

# Our Purpose in Life

## Lesson 1

[Note to Teacher: This lesson, on Ecclesiastes, is designed to build interest and rapport with just about anyone. Use this material to “set the tone” for a productive class.]

### I. The Cyclical Nature of Life -- Eccl. 1:1-11

#### A. Three illustrations:

1. Sunrise, sunset -- v. 5
2. Circular courses of the wind -- v. 6
3. The evaporation cycle -- v. 7

#### B. Life is like an endless race track, but are we really getting anywhere?

1. Generations come and go, but life goes on...
2. There's nothing new under the sun.... Even with the passing of time, it's business as usual! (“Been there, done that”)
3. cf. 3:1-11, which prompted the lyrics, “There is a season... Turn, turn, turn”

### II. The Emptiness of Worldly Preoccupations -- 2:1-11

#### A. With the drive of a type-A personality, the author tries to break the endless cycle by embarking on a grand Search for Happiness

1. He has it all: fame, power, money and women (cf. I Kings 4:21-34; 10:1,7; 11:3)
2. Unfortunately, his frame of reference is rather selfish (notice how often “for myself” is repeated in vv. 4-8)
3. How would most people answer the question: “If I only had \_\_\_\_\_, then I'd be happy!”(?)

#### B. Here was a man with “everything”! Was he happy? NO!

1. He was miserable! None of these pursuits brought lasting fulfillment.
2. Everything is “vanity” and “striving after wind”

### III. The Inescapable Conclusion -- 12:1-8,13-14

#### A. The brevity of life

1. “Childhood and the prime of life are fleeting” -- 11:10
2. We're all getting older, and the grave awaits -- 12:1-8

#### B. The compelling conclusion is that this life is a probationary period for a day of reckoning, beyond which we will be rewarded or punished -- 12:13-14

1. The God who grants you life and breath has invested your life with infinite purpose and meaning.
2. Whether or not you take advantage of your opportunity is of vital importance
3. Why do you exist? To “fear God and keep His commandments”

4. In all this, we have failed miserably and need a Savior....

C. Driving the point home

1. Can our lives be have any purpose and meaning in the absence of accountability before God?

2. If you take Judgment Day out of the picture (as in life “under the sun”), then we are nothing but specks of dust on a revolving ball in a solar system, in a much bigger galaxy, in a universe so gigantic that it staggers the imagination. I.e., *we aren't worth very much!*

3. On the other hand, with an ultimate day in court with the Almighty awaiting us, with eternity hanging in the balances, then every word, deed, and thought are suddenly invested with eternal importance.

4. The point is that our inherent worth and value are inextricably tied to the Judgment. There's no getting around it!