

ECCLESIASTES



how to LIVE no MATTER what

Sermon Study Guide April 27, 2025

Lead Pastor Brian Bales - How to Live ~*No Matter What*

The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun? - Ecclesiastes 1:1-3 (NIV'84)

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. So..... How do you want to live? We begin this new series with that question and on any given day your answer might vary. But how we live matters in light of eternity.
 - ➡ So how would you answer that question today?
2. Brian mentions that Ecclesiastes has been called the most beautifully confusing book in the Bible.
 - ➡ What about Ecclesiastes seem confusing to you and where do you see the beauty of King Solomon's words and his perspective on life?
 - ➡ Why are you drawn to study a potentially scary book like Ecclesiastes? Why might you want to avoid it?
3. Opening Words v.1-3
 - ➡ What thoughts or emotions surface when you read these words "*Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.*"?

➡ How do those words and the emotions behind them offer you *hope*? Are you surprised or puzzled by the idea that this book of wisdom holds hope in the words written so long ago?

4. The Type of Book and the Author

➡ How should the styles of writing (poetry, history, epistles) influence how we read and interpret scripture?

➡ How specifically does wisdom literature invite us to approach God's word?

➡ What assumptions do you have that are being "poked" by the author of Ecclesiastes in just the 3 opening verses?

5. A Meaningless Life Under the Sun?

➡ If you have suffered a significant loss, life may have seemed meaningless in those first weeks, months or longer. How did you move beyond those feelings toward regaining a sense of hope?

➡ When life's events don't make sense, where do you turn to for answers?

➡ Solomon is asking a question: "What do we gain from all the labor of our life here on earth?" Why is he asking this question?

➡ What is the message behind his words? What word offers you a clue as you re-read the first 3 verses?

➡ Why do you think God included this passage in scripture?

6. Two Options for Living

Brian talked about two options for living as we study the book of Ecclesiastes:

Option 1 – This life is all there is, so live for yourself and do what you want.

Option 2 – There is more to life than this, even if we don't understand it.

➡ Which of these options sounds more like your approach to life today?

➡ What do you do when you find yourself living in both camps - Option #1 and Option #2?

7. How Are We Listening?

Brian describes at least three types of listeners:

○ Group 1 – You are trying to find meaning and are unsure if God exists

○ Group 2 – You believe in God, but the circumstances of life tell you to just live for yourself

○ Group 3 – You have been following God, but you are discouraged

➡ Which of the three listeners do you most identify with and why?

Wrap Up: In a world where so much of life can feel like a fleeting moment in time like mist, like vapor, consider today this question asked again, in light of eternity "*how do you want to live?*"

This week, begin to read the book of Ecclesiastes and as you do, read through the lens of Hope.