



Sermon Study Guide June 8, 2025

Brian Bales – How to Live No Matter What: *Confronting Hevel*

So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun.

When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth—his eyes not seeing sleep day or night— then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it. (Ecclesiastes 8:15-17, NIV84)

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. Embracing the Gifts

- Who do you know that found joy even in a difficult time in their life? Did their joy seem genuine and if yes, what set them apart and how did you process their joy?

- How often do you find yourself just muddling through your week with no real sense of joy in even the small things?

- Take a minute here to name/list 3 gifts that you know are from God.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- How does this shift your perspective toward experiencing joy in a different way?

2. The Mysteries of Life and Why we Search

- When life seems *meaningless* do you take your pressing “life questions” to God?
- Who else or where else might you go to before you finally get to God Himself and why do you wait?
- What question do you have for God today that He still has not answered? How are doing in that time of silence and waiting?

3. The Possibility of Joy

- Brian mentions three categories of trust we might have in our relationships:
 1. Complete distrust
 2. Unknown
 3. Complete trust
- Think of some significant people in your life. Which category would you place them in and why? How does this impact your relationship with them?
- Which category have you placed God in and why? Depending on your answer, what have been some barriers to completely trusting God?

- How do you connect joy to your relationship with God?

4. The Pathway to Joy

- Consider any part of your life that is causing you pain or discomfort. How does your relationship with God impact how you view the pain and discomfort?

- Think of 3 truths about God that you know from your life and from scripture that are reliable.

5.

- How could these truths about God and your relationship with Him speak to you even in your pain and despite unanswered questions?

1. God sent Jesus to die for us.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16 (ESV)

2. We matter to God, and He loves us.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8 (ESV)

3. God only gives good gifts.

Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! - Matthew 7:9–11 (ESV)

Read this passage and describe the hope offered in these words: *And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” - Revelation 21:5 (ESV)*

A FINAL THOUGHT

Corrie ten Boom, a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp, often spoke about finding freedom even within the confines of such places as Ravensbrück, saying, *“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”* In this life, we always have a choice.

1. We can choose to live weighed down by fear and anxiety, seeing only the fleeting, frustrating “*hevel*” in the world around us.

2. Or, we can choose to know God, trusting in who He is and how deeply He loves us – acknowledging the reality of our world, yet embracing the good gifts from Him.