

Ecclesiastes

the meaning of life

Study Guide



A note from Pastor Jonathan

What happens when we seek ultimate meaning, purpose and identity outside of relationship with the Creator God? What happens when we're desperate for the answers to life but seem to find none? What happens when our souls get wearied from the constant pursuit of pleasure and possessions? These are enormous questions of life and meaning that Ecclesiastes grapples with in the timeless complexity and messiness of reality. Ultimately, the ancient philosopher recalibrates our hearts, minds, and lives to pursue ultimate meaning in the Ultimate God because God alone holds the key to the meaning of life.

Within this study guide, you'll find several things:

- space to take notes for each message
- questions for discussion & devotion
- application exercises

“The conclusion, when all has been heard: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person”
Ecclesiastes 12:13

For His Glory,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'J' being particularly large and stylized.

Jonathan Alexander
Senior Pastor

AUGUST 1 • WEEK 1
THE MEANING OF LIFE
Ecclesiastes 12:1–14

Message Notes:

Questions for discussion & devotion

1. If you were to condense the “meaning of life” to one sentence, what would it be?
2. Who are some wise people in your life, and why do you view them as wise?
3. What are the most important values in your life and how can you begin or continue to live them out right now?
4. What are one or two things you want said about you at your memorial service? How can you live life backwards?

Application Exercise>>

Life Values & Vision

>>Life Values

1. What are the qualities and characteristics of life that are most important to you? How does the gospel inform and shape those values? Identify and write down the top 5-7.

2. How are you living those out in your life right now? Which ones are “real” values (i.e., you’re actually living those out in your life), and which ones are “aspired” values (values that you want to live out but aren’t at this time)?

>>Life Vision

1. If you could do anything and not fail, what would it be?

2. What do you want said about you at your memorial service?

3. When you think of a “preferred” future, what do you see?

4. How will you begin or continue to move in the direction of your life vision & purpose?

AUGUST 8 • WEEK 2
CHASING THE WIND
Ecclesiastes 1:1–18

Message Notes:

Questions for discussion & devotion

1. Does it seem that life goes quickly? Why?
2. What things have you sought in your life other than Jesus? Have you experienced a futility in those pursuits?
3. How can you manage your time more wisely so that you can live in and live out your values and vision for your life and your world?
4. What is one specific thing you'll do differently to manage your time and resources more wisely and intentionally?

Application Exercise>>

Wise “Life” Time Management

1. Write down your top 5-7 life values and vision?

2. Record how you spend your time over a week. Put each activity in a category, and assign a percentage to how much time you spend each week engaging in that activity or category.

3. Is there a gap between how you spend your time and what you say is most important? Be specific.

4. What can you change or modify to spend your time more wisely in order to live out your calling, values and vision?

AUGUST 22 • WEEK 3
BACK IN THE BOX
Ecclesiastes 2:1–11, 5:10–6:12

Message Notes:

Questions for discussion & devotion

1. Do you struggle with materialism and consumerism?
2. Do you consider yourself a sacrificially “generous” person? Do others see you this way as well?
3. How are you investing and stewarding your time, talents, treasure, and touch? Give one specific example and how it has shaped and changed your world.
4. In what area would you like to invest more of yourself and your resources?
5. What steps will you take this week to begin that investment?

Application Exercise>>

Godly Stewardship

1. Do you live with a budget? What are the biggest categories in your budget?

2. How do you spend your money? Are you a saver or spender?

3. What percentage of your income do you give towards charitable giving? Are you satisfied with this amount? What can you do to be even more sacrificially generous?

4. What is one way in which you can become more generous in each of the following areas?

>> Time

>> Talent

>> Treasure

>> Touch

AUGUST 29 • WEEK 4
SEASONS OF LIFE
Ecclesiastes 3:1–22

Message Notes:

Questions for discussion & devotion

1. What season of life are you in right now... spring, summer, autumn or fall?
2. What is it like to live in that season of life? What's the best aspect and the most difficult aspect about this season?
3. Do you ponder eternity much? Why or why not? What do you think of when you consider eternity?
4. Are you looking for people who have walked this season before you? Who are some people you know who have walked this season before?
5. How can you seek out someone to connect with and mentor who needs help walking through a season of life that you've already been through?

Application Exercise>>

Mentoring Relationships

1. What are the areas of your life where you could use some mentoring and guidance (relationships, marriage, family, finances, professional, etc.)?

2. Who are people that you know and respect who have experienced success in these areas?

3. Who are the people in your world and sphere of influence that you could spend time with to mentor and guide in areas where you have experienced success?

4. What is your plan to seek out either someone to be mentored by or to mentor?

SEPTEMBER 5 • WEEK 5
PURSUIING WISDOM
Ecclesiastes 7:1–29

Message Notes:

Questions for discussion & devotion

1. What does it mean to be wise?
2. What does it mean to be foolish?
3. How are you pursuing wisdom in your life right now?
4. What does it mean to “fear God”?
5. Where can you grow in your prayer life (gratitude, confession, meditation upon the Word, praying for discernment)?

Application Exercise>>

Prayer & Discernment

Practice this pattern in your prayer life for one week.

>>Gratitude

Be specific on the things you are thankful for... especially the things you are thankful for in the past day or two.

>>Confession

Keep short accounts with God and be honest and transparent.

>>Meditation

Read slowly through a passage in the Word. What is the original intent of the author and how does that intent relate to your life right now? How is this passage calling you to see Jesus differently? How is this passage calling you to change for Christ-likeness?

>>Discernment

What are the choices that you need to make in your life right now? Ask the Spirit to give you wisdom and the heart and mind of Christ to discern what is best.

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Resources Resources Resources Resources

>> *Be Satisfied* – Warren Wiersbe

A good, biblical study companion for Ecclesiastes.

>> *Desiring God* – John Piper

Piper's hallmark book on how to grow in desiring God above all else.

>> *Knowing God* – J.I. Packer

Packer's classic on growing in knowing who our great God fully is.

>> *Maximizing Your Effectiveness* – Aubrey Malphurs

Learn how to discover and develop your divine design for serving God and His Kingdom.

>> *The Generosity Factor* – Ken Blanchard and S. Truett Cathy

A great read to learn how to be a sacrificially generous person.

>> *Managing Transitions* (2nd edition) – William Bridges

A good book for making the most of change in life.

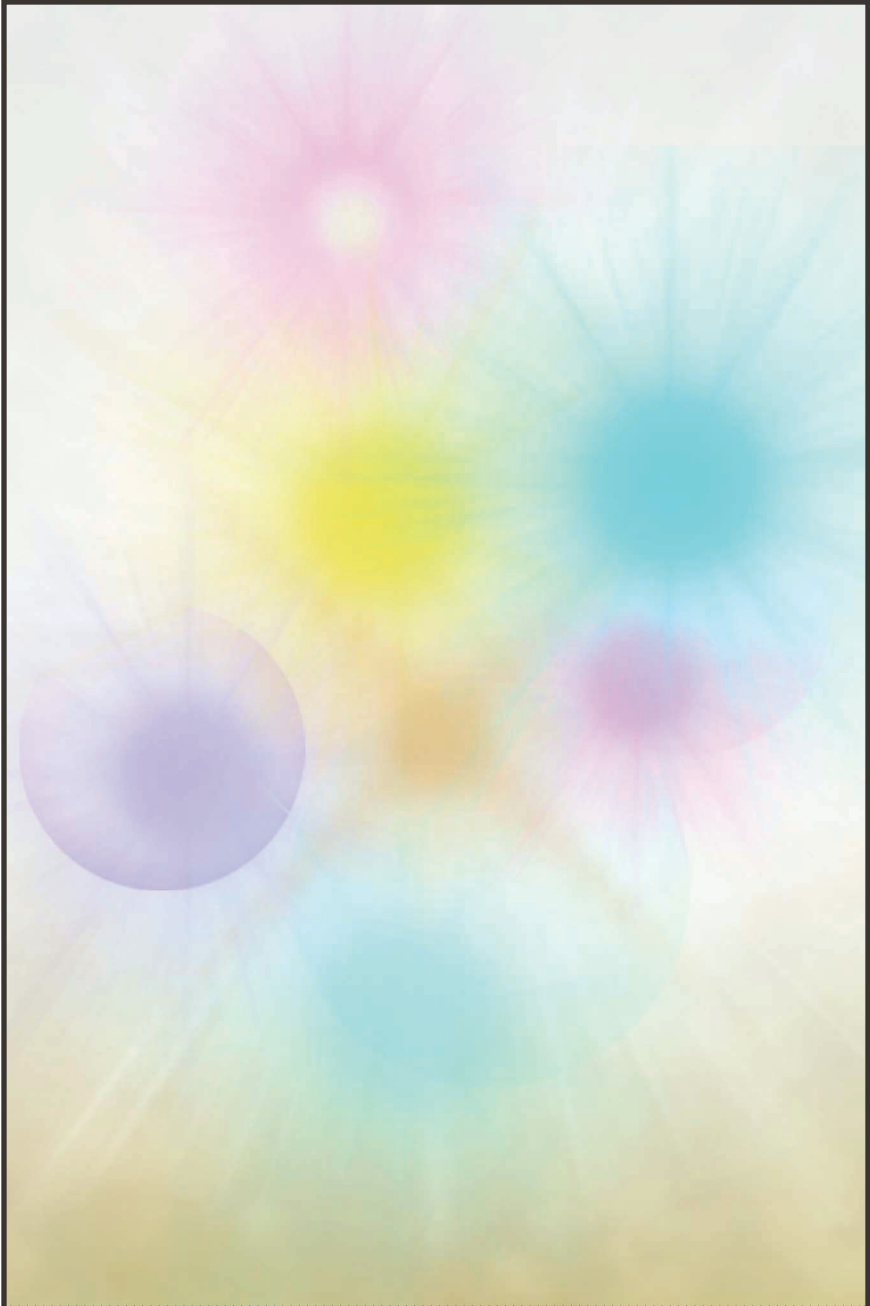
>> *Connecting* – Paul Stanley & J. Robert Clinton

A solid book for mentoring relationships.

Mark Your Calendars>>

- **AUGUST 8 | Wacky Wheelays**
All-inclusive community field day for people of all abilities. 3 pm at Bothell High School. Email for info, wackywheelays@nsb.org
- **AUGUST 15 | Summer Sunday**
ONE combined All-Church service & picnic, 4-7 pm at the Freed Farm.
Food, music, worship and baptisms.
- **AUGUST 21 | CommunitySERVE Day**
Join together with other Eastside churches to serve our local community. Sign up, communityserveday.org
- **SEPTEMBER 5, 12, 19 | Small Group Signup**
- **SEPTEMBER 18 | Men's Breakfast**
- **SEPTEMBER 26 | All Church Meeting**
- **OCTOBER 2 | Common Threads**
- **OCTOBER 15-17 | Men's Retreat**
- **OCTOBER 22 | Talk Time Hoedown**
- **OCTOBER 30 | Harvest Carnival**

Details on these and other events at nsb.org



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