



Chasing Wisdom
“The Grace to Enjoy”
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Key Passage: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, 6:1-2, & 5:18-20

Opening Question: You are setting out on a month-long assignment in an isolated rural community. Your company allows you one perk or pleasure (fine food, the sports package, the Porsche rental car, etc.) to make the experience more enjoyable for you. What do you choose?

Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, 6:1-2, & 5:18-20.

Background:

- There are two voices speaking in Ecclesiastes, the book’s anonymous author and “the Teacher” with whose words the author wants us to wrestle. The Teacher is most likely Israel’s King Solomon (see 1 Kings 1-11), widely regarded as the nation’s most successful ruler and one of the wisest individuals to have ever lived.
- Hevel
 - literally, “smoke”, “vapor”, or “breath”
 - figuratively, 1) “temporary”, “fleeting”; 2) “enigma”, “paradox”

Explore Together:

1. Solomon throws himself into a life of pleasure to see if it will bring a sense of meaning or satisfaction. Have you ever tried this experiment? What was it like for you? Do you agree or disagree with Solomon's assessment in vv. 10-11?
2. What are the downsides of a life focused on pleasure and personal fulfillment? What moral or ethical dilemmas do you foresee? What lines did Solomon cross?
3. Life's pleasures are readily available to us today, but finding enjoyment in life's pleasures is just as elusive for us as it was for Solomon. According to the text, what enables us to enjoy life's good things? What are the implications of this truth?
4. What would it look like for you to "accept your lot" and "rejoice/find enjoyment in your toil"? What are some things you would have to stop doing in order to do this well?

Apply It:

◆ Write your own dayenu song. Gratitude is a key to experiencing the grace that allows us to enjoy life's good things. Dayenu is a Hebrew phrase meaning "it would have been enough for us." What are five things from your own story that if God had done only those things and nothing else it would be enough for you? (For example, the Jews sing, "If only you had rescued us from slavery in Egypt, dayenu!")

