

Does life have meaning?
2. The problem of pleasure (Ecclesiastes 2v1-11)

John Percival

Introduction

- An experiment with pleasure...

The search for pleasure (v1-10)

- Laughter
- Wine
- Property
- Gardens
- Staff
- Possessions
- Money
- Music
- Sex
- Everything else...

The verdict on pleasure (v11)

- "Meaningless" (hebel)

- Why life is this way

A framework for pleasure

- Jesus has come...

- But we are not in heaven yet!

Conclusion

Bible references: Eccl. 1:2, 1 Kings 11:3, Rom. 1:25, Eccl. 12:11, John 10:10, 6:35, 2 Cor. 5:1-5, Ps. 16:11

Ecclesiastes 2v1-11 (NIV)

¹ I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. ² "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?" ³ I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly--my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

⁴ I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. ⁵ I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well--the delights of the heart of man. ⁹ I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. ¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.