

## THE SEARCH FOR QUALITY LIVING

**Intro:** There is no doubt that people in every generation have sought the same things out of life. What is the meaning of life? How can I know how to live? What are the keys to satisfaction and happiness? Every generation must face these questions.

How much better we all would be if we listened to those who lived before us and learned from them. That's what I hope we can do in this lesson. This a sermon about a sermon. The sermon is from the book the Hebrews called "Koheleth" ( the preacher). Or, the Greek title is "Ecclesiastes", one who calls an assembly. (Remember our word ecclesia, assembly or church?)

The preacher's topic was "life under the sun" (a phrase used 29 times in the book.) or, shall we say, "The Search For Quality Living". Solomon found the answer through his own experiences. What he tells us in this book can change our lives lives forever!

What are the features of a quality life? First consider what people often believe will produce lasting satisfaction and happiness.

### THE WORLDLY CONCEPT OF QUALITY LIVING

*A life without external controls—maximum personal liberty, answer to no one, “do your own thing”*

*A life of luxury--the quest for pleasure, accumulation of status symbols, materialism*

*A playboy philosophy of love--no responsibility, no commitment, no rules manifests in “free love” or casual sex*

*A life of little effort & relaxation--no work, everyone serving you*

*A life of worldly achievement and recognition--get the world's attention, be powerful, influential, be remembered*

*Our world is constantly being shaped by these values. The media constantly promotes them and the vast population of the world accepts them. Many people believe that they will never be happy until this is the way they live! Even Christians are often lured by this lifestyle. But, is this the answer?*

### SOLOMON'S EXPERIMENT

*Solomon had the opportunity to do what most people will never be able to do. He had everything with which to test the worldly concept of meaning and happiness. He had:*

*Wealth*

*Power*

*Time*

*He tested this lifestyle--2:1-11*

*Again and again he would see how the worldly approach could not make one truly happy or satisfied with life. It all led to “vanity”.*

*But in the process he found the real “secrets” to quality living and presented them in wise sayings scattered throughout this book. Solomon’s observations stand every worldly concept we considered on its head!*

## **SOLOMON'S “SECRETS” TO QUALITY LIVING**

*Realize that there is no earthly “immortality”.*

**Solomon stressed two important facts about life:**

*For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. (Ecclesiastes 9:5)*

*All of us will die and our earthly pursuits will come to an end. It was futile to imagine that we will be remembered very long past our deaths.*

*An interesting exercise would be to see if you can make a list of a hundred people who lived before 1900 whose names are not found in the Scriptures themselves. Out of the billions who have lived on earth, very few have been remembered very long past their own generation!*

*How many of you could name your great, great grandfather?*

**But think of the blessing of confronting the reality of death. Yes, you never know what tomorrow will bring; but you know that every day is a gift from God and that it is important to live it to the full! Living in this faith can change our lives immeasurably for good! That’s quality living!**

*Learn to find satisfaction in diligent work*

**Whatever your hand finds to do, verily, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going. (Ecclesiastes 9:10)**

**So most of the world longs for retirement; but for what? Is anyone really happy with absolutely nothing to do? Solomon found the opposite was true. Real satisfaction comes when we busy ourselves with meaningful occupation.**

**Think how satisfying it is to think back upon a day spent in productive pursuits and to enjoy a genuine tired and a good night’s sleep. Think about what it’s like to realize that you are not some working “has been” but someone who still has something worthwhile to do with your life! That’s quality living!**

*Commitment to a single woman in marriage*

**Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:9)**

**Playboys and playgirls are often just love-starved people starved looking for a way out of pain. But the truth is, sexual “freedom” leads to more pain—disease, broken relationships, and personal emptiness. But think how beautiful it is when two people really love each other**

and commit to live together and meet each other's needs. Every day they know better how to please each other and their love deepens more and more with time! Now that's quality living!

*Learning to enjoy what you have*

There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. (Ecclesiastes 2:24)

I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God. (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13)

When do you have enough? What good is a millionaire who has ulcers, missed the best moments in his children's lives, and goes home to strangers every night?

Think about the blessings of contentment. Contentment allows us to enjoy what God has given us rather than fret about what we don't have! It frees us to enjoy the people around us and to build relationships rather than merely collect stuff! That's quality living!

*A life controlled by God*

Solomon insists that the unchangeable mix of life was intended to keep us aware of our need for God.

I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him. (Ecclesiastes 3:14)

Our fear of God should cause us to recognize our accountability to God and do His will.

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

How "free" is the self-willed person? Not very. He is often addicted and enslaved to the objects of his lust!

But the servant of God knows true freedom, not to do as he pleases but to do as he ought! He finds abundant life by choosing to follow the instructions of the Creator. That's quality living!

**Conclusion:** You see, the worldly standard of happiness is wrong on every point! Ecclesiastes teaches us as godly people not to think that happiness is "out there" in sin; but rather to know that the true meaning of life and the way to happiness is found in knowing God and doing His will.

Often those who profess to live the worldly life to the fullest put on the greatest face and pretend that everything is wonderful. It becomes a way to mask deep sadness and unfulfillment. Each of knows what is within and what is there will tell us a lot about where we are with God. That void inside will never be filled by anything earthly. That restless feeling that you seek to find relief from will not go away until we die inside or until we give our life back to the God who gave life to us! Will you

**do this?**