

The Song of a Disillusioned Yuppie

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

INTRO:

Yuppie?

When is the last time you said that word?

A yuppie was a Young Urban Professional characterized by expensive tastes and specializing in self-centeredness.

This is the best way to describe the author of Ecclesiastes.

But it is not perfect.

Yuppies are usually still on the make, but this man already had it made!

Yuppies are aspirational, but the author of Ecclesiastes had arrived.

By any standard, he already had everything anyone's heart could desire.

He even goes to a lot of trouble to spell it out for us.

Isn't that nice?

He just wanted to be sure we didn't think anything was missing!

He was wise.

He was rich.

He had provided himself with every pleasure.

Simply put, he denied himself nothing his heart desired.

And for those of us with a work ethic, this guy delighted in work.

But when he stepped back to survey it all, he was quite sad and disillusioned.

Why?

Well, as Augustine said,

You made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless, until it rests in You.

When the salaries of professional athletes began to increase irrationally, one beneficiary of the upward spiral was glad for reasons other than money.

He said, as a Christian, that he felt the huge salaries would make many athletes turn to God.

They would discover that the money didn't satisfy.

They would discover that nothing short of God would satisfy.

ME:

I don't think that this happened exactly as this fellow thought it would.

Perhaps, in a case or two.

Maybe, but maybe not even then.

More money often brings *more sense of security* and *less need for a divine downer* telling you what you need in life.

YOU:

What do you think?

Did the multi-million dollar salaries earned for hitting a ball, throwing a ball in a basket, or carrying a ball over a white line cause the athletes to turn to God?

Maybe the money caused them to turn further away from God.

Did any of you earn millions playing professional “sportsball”?

No?

Let’s see what God can teach us about all this from this Song of a Disillusioned Yuppie.

Let’s open our ears and our hearts in prayer first...

GOD:

Ecclesiastes 1:1 The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

3 What do people gain from all the toil at which they toil under the sun?

4 A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

5 The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises.

6 The wind blows to the south, and goes around to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.

7 All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow.

8 All things are wearisome; more than one can express; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing.

9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.

10 Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has already been, in the ages before us.

11 The people of long ago are not remembered, nor will there be any remembrance of people yet to come by those who come after them.

WE:

It has been said that we have been made with a God-shaped void, and nothing else will fit it. **Why do we think others things will fill us up? More money, more stuff, more friends? How could they ever fill this place prepared for God??**

As the writer, let's call him "**the yuppie**," continues to view the human landscape, he provides quite a few nuggets of wisdom:

- That two are better than one, because they can **lift** one another.
- That we should show **generosity** without hope of reciprocation.
- That **wisdom** is better than might.

But he returns quickly to his *morbid mood* as he observes the common destiny of all, whether righteous or wicked. And that all the people who gain so much wealth, never have a chance to enjoy it.

It didn't help that **the yuppie** had no conception of life after the grave. This made all the achievement in this life so meaningless. The **wise** and the **achieving** would be forgotten as quickly as the as the **good for nothing** and the **fool**. Our instincts tell us that eternity is needed to set some of this right—especially for those who live good and kind lives but seem to get less of the benefits than those who are self-seeking, self-serving and cruel.

The yuppie lays out his theme. He lived in a world full of vane futility and frustration. Some point out that he predicted what Paul said in [Romans 8:20](#). Paul wrote that Creation has been subjected to this futility. Human beings, struggling to live, meet frustration at every turn. One looks back to the record of sin's entry into human-life.

People chose to become self-centered and self-guided rather than remaining God-centered and God-guided.

And so, humanity became earthbound and frustrated, and this book thinks that there is no firm foundation under the sun for humanity to build on in a way that helps them find **meaning, satisfaction**, and the **purpose of existence**. “**Under the sun**” is used twenty-nine times in this book and nowhere else in the Bible. This shows that the Teacher's interest was universal and not limited to only his own time and people and land.

In verses 4-11, the yuppie dove right into a search for ultimate truth and stability in nature and in human history. Here he is like a scientist, working with the experience of the world. He must simplify everything to a mutually dependent series of cause and effect. The yuppie cited examples of research into repetitive phenomena. He begins with four basic facts of the created order:

(1) the solid earth,

(2) the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies,

(3) air currents, and

(4) the flow and evaporation of water. South and north are selected as a balance to the east and west of the sun.

Scientists define the physical laws that have always existed and operated. When it comes, though, to origins or purpose, there is nothing a scientist can tell us from nature that will give the meaning of life. The biblical view of nature, however, is that it testifies to a Creator. It does not **compel** belief in him. But the yuppie is concerned with proof and not with testimony. He believes that meaning and security cannot be found in nature alone. **If everything cycles endlessly, how can we break out of the experiential circle into a state that leads somewhere? What is the true meaning to be found in nature? Is it found in the beauty of spring or in the violence of the storm and the earthquake?**

It is similar in the study of history. **If the solid earth gives no stability, what help is there in an endless succession of birth and death?** History shows both men and women struggling and striving to find meaning in life, but all in vain. Every generation looks for something satisfying and new. Everything “**new**” can only be understood as derived from and improved upon “**new**” things from the past. Certainly, there have been many inventions. But in the limited context the yuppie probably has in mind any invention that might enable humanity to break out of nature and history into meaning that transcends this sense of futility. Women and men have not

found it. Each generation, thinks of itself as the greatest in the history of generations but they still cannot find an answer that satisfies.

The yuppie has confronted us with a situation that we might call “**existential**.” Humanity exists in a series of experiences. Men and women cannot discover meaning in any of them. All we can do is exist and make the best of what comes. Or we can just give up altogether. Yet most people still believe that life has some meaning. *If only they could find it.* The disillusioned yuppie thinks that God has given something to us that he did not give to the rest of the animal world:

The never ending, anxiety producing, need to make sense of life and to work toward an ideal that is bigger than us.

An animal lives within the cycle of its **instincts** and **drives**. We were created in the likeness of God. We look for meaning so that we can control and direct our instincts and desires. Someone has said that it is better to be **discontented** like Socrates because he cannot solve his problems than to be a **contented** pig. It may seem easier to abandon the search for meaning and to downgrade to an animal level. Even those who give up often know the restlessness and the stings of conscience that belong to themselves as human beings. We are creatures who need the life and illumination that come from God.

THE SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

***God made us for himself and our hearts are restless
until they rest in God***

YOU:

**What have you tried to force into the God shaped hole in your heart?
Has it satisfied you? Have you offered the space to God?** I hope you will. Perhaps you've evicted God to see how those other hinge worked out.
**If you did that, how did that work out did you? Why don't you allow
God to renew the lease on your heart?**

CLOSE:

It is good to know that the disillusioned yuppie comes at last to better and surer ground. Looking back on his life he realizes people should think about God as early as possible in life. He senses that the years of life slip by so quickly and that suddenly one comes to a place where sensual pleasures are very few and far between. He did not like it...still he worries that it all meaningless. This has to do with the fact that he has no concept of eternity in his heart or philosophy.

In the end he does come around, kind of, in a way. He urges that one should fear God and keep his commandments. This is our whole duty. Someday he is sure that God will bring to judgment every one of our deeds, including the ones we think are hidden. It is not very inspirational, I guess, as it does not seem the yuppie had inspirational faith. His vision of

life was short-sighted and limited to this world. He needed to know more of God and eternity.