I was chasing one moment of fun after another, thinking that merriment was what life was all about. However inevitably, there will be a sense of emptiness after the moment of pleasure. It is inexplicable but the sense of meaninglessness was always there. This feeling could only be eased when I enter into His presence. It took me a while to understand the futility of life living "under the sun", but I am glad I did eventually.

What I have learned is that God created us, and he knows what we need and what sustains us. For life to be meaningful and fulfilling, I will need to know my destiny and my origins. The answer to these two questions can only be found in Christ, in our Father and in the Holy Spirit.

DO:

I want to remember the listlessness of life when I was living apart from God. I need to remember those days to contrast the joy and peace I am experiencing now, living under the Lordship of Christ. I do not want to return to those days – aimless and desolate. I want to stay purposeful and useful for Christ and for those around me.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank you for rescuing me from the desert plains. In your mercy, please keep me and help me to abide in You. For only in You can one find joy and the ultimate fulfilment of life on this side of heaven. Without you, life is all but vanity, meaningless, and a chase after the wind. Amen.



Day 7 • Reflection: Thursday, 8 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 7; Psalm 30**WRITER:**Alex Lai, Associate Lay Leader**TITLE:Trust His Heart**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 7 and Psalm 30 (NLT)

OBSERVE:

As I meditated on Ecclesiastes 7 (NLT), these 3 verses spoke to me.

v10 - Don't long for "the good old days." This is not wise.

The preacher reminds us not to always look back to the "good old days" because there is no way that we can really compare with the present days. We may have forgotten the problems that we experienced in the old days (Eccl 1:11). Even though we may be discontented with the present circumstances, we should trust God that He knows what is best for us.

v13-14 – Accept the way God does things, for who can straighten what he made crooked? Enjoy prosperity while you can, but when hard times strike, realise that both come from God. Remember that nothing is certain in this life.

The preacher reminds us that all things, both good and bad, come from God. We cannot change the way that God has made things, even though we may not like what is happening. Since God loves us and knows what is best for us, should we not accept both the good and bad with thankful hearts? "Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?" (Job 2:10, NLT)

APPLY:

Eccl 7:10 – When I read this verse, what came to mind is the work that the church leadership has been doing on the post pandemic church. Instead of a "To Do List", we decided to come out with a "Don't Do List" and the very first item on the list is "Don't cling on to what we were doing before." John Wesley says to hold to the old; but if the old hinders the gospel, then changes and innovations must be made. Wesley's ecclesiology was a working synthesis of old and new, tradition and innovation; and may I add - timeless and timely. In short, the message does not change but the methods have to change. As we move into a post pandemic or endemic world, we cannot be stuck in the same way of doing church and doing ministry. God is giving us an opportunity not to resume, but to reset our church and our ministries.

Eccl 7:13-14 – John Wesley experienced several crises of faith in his ministry; from the failed mission to America, to being banned from preaching by the church and the break from the Fetter Lane Society. It is through these circumstances that shaped his ministry and his understanding of the church. Likewise, the crucibles of our lives will shape us more significantly than the cruises of our lives. When we are in the valley, we have to remember that is where the soil is most fertile. We have to remind ourselves that God is sovereign and He is in control of our circumstances. This will not be the last pandemic that we will face in our lifetime. We need to build our faith on strong foundations so that we will be resilient and ready when the next crisis comes.

DO:

- 1. Even as I remember the past, I live in the present, and I look forward to the future.
- 2. Even though I cannot change the situation, I can change the way I react.

PRAYER:

Dear God, you are too wise to be mistaken. You are too good to be unkind. So when I don't understand, when I don't see your plan, when I can't trace your hand, I will trust your heart. Amen.

(Prayer adapted from the song "Trust His Heart" by Barbie Mason).


Day 8 • Reflection: Friday, 9 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 8; Psalm 31**WRITER:**Francis Lim, Chairperson, Property Management**TITLE:Obey God First Before Men**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 8, Psalm 31

OBSERVE:

In my reflection of Ecclesiastes 8, the verse that resonates with me is in **Ecclesiastes 8:9**, "All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time when **a man lords over others to his own hurt**." (NIV)

In another translation (NASB) of verse 9: "...... **a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt**."

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In this passage, the author of Ecclesiastes sketches a situation where the king is unjust and lords it over others to his hurt.

Meditating on Ecclesiastes 8, the main message that impresses upon me is: "What is my reaction in difficult situations, especially one in which I have no control; it's controlled by others".

The word that keeps impressing upon me is "**Wisdom**", or "**Be Wise**". In **Ecclesiastes 8:1**, it says: "Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter? A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam." (NASB)

It reminds me of **Psalm 111:10**, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever." (NASB)

APPLY:

In my daily life, whether in the market place, in ministries, or among family members, etc, I am not immune to disagreements, quarrels, encountering difficult situations or persons. The application for me is to reflect as a Christian, asking myself, "How should I behave or react when such situations arise?". In this regard, the author of Ecclesiastes 8 gives valuable advice that we can learn and adopt in our daily living.

One piece of advice is to keep smiling. [verse 1: and causes his stern face to beam. (NASB)] This reminds me to not be quick to anger but to compose myself so that I would have a clear mind.

Second lesson that I can learn is not to be quick to express my opposition and retaliate with words. As stated in verses 2-3, "I say, "Keep the command of the king because of the oath before God. Do not be in a hurry to leave him. Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases." (NASB) Thus, the lesson here for me is to avoid confrontation and also outright disobedience, especially when the difficult person is someone of authority or in leadership.

The third lesson which I can learn from this passage is Ecclesiastes 8:5, "He who keeps a royal command experiences no trouble, for **a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure**" (NASB). Hence I will seek to carry out the action or direction of the disagreement in ways which limit the damage it may cause and are within my conscience.

This reminds me, whether I am in the market place or in any places God puts me in, that humility, a servant heart and wisdom (be wise) would be the cornerstone of all things I do.

DO:

Matthew 10:16 states, "I am sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves, so be **wise** as serpents and innocent as doves." (NET)

Ultimately, in everything and every circumstance, I will obey God first before men as in Acts 5:29, "Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!" (NIV)

PRAYER:

Father God, forgive me of my sins. In my daily walk with you, grant me daily your provision, humility, wisdom and discernment. Guide my lips and heart so that everything that I do and say is pleasing unto you. Thank You Lord for your love for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.



Day 9 • Reflection: Saturday, 10 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 9; Psalm 32**WRITER:**Tony Tng, Chairperson, Missions**TITLE:Better Alive Than Dead**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 9:1-7

OBSERVE:

Everyone, righteous or evil, shared the same one destiny of death (v2). Tragic, bemoaned the preacher that because no one can escape death, their hearts are full of evil and they forgot how to be good (v3). He concluded, therefore, that evil is everywhere under the sun. They have no hope but await death (v2). His reflection leads him to affirm that everyone needs God, even the godly and wise. Without God, we would not know love and hate (v1). Isn't it so true? God is fair to every one of His created creatures. The sun shines and the rain falls on all, righteous or sinners, alike. We breathe the same air and drink the same water. There is no favour for anyone. However, he saw that it is still better to be alive on this earth because the living still have hope (v5). So, the preacher advised that we should wine and dine for it is the desire of God that we should be glad and happy. Enjoy while we can but do remember that it is God who approves (v7).

APPLY:

Since God is sovereign and the Maker of all, it is therefore His prerogative to give and take away. He decides that the sun will rise in the East and set in the West. He will decide when to bring down the rain and cause it to water the earth. He has a time and season for each and everything because He gives only what is good and always timely for us. His timeless gift is to love us. Who are we, sinners, to question God (Job 38:4)? We can make all the plans we want but it is the purpose of God that will prevail (Proverbs 19:21).

What would be my response to that? The preacher said that we are to dine and wine to our hearts' content because God approves of it. I would say that I should respond by giving my best to worship and praise Him, to serve Him and steward all that He has given me. Feast all I want, drink all I can but God hates gluttony (Proverbs 23:20-21) and poor stewardship (Luke 16:1-13). I need to be responsible even as I indulge in good food and wine. But, worshipping God has no end (Deuteronomy 6:5), singing His praises has no limit (Psalm 9:1-2), serving Him has no boundaries (1 Corinthians 9:19) and stewarding with my gifts is His desire (Matthew 25:21). I will respond to God's love while I am still alive. If I don't do so, when Death (eternal death) comes, there is nothing more I could do and there is no more hope. Perhaps the biggest hope is to come to receive the hope in Jesus Christ. The dead simply have no more part to play but the chance to receive that hope in Christ can only be found when we are alive on this earth. That is the moment when we can come to Christ in repentance and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour. If we missed the chance to accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, hence without God, then we would have lived a meaningless life on earth, just as the preacher said "vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

DO:

I want to live a meaningful life on this earth that is driven by the purposes of God. His plan is perfect and good, which is worthy of my pursuit.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, the Creator of all things in the sky, on earth and under the water. Who else but You can control the sun, rain and wind. You give and take away but Your love and promises are everlasting. Help me to respond to that wonderful love of Yours with praise and worship. With a grateful heart, I bow before Your majestic throne in awe and thanksgiving. In Christ's most precious name, I pray. Amen.



Day 10 • Reflection: Sunday, 11 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 10; Psalm 33WRITER:Ng Chai Seng, Secretary, LCECTITLE:The Heart Of The Wise

READ:

Ecclesiastes 10; Psalm 33

OBSERVE:

1. Ecclesiastes 10:2 "The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left."

These verses in Ecclesiastes 10 impressed on me: fools lack sense (v3); calmness can lay great offences to rest (v4); whoever digs a pit may fall into it (v8); words of the wise are gracious (v12); what you say may be reported (v20).

The book of Ecclesiastes does seem very daunting, especially when it begins with the saying "meaningless, meaningless,

everything is meaningless" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). However, there is a divine assurance when we turn our eyes kingdom-ward towards God and hope in Him. The author concludes with an exhortation to "fear God and keep his commandments; for God will bring every deed into judgment." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

Indeed, one can only grasp the true meaning of wisdom by fearing God and keeping His commandments. Gracious words are of the wise while lacking sense displays the heart's folly and engages in strife. Be mindful of thoughts that can lead to words and though unspoken, will find their way to the ears.

The passage describes the desirable pursuit of wisdom and forewarns the end result of folly.

2. Psalm 33:18 – "But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love."

Psalm 33 says: for the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does (v4); the LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love (v5); the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations (v11); blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He chose for His inheritance (v12).

The verses above nudged me to fear God and hope in His unfailing love – seek His purposes because He is trustworthy and faithful in all He does.

APPLY:

The Bible contains many wonderful words of wisdom. Life is full of choices which can lead to pleasant or undesirable consequences. God purposes for me to keep His commandments and walk wisely.

Words of the wise aptly spoken are seasoned with grace (Ecclesiastes 10:12). If left unchecked, while attempting to right an injustice or settle an unhappiness, angry thoughts can well up and get the better of me. I need to seek God and His wisdom.

What comes out of the mouth speaks from the heart. Thus, my heart has to be God-centred and inclined to the right (Ecclesiastes 10:2), and aligned to His heart's desire (Psalm 33:11).

It is always a timely reminder to fear God and place my hope in His unfailing love (Psalm 33:18). I must not let circumstances define me, but rather turn circumstances into experiences that draw me closer to God in wisdom.

DO:

I will keep myself in check by reading and reflecting on God's Word for wisdom and show grace in my words, thoughts and deeds. I will continue to seek God's strength and entrust all my circumstances to Him knowing that He is faithful and just.

PRAYER:

"Dear God, You are faithful and just. Grant me the strength to incline my heart to the right, and to keep Your commandments. Thank you for Your Word that is right and true. In Your unfailing love, guide me in Your truth and teach me always to entrust all my circumstances to You because You are watching over me (Psalm 33:14, 18). In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."



Day 11 • Reflection: Monday, 12 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 11; Psalm 34**WRITER:**Rev Adrian Ng, Pastor**TITLE:YOLO (You Only Live Once)**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 10:16 to 11:10

OBSERVE:

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 is a continuation from the previous chapter that talks about risks in life. From risks in the political realm (10:16-20) to risks in the economic realm (11:1-6), the teacher honestly talks about the uncertainty of life when we place our hopes and dreams on it. There are some who seem to be wiser amongst us that can navigate better and fortunate enough to gain from this uncertain world. Yet despite the precarious nature of everything in life, even though we could begin with the slothfulness of rulers in the morning (10:16), we are still called to be diligent and not to "let your hand go", to maintain a balance between responsibility and spontaneity.

The author then turns to give some practical advice on how to live in such a risks-filled world, that we can be fearless to follow the passions of our hearts (11:9), but also to remember not to exceed the bounds of what God approves, for He will surely bring us into judgement.

APPLY:

YOLO (You Only Live Once) is a phrase that has caught on with the young (and definitely those not so young) of my time. In a way, it challenges and spurs me on to take risks and stretches me out of my comfort zone for I only live once! However, the passage of Ecclesiastes speaks of God's reminders to:

- 1. Be diligent and wise in navigating the worldly political systems it is okay for me to work and relate with the kings, rulers and ways of the land.
- 2. Be a responsible steward of God's entrustments (time, money, relationships, service) it is okay for me to stretch myself and maximise my gifts and talents in my social engagements.
- 3. Be responsible and know my boundaries as a Christian for God will call me into judgement when I cross the line.

DO:

I am convicted to know that the world and all its systems, riches, glory and achievements will all perish one day. What's important for me will be – does my life count for God? I need to live for Jesus and bring Him glory with my whole life.

PRAYER (Serenity prayer):

Father, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.



Day 12 Reflection: Tuesday, 13 July 2021

READINGS:Ecclesiastes 12; Psalm 35**WRITER:**Alvin Tay, Chairperson, Communications**TITLE:The Conclusion: Fear And Obey God**

READ:

Ecclesiastes 12

OBSERVE:

The Book of Ecclesiastes started with the author declaring these words in verse 1:2: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." (Ecclesiastes 1:2, NIV)

Now 11 chapters later, in Chapter 12, the author concluded with the same lament: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!" (Ecclesiastes 12:8, NIV) In other versions such as NRSV, verse 12:8 reads: "Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher; all is vanity."

As Rev Raymond Fong wrote in his reflection on Chapter 1, all in life is vanity which means all is like mere breath and mist: temporary and without substance. You simply cannot hold on to it.

Then I come to the final two verses of Ecclesiastes – 12:13-14 – which I feel are the most life-changing verses in the Book. The two verses read:

¹³Now 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.
¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Yes, only a life with God at the centre, and a life lived for God, is meaningful. Fear and Obey God! God will judge us on how we have lived this life.

APPLY:

Being the person to reflect on the final chapter of Ecclesiastes, I had the privilege of reading all the BRD reflections of the previous 11 chapters. I asked myself whether there was a common theme or pattern throughout the 11 reflections. Indeed, there was: Without God, everything under the sun is meaningless. It's like chasing the wind. But everything under the Son (Jesus Christ, that is) is meaningful.

Jesus reminded us in John 15:5: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." Now that I am retired (since 2018) and looking back on my life, I could see two phases in my spiritual journey – life without God prior to 2011, and life with God (2011 and beyond). Pre-2011, I was following the Way of the World. I was striving and, yes, trying to chase the wind. My main life purpose then was to climb the corporate ladder. So I rose from being a newspaper intern to becoming its editor. But I was not really contented nor at peace as there were many things in life that were beyond my control. Until 2011 when Proverbs 3:5-6 spoke to me during a DISCIPLE 1 class – "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Slowly but steadily, I surrendered more and more of my life to God.

There is a saying that goes like this: If I run on my own, it's a **race**. If I run with God, it's G**race**! God's Grace is sufficient for me. He controls everything – including the wind! Amazingly I did better at work post-2011 when God was with me, than previously on my own without God. More importantly, I finally found meaning in life – and contentment.

DO:

I will trust and obey God, for He is good. I will communicate with God daily through Meditation on Scripture as well as Prayer. And I will continue to serve Him, in humility and out of gratitude.

PRAYER:

Abba Father, you are the difference between a meaningless life and a meaningful one. You are the source and giver of life's true meaning and purpose. Life is futile without you. Thank you, Lord, for showing me the way to a meaningful life these past 10 years. Help me to put you at the centre of my life, always! In Jesus' name I pray. Amen! Come, Holy Spirit, fill my heart with Your presence. Cleanse me from my sin. Let me be surrendered to You and may my life be consecrated for Your purposes and glory. AMEN.

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