

LET'S DO THE MATH (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15)

The MESSAGE of Ecclesiastes is that God designed life to _____ Him and be _____ in relationship with Him, for apart from a _____, vertical, _____ relationship with God, man is _____ and life is _____.

I. SOLOMON'S INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)

II. SOLOMON'S INVESTIGATION (1:12-11:10)

A. Solomon's PURSUITS. (1:12-18)

B. Solomon's PROOFS that 'ALL is VANITY' {apart from God} and the Secret of PLEASURE / ENJOYMENT and LASTING VALUE in Life. (2)

1. *Experiment #1*: The pursuit of the dead-end street of SELF-INDULGENT PLEASURE. (2:1-11)

2. *Experiment #2*: The pursuit of the dead-end street of HUMAN WISDOM / EDUCATION. (2:12 -17)

3. *Experiment #3*: The pursuit of the dead-end street of a HARD-WORKING CAREER. (2:18-23)

4. *The first nail / tent stake*: GOD'S ENCOURAGING & ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE (2:24-26):

- Let's do the math: $3 \times 0 = \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$; $30 \times 0 = \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$; $300 \times 0 = \underline{\hspace{1cm}}$. What is missing or must change in order to have lasting value? (Haggai 1:6-7; Mark 8:36; John 15:4-5; Prov. 14:14; Psalm 127:1)

C. Solomon's PERSPECTIVE on the EVENTS of Life & the Secret of God's PROVIDENCE. (3:1-5:20)

1. The *beginning observations* regarding this first section (3:1-15):

- a. This is the beginning of Solomon's ___ discourse. (3:1-5:20)
- b. Verses 1-8 is ___ long sentence or poem, consisting of ___ contrasting couplets or pairs.
- c. The word "time" is found 36x in Ecclesiastes, including ___ times in this chapter.
- d. Whereas the word _____ {in name or personal pronoun} was found or referred to 6x before chapter 3, now He is found ___ x in chapter 3.

2. The 7 *biblical principles* to factor into the equation of life. (3:1-15)

a. God limits your _____ of life, as God alone is sovereign and gracious in the contrasting events of life including the curse and human choices with both positive & negative results. (3:1-9)

1) **The premise**: To _____ there is a _____ {appointed time}, A _____ for every _____ {purpose, appropriate activity, matter, event} **under heaven** {in this earthly existence}: (3:1) This will involve God's sovereignty along with human participation & responsibility.

2) **The proofs** (3:2-9):

- *Opposites of human existence*: {There is} A time to be born, And a time to die; (3:2a) What does this indicate?
- *Opposites regarding the vegetable world*: A time to plant and a time to pluck {harvest} what is planted. (3:2b)
- *Opposites regarding human life*: A time to kill {not murder}, And a time to heal {medically}; (3:3a)
- *Opposites regarding construction*: A time to break {tear}down, a time to build up. (3:3b)
- *Opposites regarding human emotions*: A time to weep, And a time to laugh; (3:4a)
- *Opposites regarding human experiences*: A time to mourn, And a time to dance; (3:4b)

- *Opposites regarding clearing and gathering*: A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones; (3:5a)
- *Opposites regarding human affections*: A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing; (3:5b)
- *Opposites regarding human economics*: A time to gain, And a time to lose, (3:6a)
- *Opposites regarding acquisition of things*: A time to keep, And a time to throw away; (3:6b)
- *Opposites regarding handling clothing*: A time to tear, And a time to sew; (3:7a)
- *Opposites regarding verbal comments*: A time to keep silence, And a time to speak. (3:7b)
- *Opposites regarding serious human responses*: A time to love, And a time to hate; (3:8a)
- *Opposites regarding significant human conflict*: A time of war, And a time of peace. (3:8b)

3) **The point or goad: Let's do the math - "What _____ {benefit or lasting value} *has the worker from that in which he labors* {reminding us of the Curse}?" (3:9)** This expects a rhetorical _____ answer. Thus, we need to recognize that God is sovereign and gracious in the ups and downs of life which we need to _____ this by _____ as God did not ask us to be all-knowing but to trust Him. If life is just a series of inevitable events, the timing of which is out of our human control, why do we even go on and what difference does it make? What or Who again is the factor or multiplier that makes the difference from a divine perspective?

b. **God gives your life significant meaning and _____ when you submit to Him and His sovereign calendar. "I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied." (3:10)**

c. **God demonstrates His _____ in the events of life and gives them "_____ in its time." (3:11)**
What verses does this remind us of?

d. **God has placed "_____ " in your heart. (3:11)** Walter Kaiser writes, "God has put eternity into their heart" This quest is a deep-seated desire, a compulsive drive, because people are made in the image of God and are made to appreciate the beauty of creation (on an aesthetic level); to know the character, composition, and meaning of the world (on an academic and philosophical level); and to discern its purpose and destiny (on a theological level). Therein lies the majesty and madness of the whole thing." (Coping with Change - Ecclesiastes). What does this help explain?

e. **God limits our _____ of His plan & providence as He is infinite and we are finite, and He does not explain many things to us making life puzzling at times. "Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end."** How can we understand and do the known will of God in His plan?

f. **God alone gives you the spiritual capacity to have true _____ {"to rejoice"} in life, to truly "_____ " with your life, and to truly _____ the fruit of your labor in view of eternity – for these are "the _____ of _____." (3:12-13)** What word is important to observe and to factor into the equation of life?

g. **God's sovereign control and even gracious blessing over your life to promote "_____ {reverential awe and worship which results in trust, submission, thanksgiving, and devotion to His will} before Him" in time, along with a sense of future _____ to Him. (3:14-15)**

- How does all of this apply to you?