



Adult and Teen Life Groups Conferencing Guide

SERMON DATE: 04/22/2018
DISCUSSION DATE: 04/29/2018
TEXT: ECCLESIASTES 9:1-16

I. EXPOSING IDOLS IN OUR HEART.

A. The Idols of Human Autonomy and Goodness, v.v. 1-6.

1. God cannot be manipulated by human efforts – i.e. we cannot control the results of our efforts, v.v. 1-3a.
2. Our hearts are filled with evil and deserving of our rapidly approaching death, v.v. 3b-6.

B. The Idol of Pleasure, v.v. 7-10.

C. The Idol of Self-Sufficiency, v. 11-12.

D. The Idol of Strength/Power, v.v. 13-16.

ASK GOD FOR WISDOM TO APPLY HIS WORD IN OUR DAILY LIVES.



We can summarize the purpose of this section as follows: ***The wisest sinner to have ever lived is teaching how to enjoy God's gift of life while embracing our finite/fallen limitations, 6:10-11:6.***

1. **Read Ecclesiastes 6:12 & James 3:14-15.** How and why do we struggle with a self-seeking heart? What does God want us to learn about the discernment of good?
2. **Read Ecclesiastes 6:12 & James 4:13-15.** Why do we think we can determine an outcome – i.e. Control what is about to happen? What kind of plans do we make that expose our faulty belief in our ability to control future events? How does James expose the folly of such planning and what corrective does He give?
3. **Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-6.** What do we think we will receive for doing righteousness and exercising wisdom? What is Solomon teaching us when he declares that our “works are in the hand of God?” Why do we struggle to believe this and what does it look like for us to live like we believe this?
4. What event cannot be escaped by humanity no matter how we live? Why is this the case and how does it feel unjust (Solomon calls it an “evil” – i.e. better translated a misfortune v. 3)?
5. How does Solomon answer the seeming injustice? What is the true nature of humanity? Are we good people who deserve good things?
6. What do the living know, and how is that knowledge supposed to impact our lives? What hope remains for the living?
7. **Read Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 & 5:19-20.** Why is Solomon commanding us to enjoy God's gifts? What is being exposed by this command? What keeps us from enjoying God's gifts (especially our spouses)?
8. Why remind us that “all our days are frustrating puzzlements”? Why should we work with all our might when life is filled with such uncertainty?
9. **Read Ecclesiastes 9:11-12.** When we are the fastest, the strongest, the smartest and/or the most skilled at what we do; what do we expect to happen for us? What happens to all of us? Why is life in a fallen world like that?
10. What do we know is coming, why does it seem sudden to us? How is this knowledge supposed to impact our choices today?
11. **Read Ecclesiastes 9:13-16.** What is more powerful than military might and financial resources? Why was the poor man forgotten? Why would such wisdom be despised after a demonstration of power?
12. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-21; 3:19.** What does God do with men's wisdom? How do we avoid the idol of personal power?
13. **Read John 15:5-7** – What does Jesus want us to know about our need of Him? What is the secret to bearing spiritual fruit? What happens to the fruitless? What characterizes the life of abiding people?