

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

The Pursuit of Happiness

Heather Packett

Introduction

As well as being acknowledged as the wisest man in the world, Solomon's wealth and power were practically limitless. He pursued and purchased whatever his heart desired, from many wives, to servants, vineyards, flocks, monumental building projects, multiple houses and an almighty treasury of gold and valuables. Yet as he surveyed all that he had pursued in his lifetime, he came to the conclusion that without a relationship with God, all of it was meaningless, like chasing after the wind. Furthermore, the pleasure that he sought risked becoming a vice to him.

Bible Passage

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11; 25-26

Ecclesiastes 3:11-14

Discussion

1. Why do we pursue pleasure? What can be gained from it? Is there anything wrong with this?
2. What is God's perspective on pleasure? How do you come to this conclusion?
3. What is the risk of pursuing pleasure in and of itself?
4. Read Ecclesiastes 2:23. Solomon was given great wisdom from God. How did his life lose purpose and meaning over time?

(continued on next page)

5. Read Psalm 16:11. What happens when we reframe pleasure to see its place from God's perspective?
6. Read Ecclesiastes 3:11-13. How can we prioritise the *giver* of the *gift* over the gift of pleasure itself? What might this look like?

Respond

God created the gift of pleasure to reflect and share His joy. With it He gives us boundaries that begin with acknowledging and prioritising our relationship with Jesus over and above all that we seek and do.

To live a transformed life, we need to seek Jesus first, and through Him we can know freedom from the bondages of pleasures that we may be chasing after. Only when Jesus becomes the object of our desire can our pleasures become a gift instead of a vice. Take a moment now to ask God's forgiveness if you have placed the pursuit of pleasure on the throne of your heart, and commit to place Jesus front and centre from this day on.