

**First Christian Reformed Church
Life Group Spring 2024**



TIME

Week 3 - Apr. 21, 2024

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

Welcome

We live in a peculiar time and place in human history. The United States is the richest, most prosperous country in the history of the world. Through most of human history, famine and starvation was a major threat to human life. Now, in the United States, we have so much food that obesity is a real threat to our health.

Which begs the question, what happens when we use God's gifts carelessly? What happens when we use God's gifts in a way that honors him?

We hope to answer those questions and more in the following weeks as we search the scriptures to discover God's will for us as we use his gifts in the following areas:

1. Terrain (God's creation)
2. Tasks (work)
3. Time
4. Treasure
5. Temple (our bodies)
6. Transmission (the gospel)
7. Talents

Join us as we learn how the Lord would have us steward the gifts he's given us!



Preparing for Life Group

1. If you're bringing a new person to the study, we recommend getting them study materials ahead of time so they can feel prepared.
2. Pray that the LORD will open your eyes and heart to receive the lessons he has to teach you in the study.
3. Read the scripture focus for the study.
4. Go through the questions and think about how you might answer them. We've provided space in the study for you to write down your answers if you'd like.

Confession Corner

Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 27

Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. The almighty and ever present power of God¹ by which God upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures,² and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—³ all things, in fact, come to us not by chance⁴ but by his fatherly hand.⁵

Q & A 28

Q. How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us?

A. We can be patient when things go against us,⁶ thankful when things go well,⁷ and for the future we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing in creation will separate us from his love.⁸ For all creatures are so completely in God's hand that without his will they can neither move nor be moved.⁹

1 Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28 | 2 Heb. 1:3 | 3 Jer. 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Prov. 22:2 | 4 Prov. 16:33 | 5 Matt. 10:29 | 6 Job 1:21-22; James 1:3 | 7 Deut. 8:10; 1 Thess. 5:18 | 8 Ps. 55:22; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:38-39 | 9 Job 1:12; 2:6; Prov. 21:1; Acts 17:24-28

What We Believe

1. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 What's the answer to the teacher's question in verse 9, "What gain has the worker from his toil?"

2. Restate verse 11 in your own words.

3. What is God's gift to man?

4. How long does God's work endure? How long does our work endure?

Stewarding Time

How should you spend your time? Here are some tips to help Christians use their time wisely.

1. Look at every day as a gift from God. He's given it to you so that you might steward it for his glory

2. Commit time to God. Spend time reading scripture, praying, enjoying Sabbath, or worshipping God.

3. Help others. We are to love our neighbor as ourself!

4. Take care of your own needs. We all need to eat, sleep, and rest!

God Speaks to Us

Cross References

Ec 3:1 - Ec 3:17

Ec 3:2 - Job 14:5

Ec 3:3 - Ho. 6:1

Ec 3:4 - Ro 12:15

Ec 3:5 - 2 Ki 3:25

Ec 3:6 - Pr 11:24

Ec 3:7 - Amos 5:13

Ec 3:8 - Pr. 13:5

Ec 3:9 - Ec 2:11

Ec 3:10 - Ge 3:17-19

Ec 3:11 - Job 5:9

Ec 3:12 - Ps 34:14

Ec 3:13 - Dt 12:7

Ec 3:14 - Jas 1:17

Ec 3:15 - Ec 1:9

1. According to our text, how should we spend our time?

2. Read Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 27 and 28. Why are we studying the stewardship of our time if the Lord appoints the seasons of our lives? Is time management completely out of our hands? Explain your answers.



God Speaks to Our Families

1. What percent of your time do you spend on each of the following categories? Where would you like to spend more time? Where would you like to spend less time?

- a. Church and other Christian activities
- b. Employment
- c. Friends and family
- d. Hobbies
- e. Laundry, cleaning, house and yard work

- f. Ministering to others
- g. Prayer and reading God's Word
- h. Recreation and athletics
- i. Rest

- j. Social media and time online (phone and computer)
- k. Other entertainment (TV, movies and video games)
- l. Volunteering

2. According to a 2023 Gallup survey, (51%) of U.S. teens (13-19) spend a minimum of four hours daily on social media, averaging 4.8 hours every day. What would you do with an extra 4.8 hours in the day if you were a teenager? Should that number be zero? What scripture would you share with parents who allow their children to be on screens over four hours a day?

God Speaks in Worship

1. How much time do you spend in corporate worship every week? How much time do you spend in private worship every week? What's the right amount?

2. A "Rule of Life" is a schedule that Christians set for themselves to intentionally engage with the Lord, often using spiritual disciplines. Create a Rule of Life by looking at "Ways to Spend Your Time" and decide how much time every week you'll spend in each discipline. The time could be zero - you don't need to do them all every week! Share with the group one commitment you've made.

Further Reading

The Bible has a lot to say about time. Check out these scriptures to learn more about God's will for our time!

- Psalm 90:12
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Ephesians 5:16
- James 4:13-15
- Psalm 31:15
- Colossians 4:5
- 2 Corinthians 6:2
- Galatians 4:4

The Gospel Call

1. Why are Christians afraid of sharing the gospel with others? Would you be afraid of sharing the gospel with someone if you knew they would die tomorrow?

2. Many people are afraid to share the gospel because they think they don't know enough about the Bible or they'll say something wrong. How much time would it take studying the Bible and evangelism methods for the average person to be prepared to share the gospel with others?

