

**TIME FOR A CHANGE:
WHEN IT'S NOT WORKING
Ecclesiastes 1:1-11**

I'm not happy. That's it. That's the bottom line. That's reason enough to quit your job. It's reason enough to end a marriage. It's reason enough to abdicate your responsibility. The goal in life is to be happy. Happy, happy, happy. Don't worry, be happy. Happy as a kid in a candy store; a tornado in a trailer park; a clam at high tide; a pig in a peach orchard; a kid on Christmas; a pup with two tails; a mole with eagle eyes; a pig in slop. Or, my all-time favorite – Happy as a dead pig in the sunshine. But, I'm not.

What do I do?

I. WHY AM I HERE?

- A. The author of Ecclesiastes, best known as The Preacher, shares words that are tinged with a strong note of cynicism. ¹ *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.* ² *"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity."* The entire book is summarized in one statement. From a particular perspective, life is an unsatisfying, unfulfilling, never-ending chase after the wind. The Preacher went on to describe his search for meaning in life.
 - 1. He sought meaning in wisdom.
 - 2. He sought meaning in possessions.
 - 3. He sought meaning in pleasure.
- B. We can identify? Why are we here? What is the ultimate goal in life?
 - 1. Is the ultimate goal to attain a level of knowledge/wisdom? Is that represented by a degree, by a certificate? Is it to be an alumnus of a particular institution? Is it a particular major?

2. Is life to be found in what one can possess? Is life defined by an electronic device, an automobile, a house in a certain neighborhood, jewelry, weaponry, etc.?
 3. Is life to be found in an experience? Is it in a plate of food, a sexual liaison, a panoramic vista from a scenic overlook, a thrill-seeking adventure, etc.?
- Pleasure comes in many shapes, sizes, and flavors.
- C. Are we here to consume as much of life as possible as quickly as possible knowing that we are going to die?

II. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH A SECULAR WORLDVIEW?

- A. The Preacher was clear that he was wrestling with a perspective he described as under the sun. It was a view that left out God. It was a secular worldview. ³ *What advantage does man have in all his work Which he does under the sun? ⁴ A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever. ⁵ Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there again. ⁶ Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns. ⁷ All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again. ⁸ All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ That which has been is that which will be, And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.*
- B. What is the problem with a secular worldview? I have taken these observations from the Summit Ministries Worldview website. They do an excellent job of contrasting a secular worldview and a Christian worldview.
 1. Secular theology – atheism.

2. Secular philosophy – naturalism. Naturalism says that only matter exists – things you can touch, feel, and study. The Humanist trusts the scientific method as the only sure way of knowing anything, so if something cannot be observed, tested, and experimented on, it doesn't exist. Since you can't observe God, hell, the human mind or spirit, or conduct experiments on them they can't – and don't – exist.
 3. Secular ethics – moral relativism.
 4. Secular science – neo-Darwinian evolution. A rejection of God is a rejection of creationism.
 5. Humanist psychology – monism (self-actualization).
 6. Humanist sociology – non-traditional family, church, and state.
 7. Secular politics – liberalism, progressivism, secular world state.
- C. Man is at the center. All of the answers are found in man or human institutions.

III. WHAT IS THE REMEDY FOR DISILLUSIONMENT?

- A. The Preacher spent most of the book of Ecclesiastes describing his frustration with an *under the sun* perspective. When he reached the end of the book, he shifted his perspective. ¹³ *The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.* ¹⁴ *For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.* Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NASB95)
- B. The conclusion is not that nothing matters. The conclusion is that everything matters. When we fear God (know him, worship him, follow him) we learn the true value of wisdom, of possessions, and of pleasure. We are not driven by the pursuit of these things, but by

our desire to please God. In pleasing God, we find our greatest sense of fulfillment. We are created by him to know him and to serve him.

- C. Everything matters. All of life is being judged or measured by God. We will give an account of ourselves before him. We will not be evaluated by how much wisdom, possessions, and pleasure we accumulated and used up. We will be evaluated by what we did with what we knew of God? What did we do with Christ? That is the essence of life.