

The Book Of

Ecclesiastes



Ecclesiastes Reading Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction and Overview of Ecclesiastes

Day 1 - The Author

Day 2 - Your Story

Day 3 – A God Encounter

Day 4 – Solomon’s Failures

Day 5 – Let’s Begin

Week 2 – Ecclesiastes 1 & 2

Day 1 – Examining the Earth { 1:1-11}

Day 2 – The Vanity of Wisdom { 1:12-18}

Day 3 – The Vanity of Pleasure { 2:1-11}

Day 4 – Comparing Wisdom and Folly { 2:12-17}

Day 5 – The Vanity of Work { 2:18-26}

Week 3 – Ecclesiastes 3 & 4

Day 1 – A Time for Everything {3:1-8}

Day 2 – He Makes All Things Beautiful {3:9-15}

Day 3 – Injustice and Death {3:16-22}

Day 4 – Affliction and Competition {4:1-8}

Day 5 – Friendships and a Fickle Crowd { 4:9-16}

Week 4 – Ecclesiastes 5,6,7

- Day 1 – Dreaming to the Glory of God {5:1-7}
- Day 2 – Enjoying the Simple Things {5:8-20}
- Day 3 – Craving More {6:1-12}
- Day 4 – Ending Well {7:1-13}
- Day 5 - Choosing What is Best {7:14-29}

Week 5 – Ecclesiastes 8, 9, & 10:1-10

- Day 1 – It’s Time to Shine {8:1-9}
- Day 2 - Our God is Good {8:10-17}
- Day 3- Finding Joy {9:1-9}
- Day 4 – The Wisest of All {9:10-17}
- Day 5 – Avoid Folly {10:1-9}

Week 6 –Ecclesiastes 10:11-20, 11 & 12

- Day 1 - Working Smarter Not Harder{10:10-20}
- Day 2 – Living By Faith {11:1-5}
- Day 3 – It’s Good To Be Alive {11:6-10}
- Day 4 – Remember God In Your Youth {12:1-8}
- Day 5 – Fear God and Keep His Commandments {12:9-14}

Video Notes 1-6

Join the GMG Community:
Share your daily SOAK at 7:45am on
Facebook.com/GoodMorningGirlsWLW
Instagram.com/WomenLivingWell #GoodMorningGirls

Welcome to Good Morning Girls! We are so glad you are joining us.

God created us to walk with Him, to know Him, and to be loved by Him. He is our living well, and when we drink from the water He continually provides, His living water will change the entire course of our lives.

Jesus said: "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." ~ John 4:14(ESV)

So let's begin.

The method we use here at GMG is called the **SOAK** method.

- **S** – The S stands for **Scripture** – Read the chapter for the day. Then choose 1-2 verses and write them out word for word. (There is no right or wrong choice – just let the Holy Spirit guide you.)
- **O** – The O stands for **Observation** – Look at the verse or verses you wrote out. Write 1 or 2 observations. What stands out to you? What do you learn about the character of God from these verses? Is there a promise, command or teaching?
- **A** – The A stands for **Application** – Personalize the verses. What is God saying to you? How can you apply them to your life? Are there any changes you need to make or an action to take?
- **K** – The K stands for **Kneeling in Prayer** – Pause, kneel and pray. Confess any sin God has revealed to you today. Praise God for His word. Pray the passage over your own life or someone you love. Ask God to help you live out your applications.

SOAK God's word into your heart and squeeze every bit of nourishment you can out of each day's scripture reading. Soon you will find your life transformed by the renewing of your mind!

Walk with the King!

Courtney, WomenLivingWell.org, GoodMorningGirls.org

Introduction to the Book of Ecclesiastes

{Week 1 is an excerpt from the Workbook titled: Ecclesiastes: Wisdom for Living Well by Courtney Joseph with Beverly Wise}

Day 1 – The Author

Many of us have lives that are full. We have full bellies, full closets, full calendars, full trashcans, full purses and full email inboxes. But at the end of the day, we are empty. God made us all with a built in desire to find the meaning to life and to spend time on things that are meaningful.

Ecclesiastes 1:8 says:

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

Isn't it interesting that daily we can hop on our computers and click and click and click from thing to thing to thing and always find something intriguing to look at. Then we can flip on the television and do the same. The eye is never satisfied with seeing nor is the ear filled with hearing. We could literally spend all our time entertaining ourselves. We are desperate to fill ourselves up.

I love reading the Little House on the Prairie Series to my children at bedtime. We are currently in book #5. We have spent many hours reading about the sweet Ingalls family. Each night as I read, I sense a tug at my heart. Their lives were so simple and yet they were so happy. The Ingalls family found contentment in the midst of hardship and fearful times. They possessed joy, love, and perseverance and each night they inspire me to remember that it is the simple things that can bring us the greatest joys in life.

While I love all the amazing analogies I could use from Little House on the Prairie as parallels to our lives, I must be honest. This study we are about to embark on, is not so sweet. The straight talk from Ecclesiastes will rock you to the core. We are going to be real here. It is when we are most open with our inner struggles that genuine life change takes place.

And so I am very excited for this 6-week journey we will take together through the book of Ecclesiastes.

So let's begin:

The word “Ecclesiastes” in the Hebrew is *Qoheleth* (ko-hel-eth) which means:

the preacher, the teacher or an official speaker who calls together an assembly.

The Greek word for “assembly” is “*ekklesia*”, the New Testament word for church.

This gives us the English title of the book, Ecclesiastes!

About the Author:

It’s important when we study any book of the Bible, we first determine the author, the time in history it was written and the purpose.

The traditional view is that King Solomon is the author of Ecclesiastes, although not all scholars agree. Let’s observe the details that point to Solomon as author.

Read Ecclesiastes 1:1. The author never calls himself by name. What are the three qualities he used to describe himself?

Look at Ecclesiastes 1:16 and 2:9. What do these verses tell us about the author

Now look at Ecclesiastes 12:9. What did the Preacher teach the people?

Now let’s compare what we learned above about the author to what the Bible says about Solomon in I Kings 4:29-34. How are the two similar?

In Ecclesiastes 2:4-10 the author describes his vast wealth. Describe his life below:

Now compare this to the wealth of Solomon in I Kings 10:21-27

Solomon reigned as Israel's king from approximately 970-930 BC. Most likely Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes near the end of his life as he looked back and reflected on his life.

I am so grateful a man wiser and more wealthy than all of us sought meaning in all the wrong places and wrote all of his experiences in a journal, so thousands of years later we can be saved the heartache of seeking fulfillment in all the wrong places.

Discussion Question:

Is your life full? Do you struggle with feeling too full yet empty? In what ways?

Write a prayer of commitment to God, asking Him to help you complete every page of this study so you can be filled up by his living word and never empty again!

There is only one who can satisfy –the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." John 4:13,14

We will only live well, when we drink from the living well, the living words of God. Let's strive to be women living well as we walk with the King!

Day 2

Your Story

My husband grew up in a home where his parents were divorced. As a result, he spent his teen years living at his grandmother's house. My husband's story begins with his parent's story. Their struggles became his struggles, as he grappled with his little world falling apart.

We all have a story. Our stories always start with our mother and father and our childhood struggles and victories. This is what shapes us. And so today we want to understand what shaped the author of Ecclesiastes.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5; 14-17. What did Solomon's parents do wrong?

We see in the passage above, Solomon's father David not only had an affair and had the husband murdered but Bathsheba got pregnant. Oh friends, this was not good. Clearly, this displeased the Lord.

What happened to this baby according to 2 Samuel 12:15-18?

Now read about the birth of Solomon in 2 Samuel 12:24.

The Hebrew name for Solomon is Shalom which means peace. After David repented of his sin, he now had found peace with God.

Peace.

Don't we all long to find peace – peace with God, peace with others and peace from our inner turmoil? As we read Solomon's journals in Ecclesiastes we will see a man in search of peace and in the end, he finds it.

Discussion Question:

Do you have peace today? Why or why not?

All generations of people across time investigate and explore real life issues and questions. Questions like: Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning and purpose of my life?

What is your parent's story and how does it intertwine with your story? Did they have peace?

We are not alone in our struggles to find satisfaction. For centuries man has yearned for it.

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10b)

Jesus is the only true source of life, and He gives it to the FULL! Have you chosen to follow Jesus? What is the promise of Romans 10:13?

Once you are saved, your story changes! The peace of God is with you. He makes all things new! Apart from faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, there is no satisfaction in this life “under the sun”.

Hang in there with me through these next 6 weeks as we begin to live the satisfied, abundant, meaningful life that is only found in God.

Day 3

A God Encounter

Discussion Question:

Do you remember the day or season of life when you encountered God for the first time? Write about it here.

I was just 5 years old when I confessed my sins and placed my faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and believed in his resurrection.

Maybe you were 6 years old or maybe you were 36 years old. Either way, that was when Jesus became the Lord of your life.

In 1 Kings chapters one and two, we read the story of Solomon being anointed as King and the final words of his father David's advice to him. David told Solomon:

"Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn." 1 Kings 2:2-3 (esv)

Then David died and his son, Solomon, sat on the throne.

A significant spiritual experience occurred in Solomon's life when God appeared to him in a dream. God told Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted, and God would give it to him.

What did Solomon ask for according to I Kings 3:5-15.

Solomon would have been in his late teens or early 20's when he became the King of Israel. He humbly knew he needed wisdom to govern Israel but if God asked you that same question at that young age – would you have answered wisdom?

What do you think you would have asked for?

God was pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom and granted it. God also added additional blessings Solomon did not ask for including great riches and honor. According to 2 Chronicles 1:12, Solomon would become the wisest and wealthiest man who ever lived. He would have no equal.

Do you ever wish God would grant you this same wisdom –and maybe add in some riches and honor as a bonus? Me too!

Turn to the New Testament and read Jesus' words in Matthew 6:28-34. Here Jesus mentions Solomon and his wealth. What does Jesus say 3 times we ought not to be?

My mother is one of the most content people I have ever met. Matthew 6:33 is her life verse and she had my sisters and I memorize this verse when we were very young. It is tucked in my heart forever.

What does Matthew 6:33 say we should seek?

Is there something you are anxious about today?

Write a prayer handing over your worries to God.

I am so proud of you for committing to do this Bible study with us. Let's make it a point to start our days on our knees in prayer seeking God first. Keep digging into God's word and seeking his righteousness first. Watch how God transforms your anxious thoughts into peace. Pursue peace by pursuing Him – the King of Kings.

Day 4

Solomon's Failures

Today is our final day to peek into the "behind the scenes" life of the author Solomon. Tomorrow we will begin our study in Ecclesiastes.

Not only was Solomon the son of a King, a wise and wealthy man, but he also was famous. Let's face it, Solomon had it ALL!

Solomon oversaw many building projects during his reign, the greatest of which was the magnificent First Temple in Jerusalem, the House of the Lord. This was God's dwelling place on earth among His people for 400 years.

During Solomon's reign, Israel experienced a period of peace, prosperity and security. Solomon's fame spread throughout the world, and many came from far and wide to hear his wisdom. (I Kings 4:34)

Solomon is also known for being the author of a major portion of the wisdom literature in the Old Testament. Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, the Song of Songs, Psalm 72 and 127 and of course Ecclesiastes.

Even though Solomon had all these great successes, he experienced some failure.

Solomon did not obey God's commands given for the king. Can you believe it? After all God had done for him, he sinned in the areas of wealth and women.

Read Deuteronomy 17:16,17. What were 3 of the laws God had for Israel's King?

Solomon violated the Lord's command and owned vast numbers of horses (I Kings 10:25-26,28) and Scripture states that silver was as common as stones in Jerusalem during his reign. (I Kings 10:27)

In the area of women, Solomon had a huge problem. How many wives did he have and what happened as a result according to I Kings 11:3?

I know of so many spiritual leaders who began well...but did not finish well. Somewhere along the way, pride enters in and the leader falls to temptation. In the same way, we see that Solomon's life and reign began well, but did not end well.

I Kings 11:9-14a states:

"9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. 11 Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. 12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen." 14 And the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon."

God had personally appeared to Solomon, He had blessed him greatly, yet Solomon failed to obey God's commands. As a result, Israel would be divided after Solomon's death because of his sin against God.

Discussion Questions:

What do we learn about God's character, His heart, and His ways regarding His relationship with Solomon?

How does this transfer in your own life? What have you learned about the character of God, his heart and his ways regarding your relationship with Him?

This brings us to the end of our background study of the author of Ecclesiastes. At the end of Solomon's life he appears to be reviewing and reflecting upon his successes and failures. During his time on earth "under the sun" he searched for the true meaning of life and he found it!

Isn't it wonderful we don't have to go looking in all the wrong places. Solomon already did that for us! I can't wait to get into Ecclesiastes with you tomorrow!

Day 5

Let's Begin

Since I was a wee child, the number one tool I watched my mom use during her quiet time were her colored pencils! Mom always had her Bible, Bible study notebook and a set of colored pencils on our kitchen table and if you walked into her kitchen today, you'd probably find them there!

She examines each word and marks key words with different colors or symbols. She numbers lists. She marks sentences where the scripture compares and contrasts different things. She looks up the original definition of the Hebrew and Greek words and writes it in the margins and when something doesn't make sense, she goes to her commentaries, Bible Dictionaries or other versions of the Bible to figure out what God is saying. Mom works hard at understanding scripture and I pray you will put that sort of effort into this study!

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (esv)

Throughout this study we are going to do some coloring. If you want to do this in your Bible, you may.

We will be using the English Standard Version (ESV) since it is a close word for word translation of the original scriptures. This coloring is optional. You can do it in your Bible, purchase a special Bible just for color coding or print out the book of Ecclesiastes from the internet. Do whatever works best for you. The point of color coding is to help us slow down and soak in God's Word, as we read it carefully.

GMG BIBLE COLORING CHART

| COLORS | KEY WORDS |
|------------|--|
| PURPLE | God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Saviour, Messiah |
| PINK | women of the Bible, family, marriage, parenting, friendship, relationships |
| RED | love, kindness, mercy, compassion, peace, grace |
| GREEN | faith, obedience, growth, fruit, salvation, fellowship, repentance |
| YELLOW | worship, prayer, praise, doctrine, angels, miracles, power of God, blessings |
| BLUE | wisdom, teaching, instruction, commands |
| ORANGE | prophecy, history, times, places, kings, genealogies, people, numbers, covenants, vows, visions, oaths, future |
| BROWN/GRAY | Satan, sin, death, hell, evil, idols, false teachers, hypocrisy, temptation |

Open your Bible (or to the back of this book) to Ecclesiastes 1 verse 1. Mark it orange.

As we saw on day one, the author introduces himself as the Preacher, son of David and King of Jerusalem.

Now read verse 2, and mark it blue.

In the original language of Hebrew, the word “hebel”, is used for vanity, which means emptiness.

In scripture when we see that Jesus is the Lord of Lords or the King of Kings it shows superiority or the greatness of Jesus. In this case – repeating the term “vanity of vanities” shows that life is extremely vain. It can feel extremely empty and futile.

Now read Ecclesiastes 1:3 and mark it blue as well.

The most important phrase in understanding the text of Ecclesiastes is the term “under the sun”, which is used 29 times. This reveals the perspective of the author, as he journals his search for meaning in wealth and wisdom and projects and women and anything...but God.

When we search “under the sun” for meaning – all we find is an empty treadmill with nothing that satisfies. Why? Because we must look ABOVE the sun for our answers.

But isn't that how we live sometimes? We move from thing to thing, searching for the next rainbow, the next high, the next vacation, the next girls night out, the next shopping trip, the next steak dinner, or the next spa day. We chase after the wind rather than chasing our Savior. Nothing “under the sun” can satisfy our souls like knowing and walking with the King.

We know this in our heads but do we live like we believe this?

We live in a culture that doesn't believe people need God except for in a time of crisis. Even then, it's a time to blame God or be angry with Him rather than humble ourselves before him. But this sort of living only leads to further confusion, depression and disillusionment in this life “under the sun.”

Let's look ahead.

I am the type of person who never peeks ahead to see how a story will finish. I like to enjoy the unfolding journey without any spoilers. But today we are going to make an exception.

Open to Ecclesiastes 12:13 &14, to the final words of Solomon.

What 2 things does Solomon conclude in verse 13?

We will look deeper into this passage later, but for now – you know where we are headed. While our journey through Ecclesiastes will cause us to wrestle with the reality of life “under the sun”, we are not left without hope. Ecclesiastes 12:13 opens the door to joy and peace and hope like none other.

Let's not wait 6 weeks to find God – let's start with God!

“Jesus said, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’. John 14:6 (esv)

The truth of Jesus's death on the cross has made a way for us to live an abundant life free of emptiness! He gives us forgiveness of our sins, a personal relationship with him, and a hope of eternal life in heaven.

Discussion Question:

Read John 3:16. What does this passage mean to you?

As we strive to be women living well, may we never forget that Jesus is our living well. He is our living water. We must go to him daily to be refreshed.

Let's close our week in prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are so good. Thank you for the sacrifice of your son and the forgiveness of our sins. Forgive us for putting our hope and trust in the wrong things. Help us not to chase after empty and futile things and open our eyes and hearts to understand your word clearly. Change us and make us more like you. May we find joy and peace in your presence and a life full of meaning for your glory.

In the strong name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

Week 2

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 1:12-18

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 2:12-17

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 2:18-26

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

Week 3

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 3:9-15

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 3:16-22

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 4:1-8

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-16

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

Week4

ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 5:8-20

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 6:1-12

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 7:1-13

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 7:14-29

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

Week 5

ECCLESIASTES 8:1-9

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 8:10-17

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 9:1-9

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 9:10-17

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 10:1-9

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

Week 6

ECCLESIASTES 10:10-20

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 11:1-5

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 11:6-10

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14

S – The S stands for Scripture

O – The O stands for Observation

A – The A stands for Application

K – The K stands for Kneeling in Prayer

VIDEO 1 - NOTES

VIDEO 2 - NOTES

VIDEO 3 - NOTES

VIDEO 4 - NOTES

VIDEO 5 - NOTES

VIDEO 6 - NOTES
