

# **Ecclesiastes in a Nutshell**

- Written by one old man quoting another old man to his son
- Goal is to impart wisdom about how to live a meaningful life
- Main point is that all the things we look to for meaning under the sun are vapor will never satisfy us apart from God

## Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

These are the words of the Teacher, King David's son, who ruled in Jerusalem. "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!" What do people get for all their hard work under the sun?

# Two Key Terms for the Teacher

## 1. Under the Sun

-All the things we go to for meaning in life apart from God

-Pleasure, Work, Wealth, Intellect, Romance, Fame, Power, Politics, Time

## 2. Vapor (hevel)

-Translated as "meaningless" here

-There word image is purposeful

# **Principles of Wisdom for a Life of Meaning**

1. Without a God above the sun,  
all the good things under the sun  
are like vapor.

2. Learn to enjoy the simple  
good things of life as gifts of  
God.

# **A Theology of Enjoyment**

The Timing of Enjoyment

The Mindset of Enjoyment

The Surprise of Enjoyment

The Method of Enjoyment

# **The Timing of Enjoyment**

**Now! Enjoy the simple good things of life today.**

## Ecclesiastes 2:24

So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God.

## Ecclesiastes 3:13

And people should eat and drink  
and enjoy the fruits of their labor,  
for these are gifts from God.

## Ecclesiastes 3:22

So I saw that there is nothing better for people than to be happy in their work. That is our lot in life. And no one can bring us back to see what happens after we die.

## **Ecclesiastes 5:18-20**

Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.

## Ecclesiastes 8:15

So I recommend having fun,  
because there is nothing better for  
people in this world than to eat,  
drink, and enjoy life.

## Ecclesiastes 9:7

So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this!

One of the most counter-cultural things you could do today is to enjoy a normal moment in normal ways with normal people.

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# **The Mindset of Enjoyment**

Grace! Enjoy the simple good things of life ... as gifts from God.

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- God didn't need to create you.
- God didn't have to keep you.
- God doesn't owe you.

## Philippians 4:8

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

“The command in v.8 to think about all the wonderful and lovely things listed here runs directly opposite to the habits of mind instilled by the modern media. Read the newspapers! Their stock and trade is anything that is untrue, unholy, unjust, impure, ugly, of ill repute, vicious, and blameworthy. Is that a true representation of God’s good and beautiful world?....

....How are you going to celebrate the goodness of the creator if you feed your mind only on the places of the world which humans have made ugly? How are you going to take steps to fill your mind instead with all the things that God has given us to be legitimately pleased with and to enjoy and celebrate.”

-N.T. Wright

# **The Surprise of Enjoyment**

God commands it!

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## Luke 7:34

"The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!'"

-Tithe #1 - Lev 27:30-33 mandates 10% of all the produce of one's land and flocks be given to the Lord annually. Num 18:8-32 explains these offerings were to be given to the Levites.

-Tithe #2 – Dt 14:22-27 mandates an additional tithe of produce and flocks be eaten at the sanctuary annually.

-Tithe #3 – Dt 14:29 commands every third year, an additional tithe would go to local distribution centers to be given to the “the immigrants, orphans, and widows”.

-Craig Blomberg (biblical scholar) – “Pro-rated annually, these added up to a 23.33% gift.”

## Deuteronomy 14:22-26

“You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the Lord your God chooses for His name to be honored—and eat it there in His presence. This applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. Doing this will teach you always to fear the Lord your God.

## Deuteronomy 14:22-26

Now when the Lord your God blesses you with a good harvest, the place of worship He chooses for His name to be honored might be too far for you to bring the tithe. If so, you may sell the tithe portion of your crops and herds, put the money in a pouch, and go to the place the Lord your God has chosen.

## Deuteronomy 14:22-26

When you arrive, you may use the money to buy any kind of food you want—cattle, sheep, goats, wine, or other alcoholic drink. Then feast there in the presence of the Lord your God and celebrate with your household.

Median Income - \$64,977

Multiplied by - 3,000 people

Multiplied by - 10%

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Party Tithe! - \$19,493,100

## John 12:4-7

But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray Him, said, “That perfume was worth a year’s wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.” Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself. Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for My burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me.”

# **Method of Enjoyment**

Approach with discipline and  
self-control

<b><i>Sin</i></b>	<b><i>Virtue</i></b>
Pride	Humility
Greed	Charity
Lust	Chastity
Envy	Kindness
Wrath	Patience
Sloth	Diligence
Gluttony	Temperance

Are discipline and self-control  
the words you would use to  
describe your relationship  
with food, drink, and work?

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