

LIFE UNDER THE ? SUN



IT ONLY MAKES SENSE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SON
AN ECCLESIASTES STUDY

R

5 DAY DEVOTIONAL WEEK 1

5-Day Devotional: “This Can’t Be All There Is” (Ecclesiastes 1:1–11)

Day 1: The Weight of “Vanity”

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:1–2

Theme: Feeling the Weight of Life Under the Sun

Ecclesiastes begins with a statement that almost shocks us: “Vanity of vanities... all is vanity.” The word “vanity” (hevel) means vapor—something real, but impossible to hold onto. Life isn’t fake, but it often feels elusive, like trying to grasp mist in your hands. This is not cynicism—it’s honesty. God, in His wisdom, allows us to feel this tension so we won’t settle for shallow answers. Many of us spend our lives trying to solidify what is inherently fleeting—success, comfort, recognition. Yet the more tightly we grip those things, the more they slip through our fingers. This passage reminds us that the frustration we feel is not random—it is part of living in a fallen world. The heaviness you feel on a Monday morning is not a failure of faith; it’s a sign that something is broken. Ecclesiastes gives us permission to say, “This doesn’t feel right,” because it isn’t the way things were meant to be. But it doesn’t stop there—it points us forward. The vapor of life is meant to push us to something solid. It creates a longing in us that only God can satisfy.

Application Questions:

1. Where do you most feel the “vapor” nature of life right now?
2. How have you been trying to hold onto something that cannot last?

Prayer:

Father, thank You for being honest with us about the brokenness of this world. Help me not to ignore the weight I feel, but to let it lead me to You. When life feels fleeting and uncertain, anchor my heart in what is eternal. Teach me to trust You more than the things I try to hold onto.

Day 2: The Search for Lasting Gain

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:3

Theme: When Work Doesn't Deliver

“What does man gain by all the toil... under the sun?” This question cuts straight to the heart of how we spend our lives. We pour ourselves into work, projects, and responsibilities, hoping they will produce something lasting. Yet if our work is disconnected from God, it cannot deliver ultimate meaning. That doesn't mean work is bad—it means work was never meant to carry the weight of our identity. When we look to our effort for fulfillment, we are asking it to do what only God can do. This is where the way of folly quietly creeps in—it seems right, but it leads to emptiness. You can succeed outwardly and still feel inwardly bankrupt. The tension is not that work has no value, but that it has limited value apart from God. When we acknowledge Him, even ordinary work becomes infused with purpose. But when we remove Him, even great accomplishments feel hollow. This passage invites us to examine not just what we are doing, but why we are doing it. Are we working from identity or for identity? The difference changes everything.

Application Questions:

1. Where are you tempted to find your worth in what you accomplish?
2. How would your work look different if it was anchored in God instead of outcomes?

Prayer:

Lord, You know how easily I try to find meaning in what I do. Forgive me for placing my identity in my effort instead of in You. Help me to work faithfully, but not worship my work. Remind me that true gain is found in walking with You.

Day 3: Motion Without Meaning

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:4–7

Theme: The Endless Cycle

Solomon observes the world and sees something unsettling—everything is moving, but nothing is arriving. The sun rises and sets, the wind circles, the streams flow endlessly. Creation itself seems caught in repetition. And if we're honest, so do we. Wake up. Work. Sleep. Repeat. Life can begin to feel like a loop with no destination. This is what life feels like “under the sun”—motion without ultimate meaning. Without God, progress becomes an illusion. You may feel busy, but not fulfilled. You may feel active, but not purposeful. This is not how life was designed to feel. Scripture tells us that true progress comes from walking in wisdom—walking with God. Apart from Him, we drift into cycles that wear us down. This passage helps us recognize why life can feel exhausting even when we're doing everything “right.” The problem is not activity—it's direction. When God is at the center, the same routines take on eternal significance. When He is not, even the most productive life feels like going in circles.

Application Questions:

1. Where does your life feel repetitive or stuck right now?

2. How might God be inviting you to re-center your daily rhythms around Him?

Prayer:

God, I confess that life often feels like an endless cycle. I get tired, distracted, and discouraged. Help me to see that true direction comes from You. Center my heart in Your presence so that even my routines are filled with purpose. Lead me in the path of real life.

Day 4: Why Nothing Satisfies

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:8–10

Theme: The Restless Heart

“The eye is not satisfied... nor the ear filled...” This describes the human condition perfectly. No matter how much we see, achieve, or experience—it is never enough. We live in a world of constant stimulation, yet deep dissatisfaction. This is not accidental; it is theological. We were designed for more than what this world can offer. When we try to satisfy eternal desires with temporary things, we are guaranteed to come up empty. The problem is not desire—it’s misdirected desire. We often take good things and turn them into ultimate things. Achievement, relationships, comfort—none of these were meant to replace God. When they do, they lose their ability to satisfy. This is why even our best moments can feel incomplete. Ecclesiastes exposes this not to discourage us, but to redirect us. Your dissatisfaction is not your enemy—it is a signal. It is pointing you beyond the sun to the Son. Only in Him do our restless hearts find rest.

Application Questions:

1. What are you currently looking to for satisfaction that isn’t fully delivering?
2. How can you intentionally “enjoy God” today instead of replacing Him?

Prayer:

Father, You know my restless heart. I chase things that promise satisfaction but never fully deliver. Help me to see that my longing is meant to lead me to You. Teach me to enjoy You as my greatest treasure. Satisfy my heart with Your presence.

Day 5: From Vapor to Meaning

Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:11 & John 1:1–5

Theme: Life in the Light of the Son

Ecclesiastes ends this section with a sobering truth—life is not only unsatisfying, it is quickly forgotten. Our lives can feel small and fleeting, like they barely leave a mark. But this is where the gospel breaks in. What Ecclesiastes questions, John answers. “In the beginning was the Word...” The meaning of life is not a concept—it is a Person. Jesus, the Logos, steps into our vapor-like existence and gives it substance. He enters the repetition, the frustration, and the brokenness we feel. Where we have chased the wind, He lived with perfect purpose. Where we have come up empty, He offers fullness. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He redeems what feels meaningless. Now, life under the sun is not changed—but we are. In Christ, even the smallest acts take on eternal significance. Nothing done in Him is wasted. Your life is not forgotten—it is held securely in Him. What once felt like vapor now carries eternal weight.

Application Questions:

1. How does seeing Jesus as the “meaning of life” change your perspective today?
2. What is one ordinary thing you can do today “in the light of the Son”?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for stepping into my broken world and giving my life meaning. When I feel small or forgotten, remind me that I am known and held by You. Help me to live today in Your light, trusting that nothing done for You is ever wasted. Anchor my life fully in You.