

A person is walking away from the viewer down a path in a misty forest. The trees are tall and thin, with some large, thick trunks in the foreground. The ground is covered in fallen leaves. The overall atmosphere is quiet and contemplative.

SEARCH FOR MEANING

ECCLESIASTES

TERM 2 - 2014

DAILY READING NOTES - ECCLESIASTES: SEARCH FOR MEANING

Week	Passage
1	Ecclesiastes 1:1-2:26
2	Ecclesiastes 3:1-22
3	Ecclesiastes 4:1-5:7
4	Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:12
5	Ecclesiastes 7:1-8:1
6	Ecclesiastes 8:2-9:10
7	Ecclesiastes 9:11-10:20
8	Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:8
9	Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

We want to encourage each other to be on mission to our non-Christian friends, family and contacts.

Who are you on mission to?

Make a list and start praying for them (and yourself).

Pray for 3 friends, once a week, for 1 minute (3-1-1).

List the name of your family/friends here.

ECCLESIASTES: SEARCH FOR MEANING

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

1. Personal Reading


- Use this guide to help you read your Bible every day.
- Scribble down your thoughts and questions each day and remember to pray and ask God to speak to you by His Spirit, through His Word.

2. Growth Groups

- Take this guide with you to your growth group each week so you can write down prayer points that come from the study that week and prayer requests from the members of your group.
- Let your group know who you are on mission to.

3. Church

- Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church.
- Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided.



Sign up for these notes as a daily email at evchurch.info/series

digging deeper



BEHOLD YOUR GOD

The Mystery and Magnificence of God

4 Mondays starting 12th May
7:30 - 9:30pm @ ev church

ev
church

life

look into life with Jesus

1st series Begins **Tuesday 6th May** @ 7:15pm for dinner

2nd series Begins **Wednesday 7th May** @ 7:15pm for coffee and dessert

six part series: *food + talk + discussion + coffee + questions*

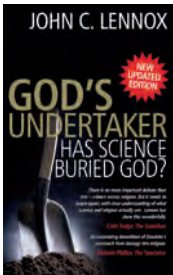
evchurch.info/life
solid hope - Jesus



SNEAKING SUSPICION

BY JOHN DICKSON

A Sneaking Suspicion is a book for young people about things that matter – things like life, death, relationships, sex, suffering, meaning and God – things that are important but we don't often talk about. John Dickson writes: "For me, what began as a sneaking suspicion has blown into a huge reality. Like most Aussies, I had a hunch there was something more to life than beer and footy. I also had a hunch that the 'something more' could be found by looking to Jesus. When I decided to go with my hunch, I discovered more than I ever bargained for."



GOD'S UNDERTAKER: HAS SCIENCE BURIED GOD?

BY JOHN LENNOX

If we are to believe many modern commentators, science has squeezed God into a corner, killed and then buried him with its all-embracing explanations. Atheism, we are told, is the only intellectually tenable position, and any attempt to reintroduce God is likely to impede the progress of science. In this stimulating and thought-provoking book, John Lennox invites us to consider such claims very carefully. Is it really true, he asks, that everything in science points towards atheism? Could it be possible that theism sits more comfortably with science than atheism? Has science buried God or not? Now updated and expanded, God's Undertaker is an invaluable contribution to the debate about science's relationship to religion.



GUNNING FOR GOD

BY JOHN LENNOX

Since the Twin Towers crashed to the ground on 9/11 there has been no end to claims that religion 'is dangerous', 'kills', or 'poisons everything'. And if religion is the problem with the world, say the New Atheists, the answer is simple: get rid of it. But are things really so straightforward? Tackling Hawking, Dawkins, Dennett, Hitchens, and a newcomer in the field – the French philosopher, Michel Onfray – John Lennox points out some of the fallacies in the New Atheist approach, arguing that their irrational and unscientific methodology leaves them guilty of the very obstinate foolishness they criticise in dogmatic religious folk. Gunning for God packs some debilitating punches. However, it also puts forward new ideas about the nature of God and Christianity that will give Dawkins' best friends and worst enemies alike some stimulating food for thought.

These books are available for purchase at the EV Bookshop in the Foyer.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

The Old Testament is full of many interesting characters, but perhaps one of the most intriguing is the main character of Ecclesiastes who is known only as the ‘Teacher’. While the Teacher is the author of most of the material in the book, it is fairly clear that the book has been put together by an editor (see the epilogue in 12:9-14). It is often assumed that the Teacher is Solomon (based on 1:1, 1:12 and 2:7). However, this is never stated outright and is actually discouraged by the statement in 1:16 (see also 12:9-12). In fact, it is quite possible that the Teacher assumed the character of Solomon as a literary device in order to make their point. Solomon, after all, is the pinnacle of Israel’s kingship and the greatest of her wisdom figures. If anyone could have figured out how to live a meaningful life, Solomon would be the one to look to! Yet for all that Solomon gained, he forgot the central truth for understanding meaning in life – he forgot to fear God and obey His commandments.

Like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes is called ‘wisdom literature’ which seeks to provide practical wisdom about how to best live in this world God has made. It is a book with a strategic message, which is delivered in a somewhat unusual and provocative way. The opening line reads, “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” At first glance, Ecclesiastes would appear to be a somber and depressing book from the beginning as it constantly proclaims that all is meaningless – suggesting that life is futile, nothing but a vapor and of no real account. In case you miss this idea at the beginning of the book, the Teacher will use the word ‘meaningless’ some 38 times before the book is finished!

But what does this mean? Does the Teacher wish us to hear him saying the same thing that Atheistic Nihilism says, that all ideas of objective purpose, hope or meaning in life are completely non-existent? Is it this kind of ‘meaninglessness’ that is being communicated by the Teacher? No, it is not.

While it is a little difficult to process his message at first, the Teacher is certainly not atheist, referring to God some 40 times in the book – and never in a negative light. In fact, he argues that it is the very existence of God that gives ‘meaning’ in life, and true wisdom can only be found when we begin with a fear of the Lord (Eccl. 12:13). The problem the Teacher identifies is that true meaning in life is often hidden from humanity. But more than this, or perhaps because of this, meaning in life is mistakenly pursued through work, wisdom, relationships, money or success, or it is questioned because of the circumstances of pain, loss or injustice.

Ecclesiastes gives a wealth of advice about how to make the most of this life ‘under the sun’ (meaning life apart from God, life with no reference to Him). Yet an exasperated, despairing emptiness pervades the book. And, ironically, this

emptiness is its greatest contribution. We will have to face the hard realities of living in a world that is broken and fallen, trying to understand if life has any meaning at all. The Teacher's conclusion is that everything is meaningless in order that we might learn to fear God (3:14; 12:13-14). Ecclesiastes highlights the need we all have for something beyond anything this physical life can offer, something found in God alone.

The series title is "Search for Meaning" because that is what the Teacher will take us on this term as we study this ancient, yet so powerfully relevant book. To feel its bite as we are intended to feel, we must be careful not to run too quickly to the New Testament to resolve the tensions it creates. But that said, to understand how to read and apply it correctly, we must look to see how it points us to Jesus and is fulfilled in Him; to see the hope and meaning that can be known because of Him. In Jesus, we see the perfect wisdom of God revealed through His redeeming work at the cross (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16). It is the gospel that ultimately sheds true light on the meaning of life and the hope of eternity with God where sin and its often painful effects will no longer be part of our experience.

As for the structure of this book, while there is clearly an introduction (1:1), a conclusion (12:9-14), and a major refrain "Meaningless, Meaningless..." much of the central part of this book is very difficult to clearly pin down structurally. Perhaps this is intentional so as to give the book a 'thinking out loud' or 'hard to get hold of' kind of feel which helps to highlight its central theme of the meaninglessness of 'life under the sun'. Ecclesiastes is an incredibly raw and honest book about life on earth. It will take us on a "Search For Meaning".

WEEK 1: ECCLESIASTES 1:1-2:26

These opening 11 verses introduce the book of Ecclesiastes and its main theme: the meaninglessness of life lived under the sun. After the introduction there are a series of experiments that investigate different areas of life in which the Teacher tries to find meaning. Some have suggested that the book of Ecclesiastes is a reaction to the development of the wisdom tradition that peaked under Solomon's rule and then began to decline with Solomon's decline. The decline meant that instead of wisdom beginning with a fear of the Lord, it ended up being used to replace their perceived need for the Lord! Humanist Secularism is the idea that life can be lived without any knowledge of God in a sufficiently meaningful way simply by resting on human wisdom and insights alone. The Teacher will show us that a truly meaningful life cannot be found through worldly means alone. Even wisdom itself fails to make sense of the world we live in because sin has ruined everything.

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

1. The repetition of words often indicates a main theme in a book, what words are repeated in these opening verses?

2. What do you think the Teacher means when he says everything is 'meaningless'? How might it be connected to the phrase 'under the sun'?

3. Why is meaning in life important for us?

Thank God for the honest and raw questions that Ecclesiastes will help you ask, wrestle with and answer. Pray that you might see that life on earth (life under the sun) is meaningless – it is fleeting, like a vapor, it is but a moment. To pursue meaning in life from merely a human vantage point, without regard for God, will never satisfy. Pray that God would unsettle you from holding tightly to earthly realities to define your existence so that you might search for a deep and satisfying meaning in life that can be found in God alone.

DAY 2

The Teacher will now explore four key areas of life under the sun in order to understand whether they can provide lasting meaning in life in and of themselves. We will consider one of these areas each day for the rest of this week.

READ ECCLESIASTES 1:12-18

1. What Old Testament figure seems to be in view here and why is that significant? (see also 1 Kings 4:29-34)

2. What reasons does he offer for why wisdom cannot provide the answer to knowing what your life means?

3. We live in a largely secular culture, a culture that doesn't believe in, or see the need to believe in God. In place of God, human wisdom is used to understand the world we live in and aims to provide ultimate meaning for our lives. What is the Teacher's conclusion about human wisdom's ability to provide satisfying meaning in life?

4. Why is wisdom and knowledge about this world not enough?

Pray that you would not be fooled into thinking that worldly wisdom and knowledge can ever explain the complexity of life, or offer meaning in the sorrow and grief that it brings. Pray that God grows your understanding of just how broken this world is and how meaningless life is until we turn back to God.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11

1. To what extent does the Teacher pursue pleasure?

2. These verses fairly clearly recount much of Solomon's life achievements. Why is Solomon's life story worth remembering when considering whether pleasure itself can provide a satisfying and meaningful life?

3. What is the Teacher's conclusion about pleasure?

4. Why is it such a dangerous thing to look to pleasure to find a sense of meaning?

5. How is this passage relevant to your life, and our culture today?

Pray that God would help you see the dangers of seeking pleasure in the absence of a deep understanding of God's purposes for the world, and your place in it. Pray that the temptation for the momentary pleasures of this world would be swallowed up by the joyful hope and lasting joy of eternal life with God.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:12-16

1. In this third exploration, the Teacher assesses wisdom itself to determine whether or not it can even be used as a trustworthy guide in this task. What does he conclude about the value of wisdom?

2. Despite his conclusion, what causes him ongoing distress?

3. What does this reveal about the failure of human wisdom to answer the deeper questions about living a meaningful life?

Pray that God would help you be wise in the way you live, not foolish. Ask God to help you see that in the face of death, even worldly wisdom falls apart causing us to look forward to God's perfect wisdom that answers the problem of death; a wisdom revealed through the coming of Jesus.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 2:17-26

1. In this fourth exploration of life, why does work (and what work results in) fail to satisfy?

2. What does this suggest about the danger of finding your identity in your work?

3. Until now, we have only considered life 'under the sun' – God has not been in view. Although brief, what does difference is made by considering God's perspective of life in verses 24-26?

Pray that you might heed the warning of pursuing your identity in your work – for it will not last. Rather, ask God to help you be grateful for your work, that you might eat, drink and work with gratitude towards God.

PRAYER POINTS AND NOTES

WEEK 2: ECCLESIASTES 3:1-22

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8

1. What initial impression does this poem leave you with?

2. Some have suggested this poem is a further critique of the meaninglessness of life by showing that humanity is trapped in the cycles of time that they have no control over. Others see it as a glimpse of the Teacher's basic optimism in life; a reason to begin hoping in the God who orders these events. What do you think?

3. In what way do these verses help us see that it is possible to live a joyful life, although not one that is ultimately meaningful in and of itself?

Praise God that He is sovereign over life, the good times and the bad. Pray that you would remember that while life is joyful, it is also broken and so are we. We must be careful not to worship life itself, or seek our meaning in any part of it alone. Ask God to help you trust in Him, the giver of life and the only one who can help us make sense of it.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11

Yesterday we considered the poem of verses 1-8; today we will consider how verses 9-11 shed some light on it.

1. How do these verses impact the way we think about the cycles of time and events described in v.1-8?

2. What hope is there for humanity to understand what God is doing in the world according to these verses?

3. What do you think the Teacher means in v. 11b?

4. Augustine, one of the early church Fathers once wrote, “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you”. In what sense does Augustine’s words capture what the Teacher is saying in vs. 11b? (See also John 17:3)

Thank God for His sovereignty over all of life’s events – the good times and the hard times. Thank Him for creating us with eternity in our hearts, that we might hunger and thirst for more than the things of this world. Pray that God would help you see the meaningless nature of this world and all that is in it compared with the eternity he has created us for: to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Pray that God would increase your desire to know and love Him more truly and more deeply.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:12-15

1. What is the fundamental difference between God’s plans and ours according to v. 14?

2. What impact does the acknowledgement of God’s rule over creation have on our ability to enjoy life (v. 12-13)?

3. What reason is given to describe why God made the world the way He has?

Praise God for the gift of life; the joy it brings; and the simple pleasures of food and drink, relationships and work. Thank God that He ordered the events of your life so that you might acknowledge His rule over all of life, and know Him. Pray for your '3-1-1' people and our mission partners that many more people would come to know a truly meaningful life by being restored to the giver of life.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:16-17

1. What important observation does the Teacher make about life under the sun?

2. How does the Teacher answer the problem of wickedness?

3. This week, we've seen that God is sovereign over all the events of life, including human existence (3:14). But this raises a question for us that the Teacher answers here: does trusting in God's sovereignty over all of life remove human responsibility? Why, or why not?

Thank God that injustice, while horrific, is not outside His purposes, and will come under His just judgment in a day to come. Pray that you might grow in your confidence to trust Him because he is sovereign without losing any sense of your human responsibility in life.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 3:18-22

1. In this last section the teacher makes another comment about the nature of life 'under the sun' (life from a human stand point). What is his basis for comparing humanity and animals?

2. In light of the inevitability of death, what does the Teacher conclude? (v. 22)

3. Having had even a small taste for an eternal 'God-centred' perspective of life, how do you react to being taken back into the meaningless framework again? How does this shape the way you think about the state of those around you who don't know Jesus?

Thank God that we are not mere animals even though we die just like them. Thank Him that in spite of the inevitability of death, there is more to life than just working, as we saw earlier this week. Pray that this harsh re-entry back into considering the futility of life without God would remind you again of the dire need of all those around you who are lost in their sin. Ask God to graciously use you to bear witness to the ultimate meaning that can be found in life through Jesus.

WEEK 3: ECCLESIASTES 4:1-5:7

From this point onwards, the structure of the Teacher's argument becomes increasingly difficult to discern. He seems to wander from one thought to the next as he continues to probe and ponder life 'under the sun' as he continues to search for meaning without success. This week's readings are largely dominated by the exploration of work. The Teacher observes that greed seems to be humanity's main motivation for working. This motivation leads to the breakdown of relationships.

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:1-3

1. What observation does the Teacher make about life?
2. If this life is all there is, what hope is there for the oppressed?
3. In the face of this injustice, what is the Teacher's conclusion about life?
4. For those who don't believe in the existence of God, what real comfort or meaning can be found for those who have suffered intensely at the hand of oppressive injustice to the point of death?
5. How does the reality of global injustice cause us to look to God?

Take time to pray for those people and nations that suffer heavily under oppression and injustice. Pray that God in His compassion might bring comfort to those being oppressed. Pray that they might cry out to God and find the ultimate expression of God's love and justice in the sending of Jesus.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:4-6

1. What does the Teacher identify as the common motivation for why people work?
2. Why is envy so destructive to human relationships?
3. How would you know if your working life and career dreams are motivated by envy?

Pray that God would help you to honestly evaluate the motives of your heart for working hard and seeking career advancement. Be aware of the decisions you make for material gain at the cost of relationship. Ask God to help you to be content with what you have and wise in how you use it.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:7-12

1. What observation does the Teacher make about work, wealth and relationships?
2. What reasons does he give for valuing relationships over work and wealth?
3. How does this insight point us to something deeper within us that we were created for?

Ask God to guard you against putting your career above relationships. Pray that God would help you consider how you can invest more intentionally into relationships with those around you.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 4:13-16

Today's passage offers further reflections of life 'under the sun'. In particular, it reflects on leaders and those who follow them.

1. What does the Teacher warn about leadership in these verses?

2. Despite the Teacher concluding that a young but wise king is better than an old but foolish one, in the end why is self-sufficiency meaningless?

3. How might the Teacher reflect on the value of inspiring self-help success-type stories today?

Pray the God keeps you from valuing self-sufficient success stories. Even though great earthly wisdom might lead to great success, in the end life can change in a heartbeat and ultimately counts for nothing apart from God.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7

The Teacher now reflects on human life 'under the sun' as a worshipper. His reflections are razor sharp and quite helpful for us to think clearly about the essential difference between who God is, who humans are, and how we ought to approach Him.

1. What insight are we given about what God is like?

1. What is the main warning the Teacher offers about humans as they consider how to come before God?

2. What does He conclude about a right approach to God?

3. What might it look like today to fear God?

Pray that God captures you again with a very high view of His sovereignty and a realistic picture of your human frailty and sin so that you might come before him with a right-placed reverence and honour. Thank Him for the very great privilege it is to be able to come before Him in prayer as you remember who He truly is – the Lord God Almighty of Heaven and Earth!

WEEK 4: ECCLESIASTES 5:8-6:12

This week we will consider what the Teacher has to say about the danger of wealth. In and of itself, money has no life or power; it is inanimate. Despite this, Jesus describes money as a rival god that actively competes for your worship and devotion (Luke 16:13). In Ecclesiastes, the Teacher also observes the danger of wealth, its ultimate meaninglessness and the corrupting impact it has on the way we live. It is sobering to think that these words were penned nearly 3,000 years ago. It just shows that not much changes under the sun after all!

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:8-12

1. What observation does the Teacher make about the abuse of power?
2. What is it about money that corrupts the human heart so badly?
3. What warning do we hear today in these words?

Ask God to help you see the danger of allowing the importance of wealth to take hold of your heart. It can never satisfy because it is simply unable to carry the burden we place on it, thus creating a constant and insatiable hunger for more. This leads to an increasing corruption of our pursuits to gain more because we foolishly look to wealth to provide us with satisfaction in life and the power to gather even more wealth! Pray that God guards you against greed through contentment with what you have and a superior joy in knowing that God alone can give you meaning in life that will endure all things.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:10-17

1. What reasons does the Teacher give us for why the pursuit of wealth is ultimately meaningless?

a) 5:10-12

b) 5:13-14

c) 5:15-16

d) 5:17

2. In light of how important wealth is to our culture, how important is it for us to take this warning seriously?

3. What makes it hard for you to face this warning openly and honestly?

Pray that God helps you see the danger of pursuing money in place of God. Take time to reflect on the fact that you were made to know God; made for an eternally significant life – that is why wealth can never satisfy. Wealth simply cannot offer the meaning we seek from it. As we foolishly pursue it, it begins to consume us. Wealth does not last. We cannot take it with us when we die; it can be taken from us in a moment. Those consumed by wealth live in the darkness of foolish and unsatisfied misery because it can never meet the expectation we place on it to give us a meaningful, significant and enduring life.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 5:18-20

1. Having totally smashed the idea that wealth can truly satisfy, the Teacher takes the reader back to a perspective of life that remembers that there is more to life 'under the sun'. What simple but profound truth are we given about the nature of God and His role in the world that offers some important perspective?
2. How does this perspective totally change the way we see wealth and enable us to enjoy life?
3. How should this impact the way we think about our own life, and how we look on the wealth of others?

Thank God for the reminder that He is the Lord God Almighty, the sovereign ruler over all of life. Pray that you might find contentment with what you have knowing it is a gift from God to be gratefully enjoyed without craving for more.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 6:1-6

1. What does the Teacher say about the relationship between wealth and happiness?
2. What is the warning here? How relevant is this warning especially given the culture we live in?

1. For some, the reference to the stillborn child may be a hard thing to hear. We need to remember that the Teacher is reflecting on life merely from the vantage point of earth (6:1 “under the sun”). This is not a passage teaching us about God’s view of a stillborn child (See Psalm 139:13-16 for how God views the value of life, even before birth). His main point is made clear at the end of verse 6. What is he saying?

Pray that God would help you acknowledge His sovereign rule over your life. Pray that you would be able to submit to the truth that whether you have a lot, or a little, your happiness is not bound to these things themselves, for they are meaningless. Pray that God helps you to face the reality that regardless of what you have, or the number of days you are given to live, death awaits us all. Do not chase after things that in the end will be lost in death.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 6:7-12

1. In what way is v.7 describing the treadmill of life?

2. While wisdom is better than folly (1:13), what gain can it ultimately offer?

3. You work to eat, and you eat to work, you can neither truly fathom nor change the world and then you die and are forgotten. How do you react to being told that your life is but a meaningless shadow on the grand scale of time (v.12)? What questions does this raise for you?

Pray that God helps you grasp the desperate and hopeless nature of life if there is nothing more than this world and our brief life in it. Ask God to help you see just how depressing a picture life can be for those who have never heard about Jesus. Pray that God might stir your heart to pray and act in love towards those people in your life that don’t know Jesus. Pray also for our mission partners and church planting partners: pray that they would be successful in reaching many people with the good news about Jesus.

WEEK 5: ECCLESIASTES 7:1-8:1

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:1-6

1. What is your first reaction to reading these verses?
2. The structure of this section (and beyond it) is held together by a series of contrasts showing that one thing is 'better than' another. Why does the Teacher say that reflecting on categories of death and struggle are better than feasting, pleasure and fun? (see v. 2, 4)
3. In what sense does it make a person wise to reflect on the reality of death?
4. Is the Teacher saying we should never laugh, be happy, feast or have fun? In light of v. 6b, what might he be saying?

Pray that God helps you understand that without Him, everything is meaningless. While difficult to face for some people, death is the ultimate reason for taking life with God seriously – none of us can escape it. Pray that God would help you let go of meaningless pursuits and give yourself more fully to seeing God glorified in your own life. Pray also for the thousands of people on the coast, and all around the world, who are lost in their sin and spend each day foolishly pursuing all kinds of things to distract them from the hard reality that death will make it all meaningless. Pray that God would graciously save people from the futility of life through the gospel of Jesus being made known.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:7-12

Yesterday we considered the benefit of facing death and struggle compared to the alternative of feasting and fun. Today will cause us to consider that while struggle 'can' be beneficial for us, it is not necessarily the case calling for great wisdom.

1. What warnings does the Teacher raise about the complexities of life? (v. 7-10)
2. How do these warnings pave the way for the necessity of wisdom?
3. With what is wisdom compared and why is it better? (v. 11-12)

Within the complexities of life, pray that God gives you the wisdom to see the dangers of compromise, impatience, anger and discontent. Take some time to consider if these are things you struggle with now, and how might you need to respond if they are?

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:13-18

1. What reasons are we given here to explain why God sovereignly ordains both good times and bad?
2. Consider for a moment the complexity of life and the fact that you simply cannot know what God is doing in every moment of your life, or why He is doing it. How should this shape the way you think about and pray in good times, but more importantly, in the hard times?

3. In what sense do these verses reveal that human effort, or mere morality is not the answer to finding meaning in life?

4. What advice does the Teacher offer for how to avoid the extreme ways of living 'under the sun'?

Come before God, acknowledging His sovereign rule over your life in reverence and awe that He is God and you are not. Pray that God would help you enjoy life with deep gratitude to Him when times are good. When times are hard, pray that God helps you turn to Him and trust in Him knowing that you can neither control nor understand the future, but to trust that whatever you are facing (or will face) is not without meaning or purpose in the mind of God. Pray that God would help you live wisely with a right submission to Him as God.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:18B-24

1. How is the wisdom that begins with the fear of God superior to words of men (worldly rulers' wisdom)?

2. What is the central problem with humanity that clouds our understanding and our ability to be truly wise?

3. What final conclusion does the Teacher make about his ability to discover what lies beyond death through the means of wisdom?

4. If any knowledge of life beyond the grave cannot be discovered by wisdom, how can we ever know for sure what happens after death? See also:

a) 1 Peter 1:3-9

b) 1 Corinthians 15:1-26; 51-58

Ask God to help you embrace the wisdom that comes from a fear of the Lord; a wisdom that acknowledges that the worldly wisdom of men is tainted by sin and cannot make sense of this life and what lies beyond death apart from God. Thank God that what we could not discover for ourselves has been made known to us by the one who died and rose again, Jesus! May we look to Him and hear His words – the source of true wisdom – to understand what life is about and how to face death with confidence.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 7:25 – 8:1

1. Having failed in his attempt to understand what lies beyond the grave, the Teacher now explores the character of humanity. What does he find?

2. What reason is given for the extreme rarity of wisdom in people?

3. What insight does the Teacher offer here about what really lies at the heart of the problem with humanity's search for meaning? (See also Romans 1:18-23; 3:23; 6:23, 8:20-21; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:21)

4. Given the insights gained so far, what hope is there to truly find meaning in life if we fail to acknowledge God, the brokenness of the world we live in, or the problem of human sin? How does this help prepare us for, and point us to the coming of Jesus?

Praise God for showing us that humanity's greatest problem in our search for meaning lies in our rejection of Him. In this, humanity is united for all have sinned; all have gone in search of many schemes apart from God. Pray that God would increase your sense of despair for those who don't know Him and those who have not yet heard the good news about what God has done about this problem of our sin. Pray that you might see the world as God sees it: a broken place full of broken people who have turned their backs on God, living lost and meaningless lives without hope or confidence to face death. Pray that you might be stirred deeply about what you can do to tell as many people as you are able about the great news that Jesus came to deal with the problem of sin, to reconcile us back to God and give us a certain hope for this life and life beyond the grave.

WEEK 6: ECCLESIASTES 8:2-9:10

DAY 1

ECCLESIASTES 8:2-8

1. What wisdom is offered about how to live in relationship to authority?
2. What reasons are given to explain why wisdom about how to live is not enough to master life by itself?
3. In what ways do people try to control their futures and deny the inevitability of death?
4. Why is it so important for people to come to terms with the reality of death?

Ask God to help you see that not only does it matter to learn how to live under the authority of earthly rulers but to ultimately learn what it means to live under God's rule. He is the only one who knows the future and he determines the lives we will live. It is God who we must learn to entrust our lives to, regardless of the circumstances we face.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 8:9-13

1. What observation does the Teacher make about unfairness of life 'under the sun'?

2. Why do people react so strongly to delayed or denied justice?

3. Worldly wisdom may tempt a person to conclude that you can be evil all your life, benefit from it and get away with it! Why does the Teacher refuse to agree with this thought? (See also Psalm 49:13-14; 73:18-20.)

4. At the highest level, why should we be grateful for God's delayed justice against human sin? (See also 2 Peter 3:8-9.)

Thank God that although injustice is an observable evil in this broken world that we live in, injustice will not have the final say. Evil will one day be finally punished, but until that day God graciously holds the door open for many people to acknowledge their sin and brokenness, repent and find forgiveness by turning to Jesus.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 8:14-17

1. Many people have a view about life that if you do good stuff, good stuff will come back to you in this life, and the life to come. How might the Teacher respond to this view of life given his observation in today's passage?

2. Given that life 'under the sun' is unpredictable, seemingly unfair and ultimately meaningless, how then does the Teacher tell people to live?

a) How do you find his advice?

b) Do you sense the despair of trying to understand how to live if there is nothing more than this life?

c) As the Teacher reflects on the enigma of life ‘under the sun’, what does he conclude about anyone’s ability to make sense of it?

Thank God that the complexity of life, while beyond human understanding, is not outside His control. As you seek to make sense of the events of your own life (the good and the bad), take caution in listening to the voices of people who would presume to make sense of it without pointing you to a deep respect that God is in control and can be trusted no matter what you are facing.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:1-6

1. What common destiny awaits all people?

2. What does the inescapable reality of death do to our sense of control as human beings?

3. If living a meaningful life is connected to the idea that we are somehow in control of its destiny, what happens when we face the hard truth that we really are not in control?

Ask God to help you both accept and delight in His control over all of life, including the reality of death. Pray that you would not be fooled into thinking your life is only meaningful because you can control your future. Humble yourself before God and pray for the strength and courage to live each day, regardless of what it brings, for His honour and glory.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:7-10

1. Facing the certainty of death and your accountability before God when it comes, what advice does the Teacher give for how to live the momentary and 'meaningless' life you have?
2. How does the Teacher's wisdom here compare to that given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:31?
3. To what extent are you consciously living your life each day for the glory of God and not your own agenda for personal gain?

Pray that God might help you let go of the need to feel in control of your life. Pray that God helps you live, work, love and enjoy your life in a way that holds it all very loosely compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing God and bringing glory to Him in all you do.

WEEK 7: ECCLESIASTES 9:11-10:20

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:11-12

1. What are the personal accomplishments listed in verse 11?
2. Misplaced motivations for living a certain way can lead to great disappointment when things don't turn out the way you intend. What is the warning in these verses for the person who is motivated to succeed in life for the purpose of personal prosperity?
3. Is there any guarantee that life's frustrations and disappointments will disappear, even for the person who is assured of God's approval? (See also 2 Timothy 3:12; James 4:13-17)

Pray that God would guard you against the world's constant pull on your life to think that you are 'owed' something, that personal prosperity is something that everyone can achieve if you work hard enough and are good enough. Pray that God would help you see that the ultimate blessing in this life is found in the forgiveness of sins and the certain hope of eternal life where you will experience the unrestricted presence of the glory of God forever! May the appeal of worldly success fade away in light of this great truth so that you can hope in something that will not disappoint, that will endure through all of life's ups and downs.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 9:13-10:1

As we saw yesterday, life has no guarantee of success, and death comes to us all at a time that is not of our choosing. How then should we live? The Teacher now turns his attention to exploring how we should live if this life is all there is.

1. What observations does the Teacher make here about wisdom?
2. While personal efforts to live wisely are highly important, how does wisdom compare to sin and foolishness?
3. In what way does facing this reality foreshadow the need for a greater wisdom that has power to overcome sin and foolishness?

Pray that you might take notice of the wisdom God gives in life, not just wisdom handed down by those in positions of great power and status, but also from those who are poor and unimpressive in the eyes of the world. Be careful how you live though, for wisdom is a fragile thing and any benefit it can bring to the glory of God can be quickly undone through sin and foolishness. As you pursue living a godly and wise life, be humble enough to acknowledge your sin before God quickly because it can quickly destroy.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:2-7

1. These verses begin to unpack foolishness that the Teacher has observed, even in high places. Where does he trace the source of wisdom or foolishness back to?
2. What might it mean that the heart of the wise inclines to the right? (See also Psalm 16:8; Is. 41.13)

3. If the right hand is associated with strength and power that can support and protect, and this strength is founded most clearly in God Himself, what might it mean for our heart to incline to the left?

4. What warning does this offer about the things we give our hearts to? (See also Luke 6:45)

Ask God to help you honestly understand the motivations of your heart, because your heart will drive your actions – both wise and foolish actions. Pray that God helps you set your heart on eternal things; things that are not meaningless.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:8-15

1. This section is made up of a series of proverbs that point out some plain facts about life (proverbs are short wisdom sayings). What message do they offer about the actions and words of fools?

2. What do these proverbs add to the Teacher's message about life being meaningless?

3. A constant theme of Ecclesiastes is the inability of people to know what comes next in life, especially the person who refuses to acknowledge God. What picture does v. 15 give us of this person?

Pray that God helps you understand just how futile life is apart from God. Life is physically dangerous and even at its most basic level things don't always go to plan. Death awaits us at every turn, even in the most mundane activities of life. Don't be lured into the foolishness of thinking that life can be enjoyed apart from God. Instead, pray that God helps you see just how lost people really are: despite all their efforts they don't know where they are going.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 10:16-20

1. In this last section, the focus of the proverbs turns to consider foolishness at a national level. What do we learn about the relationship between the leaders of a nation and the impact on its people?

2. Especially as Aussies, why is v. 20 hard for us to swallow? (See also Romans 13:1-7)

3. How does this verse challenge the way we should think about our leaders today?

Take time today to pray for those who govern Australia. Pray that God would use them to ensure that justice, fairness and mercy shape the policies that are used to govern this land.

WEEK 8: ECCLESIASTES 11:1-12:8

After the introduction in 1:1-11, the Teacher began to investigate all that is done under the heavens in order to try and understand whether or not life under the sun has meaning in and of itself. Over and again, life on earth has proved to be uncertain and unfulfilling regardless of whether one pursues a wise or foolish course of action because in the end death comes to us all. We are only alive for a moment and then we are gone, and our memory is so quickly forgotten. Now, here in chapter 11, the Teacher begins his conclusion calling the reader to acknowledge and trust in the sovereignty of God above and over all the mess of the world, and to do this from the days of your youth right through until you die – for everything else is meaningless. In a moment you will be gone, but you will be called to account for what you have done with the life you've lived, so don't waste it!

DAY 1

READ ECCLESIASTES 11:1-6

1. There are times when wisdom would call us to be cautious and discerning (ch. 10), but not always. Sometimes wisdom about the uncertainty of life and the reality of God's sovereign hand should cause us to take great risks and be enterprising! How would you summarise what the Teacher is saying here, especially in v1-2, 6?

2. Verse 4-5 offers a warning about constantly procrastinating because of uncertainty, what is the warning given to the procrastinator?

3. In what ways have you allowed fear and uncertainty to stop you taking risks in your Christian life?

4. Are there areas you need to become bolder for the sake of Jesus? (See also Mark 8:34-36; Acts 4:29)

Ask God to give you boldness in your Christian life so that you might take some risks for the sake of the gospel. Pray that your confidence in God's sovereignty might turn your fear and procrastination into a life more dedicated to doing what you can while time is given to you for the sake of Jesus.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 11:1-6 AND 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-12

1. Looking at Ecclesiastes 11:1-6 again, is it necessary to know in advance whether an activity will succeed before we boldly give it a go?

2. There is a common idea in the Christian world that praying for God to somehow supernaturally guide your every decision is necessary and makes it possible to know you are living each moment in His will. Yet here the Teacher offers a very different consideration for how to live in a world that God rules over. How does he say to engage in this world? (See also James 4:13-17)

3. In the coming of Jesus, God has revealed both what he is doing in the world and how he will achieve it. It is through the death, burial, resurrection and promised return of Jesus that God has made a way possible for sins to be forgiven and people to be restored back to God with the hope of eternal life – a life that finally overcomes the meaningless and futility of this worldly life! The way that God sovereignly makes this possible is through the good news of the gospel being preached calling people to turn from their sin and put their trust in Jesus (Eph. 1:3-14; Romans 10:9-17). Yet, there is no promise that every time you present the gospel, people will be saved. Neither is there any promise that it will be an easy life for those who want to follow Jesus. In fact, the promise is the very opposite: the Christian life will be hard. Take some time to reflect on Paul's words in 2 Cor. 4:1-12 about how to face the hardships and temporary uncertainty of the Christian life with confidence and hope.

Pray that God helps you find increasing confidence in His sovereign purposes, even though you don't know the details of each day. Pray that you might take some risks for the sake of the gospel knowing that it is through it that people are saved and lives transformed out of meaninglessness to find solid hope in Jesus.

DAY 3

READ ECCLESIASTES 11:7-10

1. In the previous section, the Teacher called people to boldly get on with the business of life while you have it. How does the Teacher call us to live in these verses?
2. Actively pursuing a joyful life runs the risk of heading into moral compromise. What does the Teacher remind us of that would provide us with a safeguard against going too far?
3. How does a right-placed fear of God free a person to live a joyful life throughout all of life?

Ask God to help you to accept the seasons of life He brings your way and to pursue and embrace joy when and where it can be found because life on earth is a sweet thing, a genuine blessing from God. Pray that you might pursue a joy-filled life aware that dark times will come, that death awaits us all, and that God will hold you accountable for your life, so live it wisely.

DAY 4

READ ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8

1. These verses bring us to the final conclusion from the Teacher and his search for meaning in this life. What is the imagery of these verses describing? (Hint: compare v.1 and v. 7)
2. At last, the Teacher actually exhorts us to look beyond this earthly existence, what is his final plea to those searching for meaning?

3. While we are finally pointed in the right direction, what is it about this final plea that still leaves us with so many questions?

Ask God to help you see that one of the only certain things in life is death, and the only way to face it is to look to, and remember, your Creator for He alone can make sense of the life you've been given. While many questions are left unanswered by the Teacher, thank God for sending Jesus who came so that we might have life and have it to the full!

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 12:1-8 AND 1 PETER 1:3-9

1. In Ecclesiastes 12:1-8 we have a detailed picture of the inevitable end that we all must face – death. In light of this fate, the Teacher says “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, ‘I find no pleasure in them’”. While the Teacher didn't know the full details of God's plans, he knew enough to be certain that remembering and being reconciled to God was the only thing that makes sense in a life that lasts only for a moment, because everything else is meaningless. Now look at 1 Peter 1:3-9 and answer the following questions:

a) Where does lasting purpose in life come from?

b) How does having an eternal perspective help us face the struggles and disappointments of this life?

2. What does the life you are currently living say about the kind of future you are planning for?

3. What warning do you need to hear from the Teacher today about the pursuits of youth (which for some people last well into their latter years)?

Ask God to help you feel the weight of eternity and the need to be prepared for it today because death comes to us all, and it may come when we least expect it. Pray that God would help you know how to use everything you have been entrusted with in a way that demonstrates you are preparing for a future with Him in heaven.

WEEK 9: ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14

DAY 1

This week we are going to consider the Teacher's conclusion and how it prepares us for the coming of Jesus, the place where true wisdom is revealed to us by God to make sense of this life.

READ ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14

1. What insights do these closing verses give about the Teacher himself?
2. What does this suggest about the importance of working hard to understand this life we have been given?
3. While working hard at understanding life is both necessary and good, what warning does the Teacher offer about this?
4. How does the Teacher's example challenge you today?

Thank God for the honest and hard work the Teacher put into exploring life 'under the sun' in a very raw way. Thank Him for both the example and the challenge of the Teacher's life to work hard at understanding what life is about, without getting lost in the journey and not seeing that all things point us to God. Pray that God might help you grow in your understanding about life, and in your passion to see others grow in theirs also.

DAY 2

READ ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14

1. Verses 9-12 provide us with good reason to respect the Teacher and his insights. After all has been heard, what is the final conclusion of this book?

2. Given the content of Ecclesiastes is like opening the proverbial Pandora's box on life's big questions, how do you find the final conclusion?

3. In light of all the Teacher has explored, why is this conclusion the only possible one?

4. If turning back to God with a right-placed fear of Him, matched with a trust in His Word is the way we are to live according to the Teacher, how close is this to describing the Christian life today? (See also Acts 3:17-23; Romans 3:21-24; 8:18-25; Galatians 2:20; 1 Thess. 1:2-10;)

5. Are you able to accept God at His Word, trusting Him to be God and for that to be enough – especially when times are hard and life doesn't seem to make sense?

Pray that God might help you accept the reality that He is God and you are not. His ways are above yours and what He is doing in the world is often unknowable to us who are 'under the sun'. Pray that you might be able to face life, regardless of the lot you have been given, in a way that reveres God and lives by faith trusting in His Word.

DAY 3

READ PROVERBS 2:1-6

1. What does the writer of Proverbs tell us about where wisdom is found, and where it leads?

2. In what way is the Word of God, the fear of the Lord, wisdom and any knowledge of God connected in these verses?

3. When you think about knowing God, do you first think about the need to fear Him? Why, or why not?

4. Why is it so important to have a right-placed fear of the Lord?

Thank God for His graciousness in revealing to us what we could never find out simply by observing life on earth. Through God's Word, we can learn what it means to fear the Lord, and through that to begin to know Him and trust Him.

DAY 4

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-31

1. In Ecclesiastes 1, the Teacher used wisdom to search for an answer to the question about meaning in life and came up empty. Wisdom in itself, though beneficial, did not provide an answer to the searching questions about life. What insights are we given by the Apostle Paul about the limits of human wisdom, and where true wisdom can be found?

2. Why might Jesus' death on the cross be described as the wisdom and power of God?

3. In what sense do the events of the cross answer the questions of Ecclesiastes about the brokenness of the world?

4. How does Jesus' death on the cross offer the only meaningful answer for life on earth?

5. What impact should this have on the way we live?

Praise God for revealing the answer to our search for meaning by sending Jesus to die for our sins and offer us the hope of eternal life, a life where sin and its effects are finally done away with. His death is both the wisdom and power of God in that through these events God conquers sin, Satan and death – the very things that we are bound to in this life apart from the work of Jesus, and unable to change of our own efforts.

DAY 5

READ ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14 AND JOHN 5:37-40

1. As we consider these passages together, what is the end goal of our need to be diligently studying the Scriptures?

2. One of the dangers of study, says the Teacher, is that when done for its own sake it never ends and simply makes you weary. The warning Jesus picks up in John 5 speaks of studying the Scriptures without seeing where they point. Is this a danger for you?

a) Are you following God's Word to where it points you?

b) Is your prayer life, in relationship with Jesus, alive and full?

c) Have you been captured by the enormity of what Jesus has done for you?

3. The search for meaning in this broken world ends when you come to Jesus and can see what He has done, is doing, and promises to finish when He returns. What impact should this have on your life today?

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for Jesus, reflecting on what Jesus has done for you at the cross. Come to Him in repentance of your sin, confident of His love and forgiveness and asking Him to change your heart to become more like His and to see this world and engage in it as He calls us to – so that grace would reach more and more people causing thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:15)

EV MISSION PARTNERS

EV is committed to the proclamation of the gospel all over the world. For you and your group's prayers, a list of each congregation's Mission Partners is below. At the end of this list are photos and a brief biography of each mission partner.

SATURDAY EV

Chris and Sharon Ekins
Derek and Anna
The Geneva Push

SUNDAY AND BREAKFAST EV

Jono and Amy Vink
Paul and Sandra King
Colin and Jill Bakon
Daniel and Renae Godden
Kirstin Hawkshaw
Jai and Jay-Ellen Wright
The Geneva Push
Derek and Anna

NITE EV

Daniel and Renae Godden
Martin and Jen Shadwick
Kirstin Hawkshaw
The Geneva Push

PENINSULA EV

Daniel and Renae Godden
Kirstin Hawkshaw
The Geneva Push

EV MISSION PARTNERS INFORMATION



JONO AND AMY VINK

TANZANIA

Jono and Amy, along with their children Lili, Isaac, Brie and Abe, are working in Musoma, Tanzania. Jono helps to train church leaders by grounding them in Biblical theology and in practical exegetical skills. The aim is to equip locals to teach the Bible and pastor God's people in Tanzania. Amy homeschools and is involved in running various groups and Sunday School at the local church. Amy is also working with local women in the new Rhema Coffee Shop, which provides not only income and training for local women, but is also a base for evangelism and discipleship.



DEREK AND ANNA

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Derek and Anna (Liam and Jasmine) have come from Crossroads, one of our sister churches in Canberra, where Derek did MTS. They are living in a large city in Southeast Asia. Derek teaches in a local college, training workers from all over the country, who will go back to their towns as leaders bringing the message to those with whom they live. Pray for the ongoing teaching at Derek's Bible College and at the School of Mission, which has a focus on mobilising interest in Muslim Ministry, and equipping people for that. Pray for the students of the School of Mission will be going on a 2 month prac during this period, which involves joining workers currently involved in church planting and evangelism work and putting it all into practice. Pray for Anna as she is currently working towards bringing together some local Muslim ladies who are open, and forming them into a group of inquirers. Pray for God to reveal himself to these ladies.



THE GENEVA PUSH

Geneva has been set up to provide a means by which we can pool our energies to fuel a whole new generation of church planting that might see thousands of Australians saved to know Jesus. Geneva is seeking to achieve this outcome by communicating the vision and need of planting so more and more young people think to give themselves to planting. Through God, we are seeking to find 16 church planters to mentor during the second half of this year. It has set in place a high quality assessment process to find the best guys, and provides ongoing support and training through coaching structures, mentoring and ongoing conferences to best ensure planters have the biggest impact they can as planters.

www.thegenevpush.com



PAUL AND SANDRA KING

STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Paul and Sandra are sent by us to bring the gospel to France and they currently live in Strasbourg. They serve with French Christians in the University Bible Group (GBU). Their ministry with university students involves evangelism, discipling, and training students to teach the Bible. They also coordinate full-time ministry apprenticeships; one program is called RELAY working with the GBU in universities, the other is NEW GENERATIONS working with local churches in cities. Evangelism event: "Dialogue Veritas" where we invite students and friends to talks based on a survey regarding God and life. We hope see every Christian in the GBU to meet with another GBUssien during this period meeting together once to learn to pray and another time to pray! We thank God for the start of a monthly morning to pray for the work of God in the campus. We thank God for the six ministry apprentices this year and their prayerful and generous partners.

EV MISSION PARTNERS INFORMATION



COLIN AND JILL BAKON

SIM: LATIN AMERICAN MINISTRY

Colin's role involves training and mentoring Christians in Latin America in mission mobilization in response to many wanting to be involved in the world Christian movement. He mentors a network of local mobilisers who journey with churches and prospective missionary candidates. A project has been started up to help in this. See www.sim.org.au/wake-up-train-up-and-step-up Pray for a good working relationship between Colin & Geoff from Australia, Randy from the US and Alex from Mexico who make up the New Nations team. The work with the Honduras team is expanding with 8 trained Kairos facilitators and over 35 who have done the course. Expansion is now planned for Guatemala (February) and strengthening what we have in Peru (April) but more funds for our project are urgently needed for this work to continue. Translation work continues on the Kairos training material.



DANIEL AND RENAE GODDEN

SALT CHURCH, WOLLONGONG

Dan and Renae moved to Wollongong last year to start a new evangelical church there. Salt Church has begun to meet together and build new relationships with people in the Illawarra who don't know Jesus. Be praying for the core group who have committed to Salt Church already, that God would give them heaps of opportunities to tell people about Jesus. Pray for another pastor to help in this ministry. Pray for the Illawarra region, that God might work in such a way that there would be a flood of new disciples of Jesus right across the region.



KIRSTIN HAWKSHAW

CMS MISSIONARY IN NEPAL

Kirstin is working as an Occupational Therapist in Pokhara, Nepal and continuing to attempt to improve her communication through language study. She hopes to be salt and light as she does training and cares for people with disabilities through a community rehabilitation program which involves travel to villages across a significant part of the middle of Nepal. She is involved in a small local church and is praying for many more opportunities through church, work and life to be a witness to Jesus and to be discipling Christians in the relatively young though vibrant church of Nepal. Kirstin is now on Home assignment. Pray for her as she visits her supporters, for rest and renewal and good times of fellowship and spiritual growth in her home church.



JAI AND JAY-ELLEN WRIGHT

MAKE CHURCH, MACKAY

Jai and his wife Jay-Ellen moved to Mackay and have really enjoyed getting to know the place and the people! Jai and Jay have a vision for starting new churches and a love for country Queensland which goes hand-in-hand with a strong desire to share the good news of Jesus. Jai did two years of full time ministry training at “UniChurch, Qld”(Brisbane) and then spent four years in Sydney where he studied at Moore Theological College, completing a Bachelor of Divinity. During this time, Jay-Ellen invested in their three young children, Amber, Ebony and Kade and now their latest, little Jett. Pray for strength in her role as mum. They have seen God’s hand building this church in so many ways and are super excited to be in Mackay sharing God’s love.

EV MISSION PARTNERS INFORMATION



MARTIN AND JEN SHADWICK

AFES NEWCASTLE UNI

Martin and Jen are graduates of our EV MTS programme. They both work full time with AFES at Newcastle Uni, engaging in evangelism as well as discipling and training Christian students. Martin leads the AFES staff team which oversees two groups – one for Australian students and one for international students and a new ministry to Muslim students. Praise God for the birth and growth of Hannah. Praise for the new team members in AFES Newcastle: Jess Khor, Andy Bootes and Heather Green. Pray for them as they grow together as a team. Praise for new funding to help in the ever growing International students' ministry which is headed up by Rodney Nohra. Praise God for special funding to help with the Arabic ministry and pray for Ashraf Mehanni who heads this up. Pray for the start of the new school year and this very important time of making AFES known with the new students on campus.



FIEC

(STAFF WORKER/CHAPLIN – JIM RAMSEY)

The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC) is a fellowship of churches and pastors across Australia. Our churches are committed to praying for one another and continuing to promote planting of evangelical churches throughout Australia. Our pastors seek to provide support and encouragement to one another. FIEC began in 2002 when a small group of evangelical pastors had the simple aim of encouraging one another to proclaim Christ and plant more churches. The first annual conference was held in 2004 when some pastors, wives and friends met together to pray for each other and the churches they represented. In 2012 the conference had over 170 people in attendance, representing thirteen member churches across Australia. FIEC is aiming, with God's help, to plant 100 churches across Australia during the next 15 years. Pray for the preparations for the Annual Conference (Sept 15-18)



CHRIS AND SHARON EKINS

COAST EVANGELICAL CHURCH, FORSTER

Chris and Sharon moved up to Forster to begin a church there in early 2009. They were convicted of the great need there for more Bible teaching churches, especially ones that are accessible to those with little or no church background. Praise God that they now have about 60 adults and 30 kids who call Coast EC home. Pray that God would continue to grow His church and save many as they pray, invest in relationships, share the gospel and teach the Bible. Praise for a new group starting to take form in Taree. Check out www.coastec.net.au/category/prayer/ for more.

The New Testament teaches us to give generously, regularly and joyfully. Please join with us in bringing solid hope to the coast - Jesus.

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If you require a receipt put your name and SBF (School Building Fund) as your reference on the direct debit please.

