

Checking In

1. Take a few minutes to check in with everyone, see how they are doing, and open with prayer.

Learning

Knowing God

Key Doctrines

- *Creation* – God has created all things, thus all things belong to God.
- *Providence* – God is the sustainer and provider of all things.
- *Wisdom* – The art of living well.

Key Observations

- *Read: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, Genesis 3:1-7*
 - As you read through Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 who is the primary actor? Does God play a part in what is happening? If not, what does that tell us about this path chosen here by the so-called “sage”?
What is important to highlight here is how human centered the entire passage is. It is a description of human creation, control and achievement. At no point is God’s act of creation, his providential care nor his presence appealed to. This is a life lived on one’s own terms. We know wisdom is not being heeded when the “fear of the Lord” is left behind.
 - As you turn your attention to Genesis 3:1-7 what parallels do you notice between the two passages?

In what way has the path chosen in Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 been in keeping with the pattern of sin we see here in Genesis 3:1-7?

In Genesis 3:1-7 we read about the Fall of man. What we see in the passage is a move away from humble dependence toward prideful autonomy. Much of what we see in Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 is a description of this way first walked by Adam and Eve. There is a rejection of wisdom which retains a need for trust and is based on a "fear of the Lord" for a kind of wisdom which seeks a kind of "knowing for myself" rather than trusting God.

- Having read both passages what seems to be the fall out of this path of foolishness? In other words, what is the result?

It is vanity, in that it is a way of life that amounts to nothing in the end. It ultimately leads to death. Beyond that what we see in the passage is that rebellion against God's way of wisdom not only hurts our relationship with God, but also with others. Adam and Eve's relationship is frayed, but also in the Ecclesiastes passages we see that it leads to injustice and abuse in the ways we relate to others (concubines, slaves).

➤ *Read:* Ecclesiastes 3:9-13, 1 John 2:15-17

- As you read through Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 who is the primary actor? Does God play a part in what is happening? If so, what does this tell us about the nature of true wisdom?

In contrast with Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 what we see here is God's act of creation, his providence and his ongoing care are of primary emphasis. God is the

main actor, and this is what sets the stage for a life of true wisdom which ultimately is a life of contentment and joy.

- 1 John 2:15-17 provides a nice summary of much of the contrast between folly and wisdom spoken of in Ecclesiastes. What is the primary characteristic of the person who lives with wisdom according to John?

Wisdom literature is clear that wisdom and folly are ways of the heart. Notice John here makes this point as well, but telling us that ultimately the difference between folly and wisdom is what we love. It's about the affections of our hearts.

Listening

Responding to God

- In light of hearing this week's sermon, our study together, and listening to God's Word, how might God be inviting you to take a step of obedience?

Loving

Obeying God

- What is happening in my own life right now that I need to share and for which I need prayer?

- This week I am committed to praying for _____ about:

Checking Out

- What was most meaningful about this group session for you (*Give each person 1-2 sentences to share*)?
- Close in Prayer and 1 John 2:15-17.