

Eternal PERSPECTIVE *Ecclesiastes*

BIBLE TEXT | ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

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

3 What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils 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 hastens to the place where it rises.

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

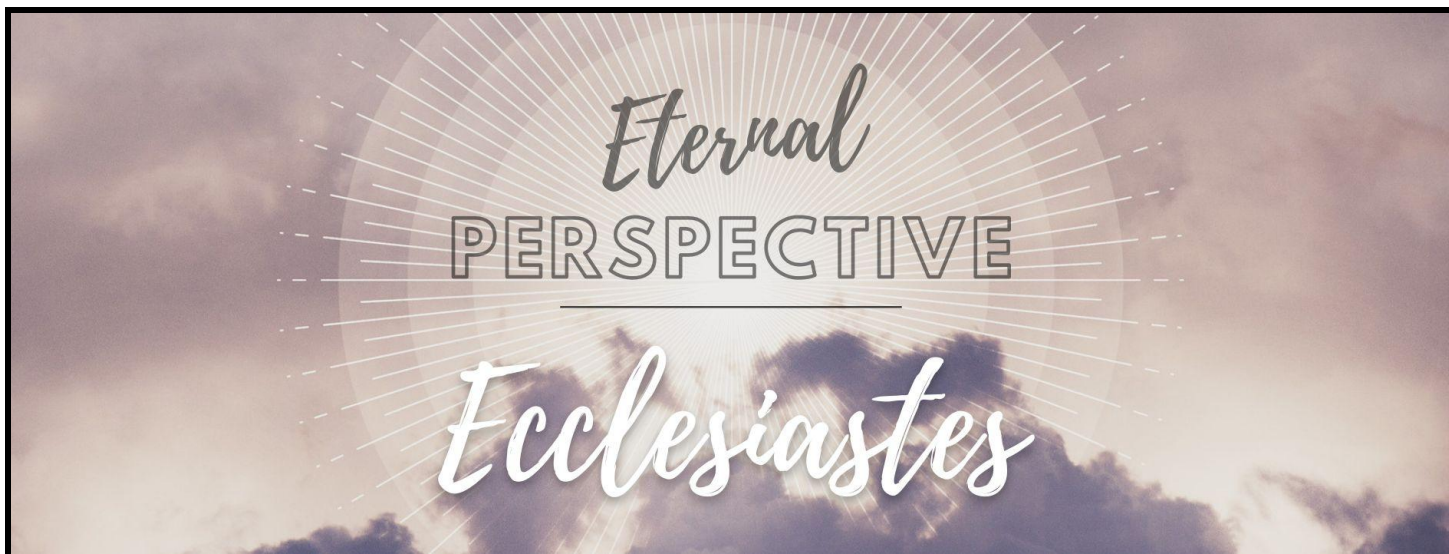
7 All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.

8 All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

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

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

11 There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.



DEVOTIONAL FOR ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

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As we embark on Ecclesiastes, let's take a quick look at Solomon's background. Solomon is the son of David (of David and Goliath, among many notable moments!) who would become the King of Israel and referred to as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). Solomon also became King of Israel, and his wisdom and wealth surpassed all (1 Kings 3:7-14).

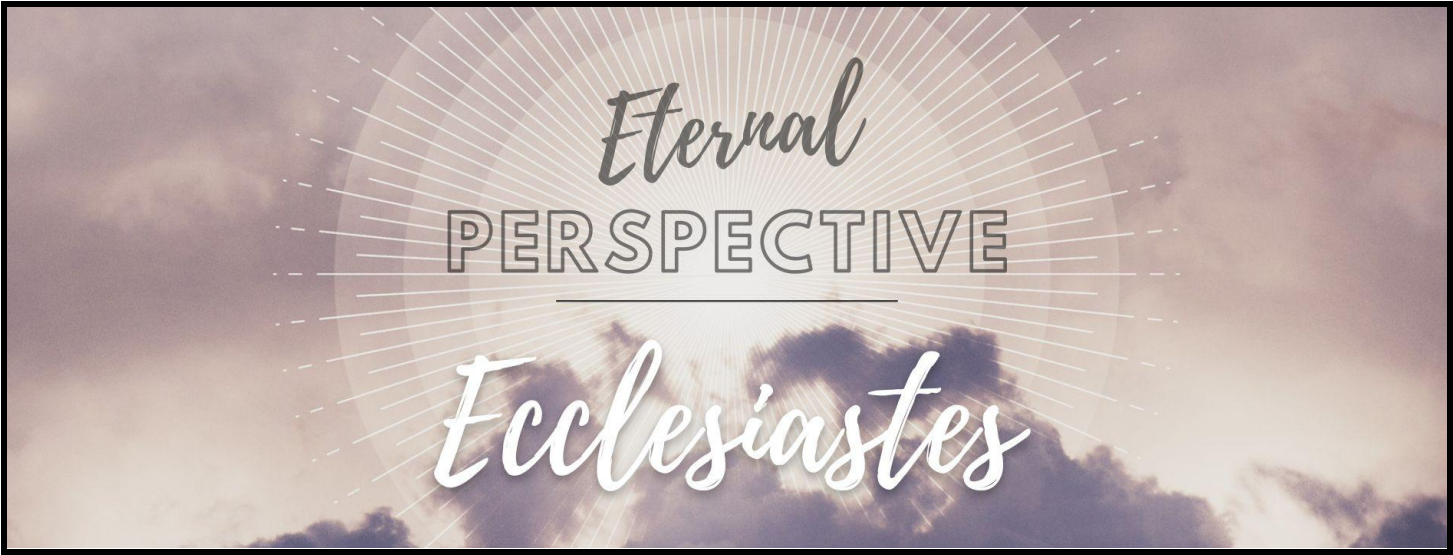
Solomon starts us off with some deep introspection. A lament of "What's any of it even matter?" Solomon begins with "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" It is very relatable and to the point. It points us to the reality that all of our life is in vain if we are seeking things apart from God.

It is interesting that Solomon, thousands of years ago, is questioning the same thing that so many of us have wrestled with ourselves. What is the point of our existence? What value are we adding? What's the point? What is our purpose in life? Why should we labor?

As a stay at home mom and keeper of our home, I can be very quick to feel like my work is monotonous, tedious, undervalued and overlooked. More often than I'd like to admit, I have to remind myself of what a gift and blessing it is to take care of my home and family. It is a way to serve others and the Lord. When I change my focus to how can I serve my family well, how can I point my children to the Lord, how can I lighten the load for my husband, the purpose of my life and the work has a bigger meaning - to glorify God in my actions and to love others while doing it.

Our culture is louder than ever with messages of "Follow your heart," "Your own truth," and, "Serving self." Our society sometimes carries a victim mentality, like "what can others do for me or what is owed to me?" In either scenario, there is one common denominator and outcome, which is selfishness and dissatisfaction.

As Brandon and Cody shared with us recently, work can be considered worship. Whether it be our vocation or just daily life, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily to the Lord, rather than for men" (Colossians 3:23). A quote from a book I've been reading recently by Rory Groves says, "The Biblical idea of work as worship had to be undone before people were ready to submit to the idea of leisure, comfort and wealth as acceptable pursuits in and of themselves." This may be a current quote, but the mentality has been there all along.



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The point of Solomon is not that work is useless or that our life is pointless, but to remind us that it will FEEL that way if we are pursuing things apart from God and His will (Philippians 2:3-4). We are reminded several times that our lives are but a vapor- here today and gone tomorrow (James 4:14; Psalms 144:4). Let this be an encouragement to live our days according to God's will for our lives, "Therefore I urge you, brethern, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2).

Questions:

1. How can you worship the Lord in your work?
2. In what ways can you love God and love others today?
3. Is the way that you are living out your days glorifying to the Lord? Do any changes need to be made?