

SKEPTICAL

UPSTATE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 6 - *ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11*

LEADER NOTES

Though it would seem that our world can agree on nothing, there is but one fact that no one can deny: death is certain. Subcouniously, we all have an awareness of death and a fear of death. We know that we will die and spend eternity somewhere. Christ came not only to remove the sting of death, but that we can know for certainty where we will spend eternity one day.

As we are finishing off our Skeptical series, encourage your group to ask any questions that they may have. Create an enviroment that makes the people in your group feel comfortable to ask these questions now and going forward.

In addition, the topics we are addressing can be daunting. We want to encourage you and those in your group to listen to other Teaching Pastors sermons on these topics. You can find their messages [HERE](#).

Please continue to ask your group about gospel connections and conversations. You can complete the form [HERE](#).

COMMUNITY

OPEN THE GROUP BY CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND ALLOWING A MOMENT FOR EVERYONE TO HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG.

START THE GROUP BY TAKING PRAYER REQUESTS, FINDING OUT ABOUT PEOPLE'S WEEK, AND PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER.

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- *NAME THREE THINGS YOU ARE CERTAIN WILL HAPPEN TODAY. HOW CAN YOU BE CERTAIN ABOUT THESE THINGS?*

SCRIPTURE

TAKE THIS TIME TO STUDY THE BIBLE TOGETHER. REMEMBER, THE GOAL IS NOT JUST TO CONVEY INFORMATION, BUT TO HELP PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP LEARN TO READ THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES.

THE POINT

EVERYONE WILL SPEND ETERNITY SOMEWHERE.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

- 2 a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8 a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

9 What gain has the worker from his toil? 10 I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Hebrews 9:27

27 And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, Hebrews 9:27.

STUDY NOTES

Ecclesiastes is not concerned about questions of “cyclic” versus “linear” time. These verses do not concern divine providence or abstract notions of time but human mortality. Life is composed of joy and sorrow, building and destroying, and living and dying. Each comes at the proper time. This reminds us we are creatures of time and not yet able to partake of the joys of eternity. No one can be happy who has not come to grips with the reality that life is full of changes and sorrows, as well as continuity and joy. We must accept we are mortal and governed by time.

1) We are guaranteed to die (v.1-2).

By beginning this section of Ecclesiastes with a reminder that there is “a time to die,” Solomon reminds us we are mortal and our time here on earth is limited. Before sin entered the world, there was no death. Solomon reminds us we are broken people living in a broken world. The apostle Paul understood this as well and challenged the church at Ephesus, “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16). There is an end to the life we have on earth. Therefore, we must consider how we are to live. Should we spend our time trying to live longer? Should we make every moment count?

We live in a culture that is constantly trying to sell us a hundred different creams and lotions that try to hide the reality that our bodies are not permanent. Whether we face terminal sickness or someone around us dies from an accident, we all will be confronted with the reality of our mortality at some point in our lives. God, however, does not want us to live in fear of death. In fact, God hates death. He hates it so much that He took on human flesh, suffered on the cross, and defeated death by rising from the grave.

2) We were created for eternity (v. 11).

Though life ends on earth, we are actually immortal creatures. There is life after death, so we not only think of life with death in mind, we think of life with eternity in mind. With death in mind, we know life is fragile, and we must make every moment count. With eternity in mind, we prepare for life after death.

What makes eternity simple is that there are only two choices for life after death. Hebrews 9:27 is clear that we will face judgment after death. What we do in this life will determine whether God’s judgment sends us to heaven or hell. Therefore, it is a matter of eternal life for us to consider Jesus as Savior and Lord.

The Bible says “through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12). Adam and Eve were told not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil because in the day they ate of it, they “would surely die.” Death is the curse of the fall, it’s a result of living in a broken and sinful world. It’s important for us to note that death was not God’s intention but something we in our sin invited into the world. Death is terrifying because of its finality, but more than that, death is terrifying because, deep down, we all know we are sinners. We fear facing God’s righteous judgment. As Christians, though, we have the benefit of knowing that after death comes life, and this truth puts death into perspective.

For more resources on this passage click the resources link [HERE](#).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *What do the contrasting times Solomon mentions in verses 2-8 teach us about the nature of life?*
- *How is death described in this text?*
- *Why is the thought of death so terrifying for so many people?*
- *What is the solution to death?*
- *How do you think most people approach life after death—with certainty, doubt, or a confusing mixture of both?*
- *How should a true certainty in life after death affect the way you live each day?*

COMMISSION

AS YOU WRAP UP YOUR GROUP, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WE GO INTO THE WORLD ON MISSION FOR JESUS. USE THIS TIME TO FOCUS EVERYONE TO LIVE ON MISSION AS YOU LEAVE.

- **OUR CULTURE IS SKEPTICAL OF THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY. HOW DOES OUR DISCUSSION THIS WEEK EFFECT THE WAY YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE IN THIS WORLD?**
- **WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS TO KNOW JESUS?**