

ECCLESIASTES

All Is Vanity

1 The words of the Preacher,¹ the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 Vanity² of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

3 What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?

4 A generation goes, and a generation comes,
the earth remains forever.

15 What is crooked cannot be made straight and what is lacking cannot be counted.

16 I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were of Jerusalem before me, and my heart has great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

17 And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceive that this also is but a striving after wind.

CHAPTER 2: 1-11

I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.” But that also proved to be meaningless. “Laughter,” I said, “is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?” I tried cheering myself with wine and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives. I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man’s heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS
LIFE UNDER THE SUN

“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

What is Your Greatest Love?

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER THE

What is most important to you?

- **Pleasure**
Feeling excited
- **Relationship**
Feeling loved
- **Entertainment**
Feeling amused
- **Accomplishment**
Feeling successful
- **Sex**
Feeling passionate

“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

What is Your Greatest Love?

1. Pleasure (excitement)



CHAPTER 2

PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

What is Your Greatest Love?

1. Pleasure (excitement)
2. Relationship (feeling loved)

Why are relationships so potentially unhealthy? The answer, as bitter and as ashamed as it makes us feel, is we idolized our relationship. We elevate relationships to where God should be. As a result, people give up their morals, their virginity, and a huge part of their heart. We want to feel loved and will do almost anything to feel it.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

What is Your Greatest Love?

1. Pleasure (excitement)
2. Relationship (feeling loved)
3. Entertainment (feeling amused)

Amusement (2:2)

Amusement are things that catch and keep our attention. A computer game or soap opera. A comedy. Music. They keep us distracted from our personal troubles or boredom. In the end, we might come to believe that our goal in life is to be kept amused.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

What is Your Greatest Love?

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Projects (2:4-6)

Solomon had a number of projects. Notice the ecological sound plans. He wrestled God’s creation into beauty and function. He made a pond so that it would water a group of trees.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER THE SUN



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

What is Your Greatest Love?

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5. Sex (feeling passionate)

Hedonism

People live for their pleasures because they are convinced that it is the right aim in life for them. The English word ‘hedonism’ comes from the Greek word for wild pleasure or lust.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

The Problem With Pleasure

When pleasure provides one’s needed meaning or significance in life, then one becomes dependent on increasing amounts of pleasure.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER THE



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

The Problem With Pleasure

Once the feeling with its associated pleasure came and was filled, it went away.

It is interesting how God designed man. If the pleasure didn't go away, we would surely end up killing ourselves by immediately repeating the act.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

The Problem With Pleasure

After the short feeling of pleasure is satiated, guilt sets in. Guilt is an awareness that one has broken God’s standard.

This awareness gets less and less as one does it. People get more hardened and even convinced others are wrong to think it wrong.

They even get upset with those associated with standards and God Himself.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

The Problem With Pleasure

Along with spiritual guilt, is a big emptiness, a void.

Despair and depression often settles in. This makes the person even more willing to go through the cycle again.

They don't want that emptiness and the accusing guilt hanging over them. They would rather make big plans for attending some party. They don't want to think how they hurt or lied to someone.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

THE “I” FACTOR

There are many ways that we seek for pleasure. Not all pleasure is wrong. But when it is sought in such a way that violates God’s revealed standards, then they become wrong.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER T

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“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

THE “I” FACTOR

I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine. I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; I made gardens and parks for myself. I collected for myself silver and gold. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men and all that my eyes desired. I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure. Then I became great and increased more than all.

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER T

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“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

THE “I” FACTOR

- 1) “I” – His preoccupation with self This is the ‘pride of life’
- 2) “For myself” –His purpose centered around his own life

God never made us to live for ourselves.

Jesus showed us how to live. He said, “The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

THE “I” FACTOR

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma” (Ephesians 5:1-2)

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Colossians 3:23)

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER T



“Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.”

THE “I” FACTOR

Solomon, we will end up saying, “Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 2:11)

CHAPTER 2 PLEASURE

ECCLESIASTIC LIFE UNDER THE SUN



NOW WHAT

1. Each of us needs to examine our lives. Are we an “I” or “Me” person?
2. What pleases you the most?
3. What is it that you really live for? Is it a raise? Is it someone to praise you? Is it to have a nice house that people admire? Or some special thing you have done?
4. Motivation counts. We can do normal things like have a vacation, but its purpose is transformed. Remember that time Jesus went off by Himself with His disciples?
5. Are we doing all to the glory of God. When we seek to glorify Him in everything that we do, we change our focus to Him, and amazing changes take place.

CHAPTER 1

WISDOM

ECCLESIASTICUS LIFE UNDER THE