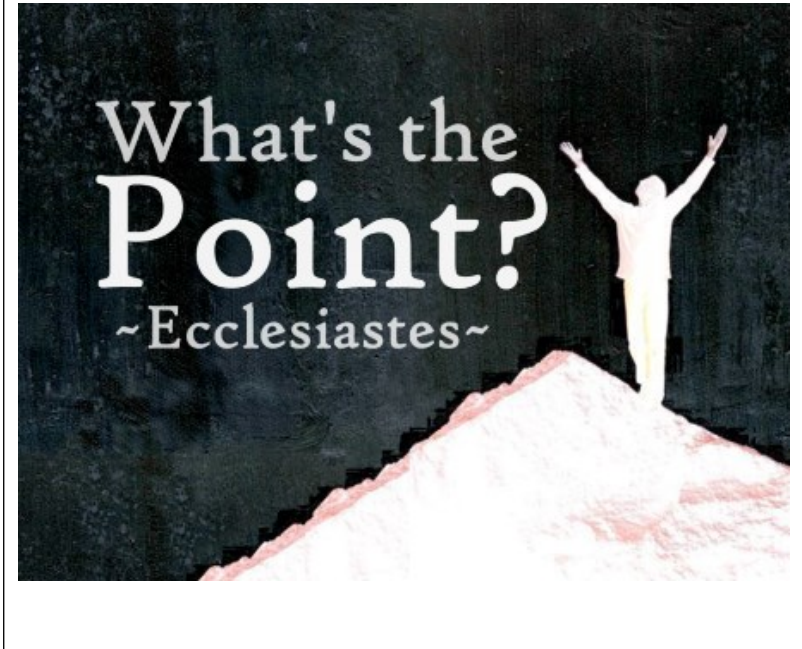


**PURPOSE
DEFINED**



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.”**

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lesson 0 - Preclass Info

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

PURPOSE OF THIS CLASS

Goals we hope to achieve in this class:

- ⇒ Learn our Godly purpose in this life here under the sun and determine ways we can take what we learn and have it impact how we live each day, as well as impact the lives of those we interact with.

- ⇒ Become better equipped to manage life's circumstances in a good and Godly way in each season of our life based on our knowledge of who God is and His purpose for us.

- ⇒ Come to a better understanding of contentment through Godly wisdom and apply it in our life so that we are able to enjoy our God-given time here on earth.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Lesson 9 - Contentment (Accepting Your Lot)

How do you define contentment?

What challenges do we face that make it hard to have an attitude of contentment?

What tools does the Bible give us that we can use to create in ourselves an attitude of contentment?

Lesson 10 - Handling Riches / How to View Money

What does scripture say that building up wealth and resources to indulge/satisfy ourselves will lead to? How can it affect our lives here under the sun? What effect will it have on us eternally?

How can withholding our wealth (from a standpoint of worrying about the future, trying to increase status, etc.) affect others?

Lesson 11 - Circumstances of Life - Time and Chance

Do we have control over the general conditions of the creation that we live in?

We know that we are not guaranteed tomorrow and that very bad things can happen to us at any minute. What can we do now to best prepare for life circumstances (good or bad).

PURPOSE

Quotes about purpose:

"I believe a purpose is something for which one is responsible; it's not just divinely assigned."

— Michael J Fox —

"When you realize God's purpose for your life isn't just about you, He will use you in a mighty way."

— Dr. Tony Evans —

Schedule of classes:

Class 1 - Overview & Purpose

Class 2 - Purpose of Life

Class 3 - Characteristics of God

Class 4 - Good vs. Godly

Class 5 - Good vs. Godly (Wisdom)

Class 6 - Seasons of Life

Class 7 - Seasons of Life

Class 8 - Relationships

Class 9 - Handling Riches / How to View Money

Class 10 - Contentment / Accept Your Lot

Class 11 - Circumstances of Life / Time & Chance

Class 12 - Circumstances of Life / Evil in the World

Class 13 - Q&A / Review

People to ask for guidance / accountability:

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Lesson 1 - Defining Our Purpose

What is your purpose?

Lesson 2 - Purpose of Life

Why is it so crucial that we understand what our purpose is?

Why or how do we forget our purpose and get off-track from living it out every day.

Lesson 3 - Characteristics of God

How do God's characteristics help shape your view of our time here under the sun and how might it influence your perceived purpose?

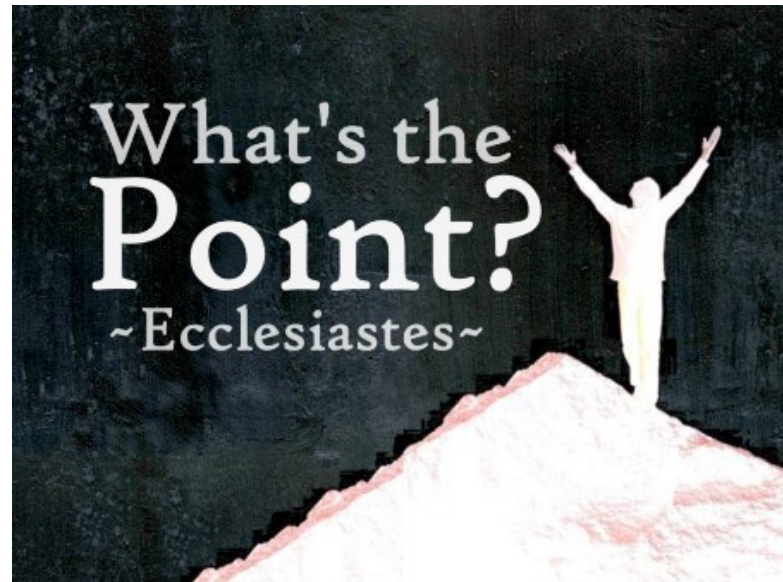
How do I apply some of this knowledge about who and how God is? What kind of confidence does serving a God like this provide me? How should this wisdom impact my daily steps/purpose?

Lesson 4 - Good vs. Godly

What are your thoughts about doing things that are good vs. doing things that are Godly. Give some examples that you can think of either from the Bible or even from your life.

Does God make Godly plans for us that might conflict with some of our good plans? For instance, look at David's good plans in 1 Chronicles 17. He had good plans. What were they? And how did God feel about David's good plans?

FINAL REVIEW



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR
GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS,
FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF
MAN.”**

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

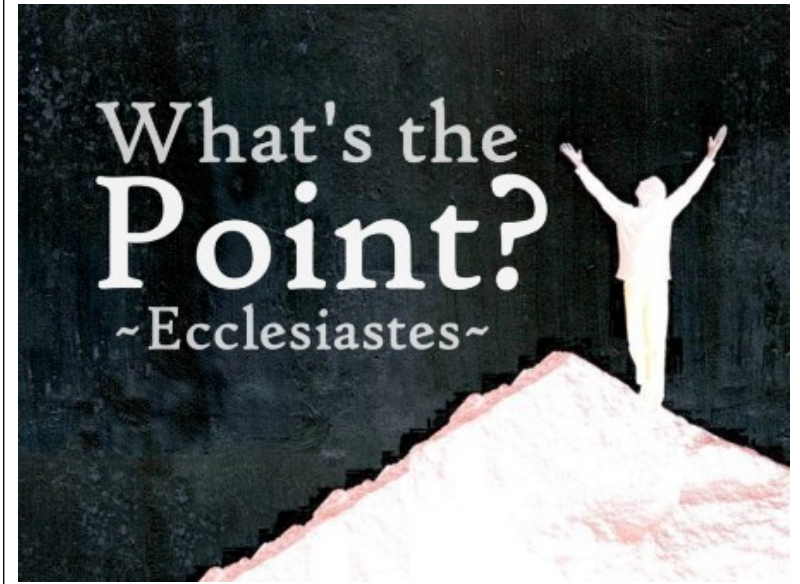
Lesson 13

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

PURPOSE

DEFINED



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.”**

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lesson 1

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Ecclesiastes 1:1-15

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23

Ecclesiastes 3:9-12

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. 12 I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; 13 also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

Ecclesiastes 7:13-15

¹³ Consider the work of God:

who can make straight what he has made crooked?

¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

¹⁵ In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing.

Ecclesiastes 9:1-3

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION & NOTES

One of the greatest challenges Christians face in this life under the sun is dealing with the fact that there is evil in the world and the fact that such a loving God allows evil to exist. Many have abandoned their faith and cite evil in the world as their reasoning. A deeper understanding of God, His character and purpose will prepare us to withstand the evil in the world around us and live better, more pleasing lives in the sight of God.

- Read Isaiah 55:8,9
- Read John 16:33
- Read 1 Peter 1:3-8

What can I do this week, month, year to develop a deeper understanding of God to prepare my heart and mind for evil that may affect me?

What other actions can I take to prepare the effects of evil in the world or evil happening to me?

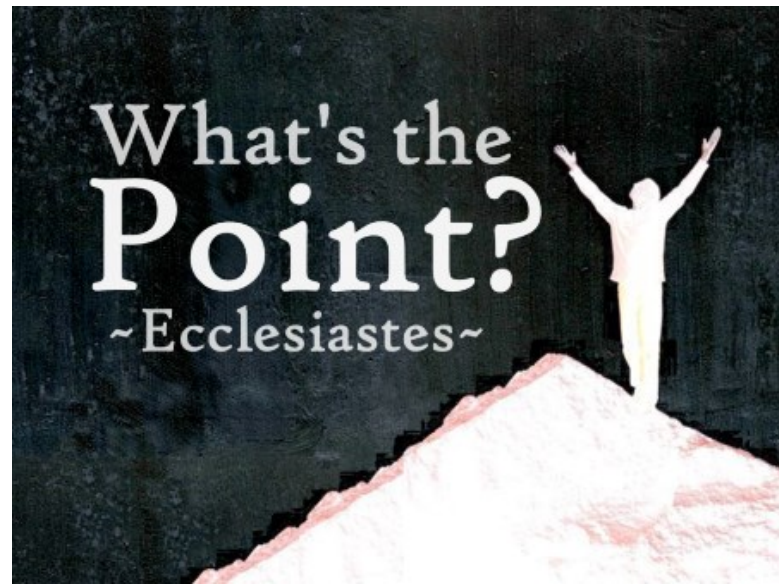
SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

- **Ecclesiastes 7:29**—See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.
- **Ecclesiastes 8:12-13**— Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.
- **Ecclesiastes 8:14-17**—There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. 15 And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.
- 16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how neither day nor night do one's eyes see sleep, 17 then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.
- **Ecclesiastes 9:1-6**— But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. 2 It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. 3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. 4 But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Written around 945 BC (~3,000 years ago)
- Part of the “wisdom literature” of the bible
- Word Ecclesiastes is derived from the Greek word Ekklesiastes – that word is derived from Ekklesia which means “assembly”
- In verse 1 we see words are from the “Preacher.”
 - ◊ The word “Preacher” is taken from the Hebrew word “Koheleth” which means “preacher, gatherer.”
- Most believe it was written by Solomon (reigned around 970-930 BC)
 - ◊ 1:1 – the son of David
 - ◊ 1:1 – king in Jerusalem
 - ◊ 1:12 – king over Israel in Jerusalem
 - ◊ 2:4-6 – building activities
 - ◊ 2:7-9 – wealth
 - ◊ 12:9 – he was wise
 - ◊ 12:9 – he taught the people knowledge and arranged proverbs...
- An outside narrator sets up and closes the book
 - ◊ See 1:1 – “The words of the Preacher...”. Kind of like a title page.
 - ◊ See also 12:9
 - ◊ I don’t think too much about this, just wanted to inform you as there are some out there who don’t think Solomon wrote this. My point of view is that the book is inspired and my faith won’t be shaken if I find out that it was not Solomon who wrote it.
- Main purpose of book – To answer the question many have asked and searched answers for: What value or purpose is there in this life on earth? (1:3).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE:
EVIL IN THE WORLD



“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
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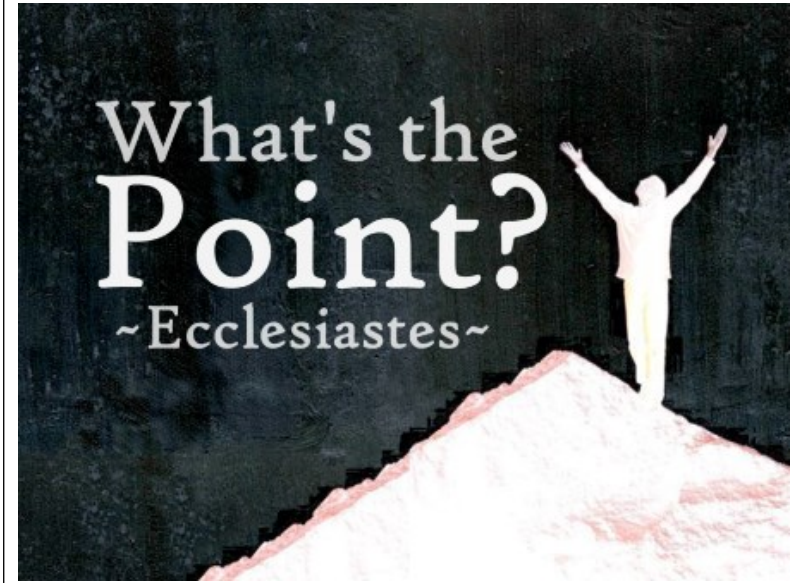
ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lesson 12

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

PURPOSE OF LIFE



“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.”

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lesson 2

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

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THOUGHT QUESTIONS

Read Genesis 3:13-20 and Ecclesiastes 7:13 — Do we have control over the general conditions of the creation that we live in?

Read Ephesians 1:3-10. Is the focus of the great blessings we have in Christ physical?

Read John 16:33—what are we told about tribulation? What comfort does Jesus give us?

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Here are some passages that support the definition of our purpose on the previous page. To help better understand the validity of this definition, please consider the three major parts:

1. Glorify God
2. Following His commandments and desires
3. Do good

As you read each passage please see consider how they fit into one of the above three major components of the definition of our purpose. Write notes beside each passage accordingly.

Isaiah 43:6-7

6 I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,
7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 10:31

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:23

23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Philippians 2:13-15

13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

2 Timothy 1:9

9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

2 Timothy 2:20

20 Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

James 1:27

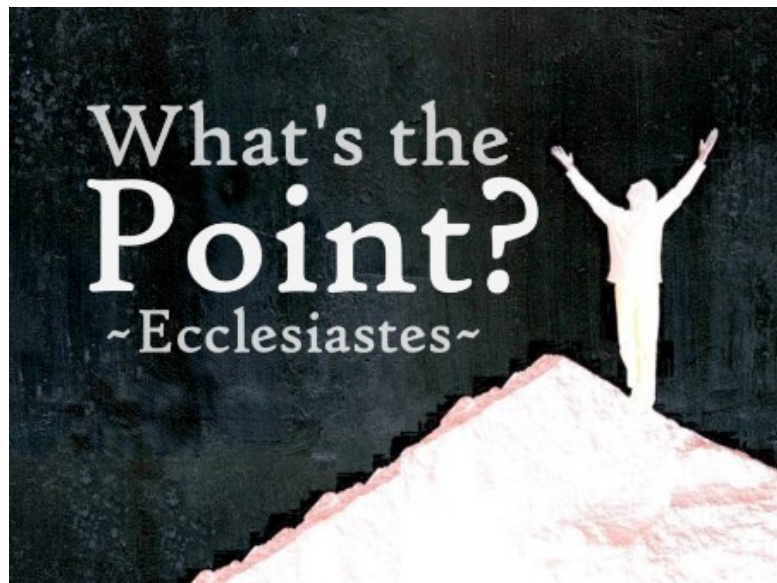
27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Please read these scriptures and write any notes in the space below

- Ecclesiastes 1:13-15
- Ecclesiastes 7:13
- Ecclesiastes 7:14-18
- Ecclesiastes 7:29
- Ecclesiastes 8:14-15
- Ecclesiastes 9:1-6
- Ecclesiastes 9:11-12
- Ecclesiastes 11:5
- Ecclesiastes 12:1-8
- Luke 13:1-5
- John 9:1-3

**CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE:
TIME AND CHANCE**



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.”
ECCLESIASTES 12:13**

Lesson 11

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

1 Peter 2:12

12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

John 14:15

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Ephesians 5:10

10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

1 John 2:3-6

3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

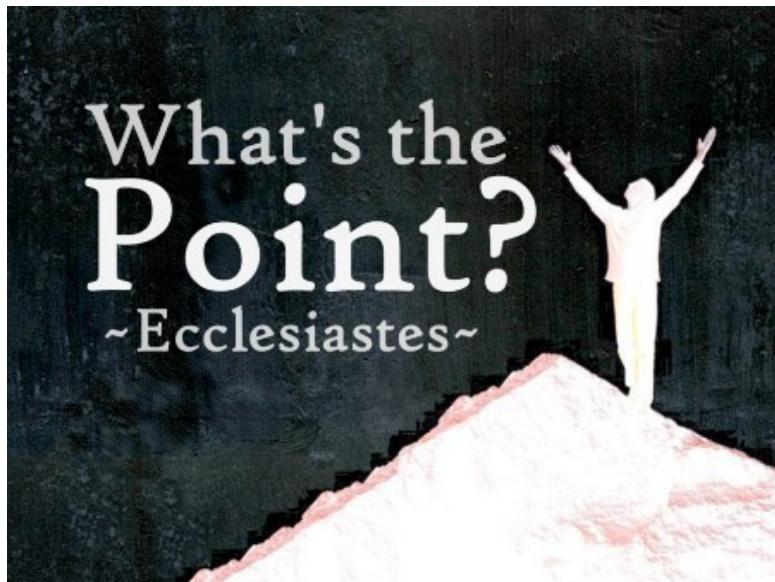
Micah 6:8

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

John 15:16

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.”**

ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lesson 3

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Matthew 6:24-26

24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. 25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

1 Timothy 6:10, 17-19

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Proverbs 6:6-8

6 Go to the ant, O sluggard;
consider her ways, and be wise.
7 Without having any chief,
officer, or ruler,
8 she prepares her bread in summer
and gathers her food in harvest.

Ephesians 4:28

28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

1 John 3:17

17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

1 Timothy 5:8

8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Eccl. 5:13-17

13 There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, 14 and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. 15 As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. 16 This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? 17 Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger

Eccl. 6:1-6

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: 2 a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil. 3 If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. 5 Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. 6 Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

Eccl. 11:1-6

Cast your bread upon the waters,
for you will find it after many days.
2 Give a portion to seven, or even to eight,
for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.
3 If the clouds are full of rain,
they empty themselves on the earth,
and if a tree falls to the south or to the north,
in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.
4 He who observes the wind will not sow,
and he who regards the clouds will not reap. 5 As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything. 6 In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

God's Sovereign Control Over Man:

Eccl. 1:13; 2:26; 3:1, 11, 14; 5:18-20; 6:1-2; 7:14; 8:15; 9:1

God's Providential Grace:

Eccl. 2:24-26; 3:13; 5:18-20; 8:15

God's Eternality:

Eccl. 3:11, 14; 12:5, 7

God's Creatorship:

Eccl. 3:11, 14; 7:29; 8:16-17; 11:5; 12:1, 7

God's Perfection:

Eccl. 3:14; 7:29; 8:16-17; 11:5

God's Justice and Holiness:

Eccl. 2:24-26; 3:17; 5:4, 6; 7:26, 29; 8:2, 12-13; 11:9; 12:14

God's Abode:

Eccl. 5:2

God's Omnipresence and Omniscience:

Eccl. 5:2, 6; 8:2, 16-17; 11:5; 12:14

God's Omnipotence:

Eccl. 7:13; 11:5

God's Preservation of His Saints:

Eccl. 7:26; 8:12-13

God Requires Reverential Fear:

Eccl. 3:14; 5:7; 7:18; 8:12-13; 12:1, 13

God Requires Obedience Before Sacrifice:

Eccl. 5:1, 4, 7; 8:2; 12:1, 13

God's Word:

Eccl. 12:13

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

How do God's characteristics help shape your view of our time here under the sun and how might it influence your perceived purpose?

After considering some of the characteristics of God listed in the scriptures on the previous page, what are your thoughts about Genesis 1:26?

How do verses like Isaiah 43:1-2 impact your faith in God's plan and purpose? How do promises like this impact your Christian walk with God and Christ? Consider the example in Daniel 3 of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (especially vss. 16-18, 25, 26-28).

How comforting to know that we serve such an almighty, all-powerful, all... everything God who created us in His image. God sees and is with His people. Consider a few more passages and make note of the way God observes His people...

Genesis 6:11-13:

Exodus 3:7-8:

Numbers 6:24-26:

Psalms 141:3:

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Eccl. 2:3-11

3 I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. 4 I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. 5 I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. 6 I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. 8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.

9 So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. 11 Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

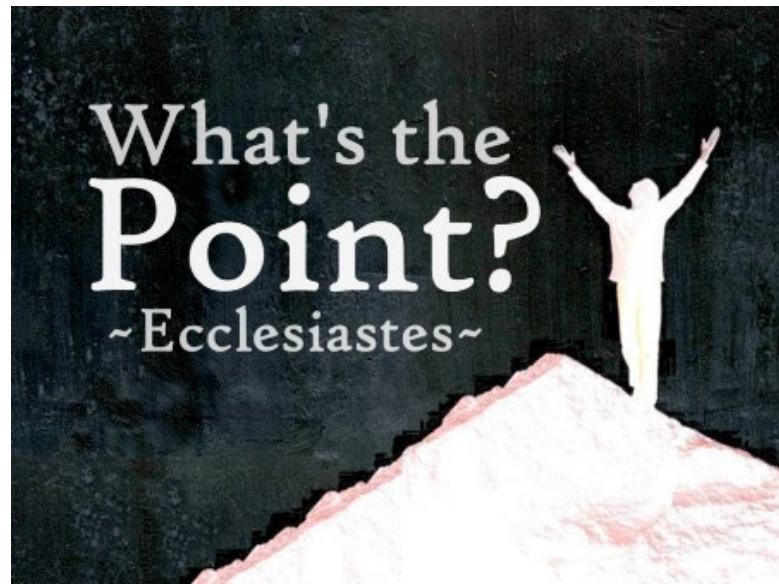
Eccl. 4:7-8

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun: 8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

Eccl. 5:10-12

10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? 12 Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

GOOD VS. GODLY



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
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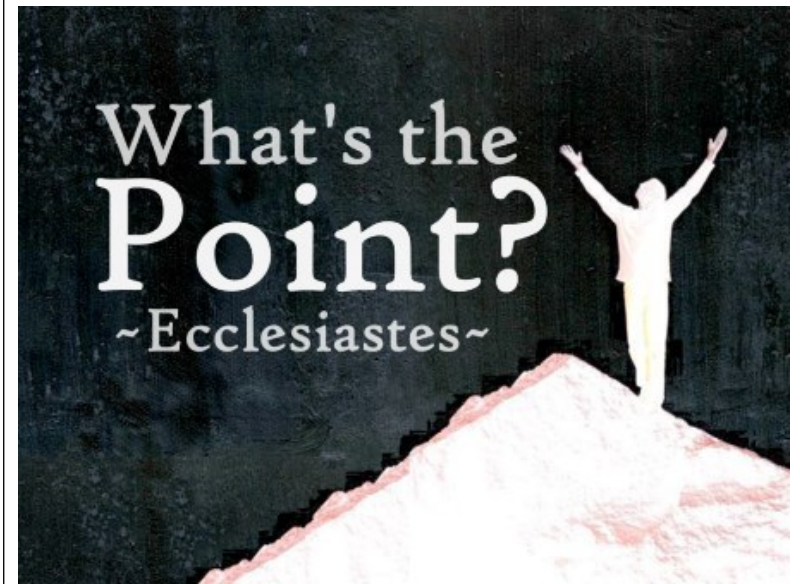
ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lessons 4 & 5

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

**HANDLING RICHES /
HOW TO VIEW
MONEY**



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
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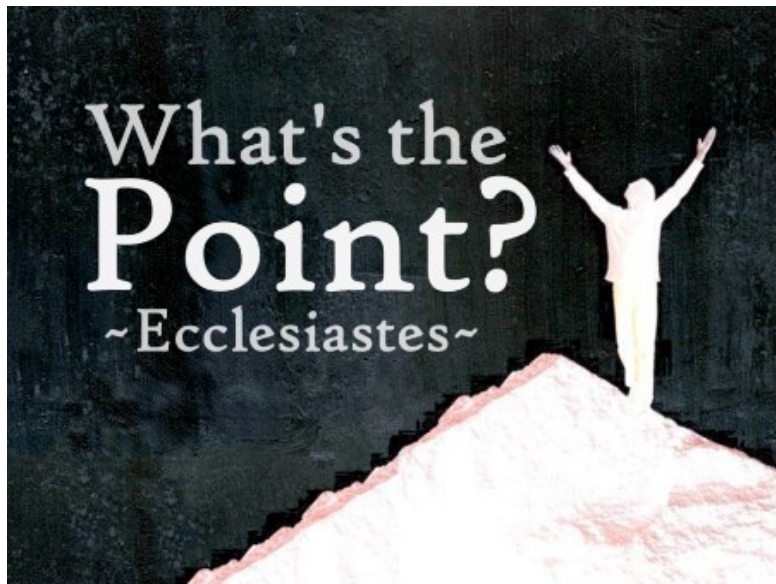
ECCLESIASTES 12:13

Lesson 10

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

SEASONS OF LIFE



**“THE END OF THE MATTER... FEAR GOD
AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, FOR
THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.”
ECCLESIASTES 12:13**

Lessons 6 & 7

Ecclesiastes - Summer 2017

Jack Johnson & Jason Reynolds

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Eccl. 2:24-25

24 There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, 25 for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

Eccl. 3:12-13

12 I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; 13 also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

Eccl. 3:22

22 So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

Eccl. 5:18

18 Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot

Eccl. 9:7-9

7 Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.

8 Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.

9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Ecc1 2:4-11

4 I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. 5 I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. 6 I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. 8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.

9 So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. 11 Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

Ecc1 4:4-8

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

5 The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

6 Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun: 8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

- 1 To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:
- 2 A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck 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;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw 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 of war,
And a time of peace.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

What are some of the “seasons of life” that you have experienced?

What seasons do you dread or look forward to?

What should be the Christian’s view of time?

How successful is the farmer that doesn’t act / react accordingly to the changing seasons? How many farmers are out there planting their crop in the middle of the harshest winters, hoping to bear fruit in early Spring? We, too need to recognize the seasons of our lives and understand the care and attention that is needed in each season. See Proverbs 6:8, 10:5, and 20:4). Why is it important to realize that God has appointed “times”? Read Psalm 1:3 and Mark 11:13.

Why would we think our lives are any different than that of the farmer? Are there seasons in your life when you need to be tilling the soil and seasons where we should be enjoying the harvest?

CLASS OBJECTIVE / NOTES

Class Objectives:

- (1) That we each learn that contentment is an attitude that is pleasing to God that we have the ability to create in ourselves.
- (2) Learn at least 3 biblical tools that we can use to create in ourselves an attitude of contentment.

First off let’s all make sure we’re on the same page here - what is contentment?

- The attitude of being satisfied with one’s situation
- Remember contentment is an attitude...it’s not an achievement (something you work towards and achieve once you reach a certain status). You can be content at any stage or means of life.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

Based on the provided scriptures (and any others you know of not provided...) list out as many reasons as you can why deep, meaningful relationships are valuable assets to us living lives that are pleasing to God during our time here under the sun.

How did Jonathan love David? (1 Sam. 18)

What attitude(s) do we need to have toward others to best be able to have the kind of friendships that God has made available to us? (Friendships that ease our burden, strengthen our faith and add joy and value to life).

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

- **Ecclesiastes 2:24** - I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. 2 I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" 3 I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. 4 I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. 5 I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. 6 I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. 8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man. 9 So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. 11 Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun
- **Ecclesiastes 4:7-8** - Again, I saw vanity under the sun: 8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** - Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! 11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

- **Ecclesiastes 6:3-4** - If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered.
- **Ecclesiastes 9:9** - Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.
- **Proverbs 17:17** - A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
- **Proverbs 18-24** - A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- **Proverbs 27:5-6** – Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.
- **Proverbs 27:9** – Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.
- **Proverbs 27:17** – Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.
- **1 Samuel 18:1-3** - As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.

SCRIPTURES TO CONSIDER

- **John 15:12-15** – “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.
- **Acts 4:32** - Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.
- **Romans 12:10** - Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.
- **Romans 12:15** - Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
- **Galatians 6:2** - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- **1 Corinthians 15:33** - Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”
- **Philippians 2:3-4** - Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
- **Colossians 3:12-14** – Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:11** -Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
- **Hebrews 13:16** - Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.