

# A Visitor's Guide to the Old Testament

## A Quick Discussion Guide on the Book of Ecclesiastes

1. The Wisdom Literature of Proverbs presents the point of view of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
The Wisdom Literature of Ecclesiastes presents the point of view of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
With which of the two books to you feel a greater affinity? Why?
2. If you knew you only had a few months to live, list TWO to FOUR important conclusions/bits of advice that you would want to hand on to the next generation:
  - 1)
  - 2)
  - 3)
  - 4)
3. Solomon sampled all that "life under the sun" had to offer, attempting to gain perspective from knowledge, pleasure, achievement, work, and human experience (among others). In each of the following stages of life, what are the sources "under the sun" from which we gain perspective? Why is it important to understand the limitations of those sources?
  - a) Kids
  - b) High School age
  - c) College
  - d) Young adult (post college)
  - e) Middle-age
  - f) Retired
4. How should a person respond to Solomon's famous poem in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8?
  - *Be content...*
  - *Be alert...*
  - *Be determined...*
  - *Be willing...*

5. Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 talk about “community”.
  - Why is community important?
  - Can you live without it? Why or why not?
  - What characteristics are people looking for in community? What are YOU looking for?
  
6. Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 puts us in silent awe before God. In part, it addresses the skill of listening. Why is it important to be a good listener and how does one become better at it?
  
7. Ecclesiastes 5:8ff speaks to one’s attitude toward “stuff” or wealth.
  - How might “generosity” fit as an antidote to the pitfalls of wealth?
  - What role does God play in our finances/possessions?
  - What “simple” things does Solomon conclude are better than great wealth? Give THREE useful ways in which a person can put those simple things into practice:
    - 1)
    - 2)
    - 3)
  
8. Why is Ecclesiastes 7:20 critical to our understanding of God’s grace?
  
9. Ecclesiastes 9ff is highlighted in the NIV as “A Common Destiny for All”.
  - ❖ What is that common destiny?
  - ❖ What are the fears and anxiety that people have about death?
  - ❖ As with much of Ecclesiastes, this chapter can come across as depressing. But what is the bigger picture that Solomon wants us to contemplate/grasp?
  
10. One commentator had this to say about Ecclesiastes 11,12, “In the final two chapters of Ecclesiastes the Teacher’s tone begins to change and he begins to challenge the listener to live a life that is risky. We need to live lives that are wise but aggressive.” Do you agree? Why or why not? When was the last time you did something “risky”?
  
11. Solomon’s chased after meaning or contentment from one thing to the next... and concluded that every avenue “under the sun” ended up *hevel*. In the end, Solomon advised something *not* “under the sun”, but rather that we “fear God and keep his commandments”. What are some characteristics of a life that is lived in goldly fulfillment?