



a reality check on work

Ecclesiastes 2.17-3.14

This discussion guide includes preparation BEFORE the group and some guidance DURING the group meeting. Preparation before the group will help you, your leader, and your group to engage and respond to the living and active Word of God.

PREPARATION BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS:

The aim of this preparation is to encourage good & prayerful observation of the text of God's word and the joyful experience of discovering its truth.

Pray & read Ecclesiastes 2.17-3.14

What strikes you about this reading?

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Do you have any questions about this reading?

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How does this reading make you feel?

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What do you think in response to this reading?

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What will you do in response to this reading?

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WHEN THE GROUP MEETS: Pray for your discussion time

Share with each other the good and bad things about work: (by 'work' think broadly about anything that requires effort for gain and not just 'employment')

read Ecclesiastes 2.17-2.26

▸ Why is work meaningless? (3.16)

▸ Discuss what you think Solomon means by 'toilsome labour' (v20). Is Solomon right in his assessment of work? Why is this true (compare with Genesis 3.17-19)?

read Ecclesiastes 3.1-14

▸ Discuss the activities you are most involved with now (now is the time for...). Reflect on how your *activities* change at different *times*:

▸ *What does the worker gain from all his toil...* How do v10-14 resonate with the *gain* you have for the activities you do?

read 1 Corinthians 15.50-58; 16.10-11

▸ In 1 Corinthians 15.32 Paul writes: *If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."* Why would Paul agree with Solomon? Why doesn't he, what changes everything?

▸ What does Paul mean by 'the work of the Lord' (15.58, 16.10)

▸ Why is it that all other work is vain, but 'the work of the Lord' is not in vain?

▸ What is important enough to move you from 'the work of the Lord'? How much are you to give yourself to 'the work of the Lord'? (5.58)

PRAYER time! Why not share one thing that has moved you from doing, or one thing you can do more fully, as you deliberately and intentionally go about 'the work of the Lord'. Pray and keep each other accountable for this one thing.