



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

July 26, 2026

Ecclesiastes 4:13–16; 5:10-11; 12:13

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

OPENING

What is something that many people spend their lives pursuing but often discover isn't as satisfying as they expected?

Our culture often teaches us that success, popularity, influence, and wealth are the keys to happiness. Solomon had firsthand experience with all of these. Yet in Ecclesiastes, he repeatedly warns that many of the things people chase most passionately can never provide lasting fulfillment.

Today we'll explore how true significance is not found in popularity, power, or possessions, but in a life devoted to God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read the following passages aloud together: Ecclesiastes 4:13–16; 5:10-11; 12:13

Ask the group to listen for:

- What Solomon says about popularity and success
- What he teaches about money
- His final conclusion about life's purpose

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Throughout Ecclesiastes, Solomon examines the things people often trust to provide meaning and security.

In chapter 4:

- He observes how quickly public approval can change.
- Leaders rise and fall.
- Popularity is temporary.

In chapter 5:

- He warns that money never fully satisfies.
- The more people have, the more they often want.
- Wealth can create additional concerns rather than lasting contentment.

Finally, in chapter 12:

- Solomon summarizes everything he has learned.
- After exploring success, wisdom, pleasure, possessions, and achievement, he concludes that life's true purpose is found in God.

The big idea:

Everything this world offers is temporary, but a life centered on God has eternal value.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What stands out to you about Solomon's observations in Ecclesiastes 4:13–16?

Popularity and influence are often temporary. People quickly move on from leaders, trends, and public figures.

Why do people naturally seek approval, recognition, or status?

We all desire significance, acceptance, and affirmation. The problem comes when we seek those things apart from God.

What does Solomon teach about the pursuit of money in Ecclesiastes 5:10–11?
Money itself never fully satisfies. The desire for more often grows as possessions increase.

Why do you think wealth so often fails to provide lasting contentment?
Because money can meet physical needs but cannot satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart.

What are some modern examples of people chasing satisfaction through success, recognition, or wealth?
Career advancement, social status, influence, possessions, achievements, or financial security becoming ultimate priorities.

How does Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes 12:13 differ from the messages our culture often promotes?
Culture often emphasizes self-fulfillment and personal achievement, while Solomon points to reverence for God and obedience as life's ultimate purpose.

What does it practically mean to "fear God and keep His commandments"?
To honor God, trust His wisdom, submit to His authority, and live according to His truth.

APPLICATION

Which of the pursuits Solomon discusses - approval, success, influence, or wealth - do you find most tempting to rely on for significance?
Encourage honest reflection.

Are there areas where you have been seeking satisfaction from temporary things rather than from God?
Invite participants to consider priorities, ambitions, and sources of identity.

What is one practical step you can take this week to refocus your heart on God rather than on worldly measures of success?

Examples:

- Spend intentional time in Scripture
- Practice gratitude
- Evaluate priorities
- Serve someone without seeking recognition
- Surrender a specific ambition to God

DIG DEEPER

Why do popularity and recognition often lose their appeal over time?

How can believers enjoy God's blessings without making them idols?

What is the difference between using money wisely and loving money?

How does an eternal perspective change the way we view success and achievement?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Solomon spent much of his life exploring what the world could offer. He discovered that popularity fades. Wealth cannot satisfy. Success is temporary.

But he also discovered something far more important: fear God and keep His commandments.

Ask:

What am I relying on for significance?

Is God truly at the center of my life?

This week, challenge your LIFE group members to identify one area where they have been measuring success by the world's standards and intentionally view it through God's perspective instead.

Remember:

The things of this world are temporary, but a life devoted to God carries eternal significance.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Song of Songs 2:15** as we continue our series, *Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom in a Foolish World*.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Thank God for giving our lives purpose beyond temporary success and possessions.
- Ask Him to help us find our identity and satisfaction in Him alone.
- Pray for wisdom to steward influence, opportunities, and resources faithfully.
- Pray for hearts that value eternal priorities above temporary pursuits.
- Pray specifically for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts will be open, the Spirit will move powerfully, and people will respond in obedience to Christ.

COMMENTARY

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16, 5:10-11, 12:13

4:13-16. The Preacher (traditionally associated with Solomon) explores the fleeting nature of political power, the instability of worldly fame, and the fickleness of the public. He illustrates how wisdom and youthful potential often outshine stubborn, foolish leadership, yet ultimately notes that all earthly legacy is temporary and meaningless.

The text begins by contrasting a youth with an aging ruler who refuses to take advice. The older king, though once potentially successful or having inherited a throne, has grown foolish, arrogant, and out of touch with his people.

Rising above the older king is a young, impoverished, and wise individual. This youth may have even risen from literal or metaphorical imprisonment (or oppression) to claim power. The Preacher observes that this transition is preferable to an entrenched, unteachable leader.

Despite the wisdom and initial triumph of the young successor, the applause of the crowd quickly fades. People are generally fickle. While the masses initially rally around the new, popular leader, future generations (or even the same citizens) will eventually grow dissatisfied, desire something new, and abandon him.

The final verse (v. 16) highlights that there is no end to the multitudes of people who follow these leaders, yet the "second youth" will eventually share his predecessor's fate. His power, status, and legacy will also erode with time.

The CSB translation emphasizes that searching for ultimate purpose, eternal significance, or satisfaction in political power and public approval is futile. Because every ruler is eventually replaced and forgotten, relying on human authority for lasting significance is ultimately empty.

5:10. Solomon observes that the love of money is ultimately an empty pursuit. Because material gain is a fleeting, temporary thing, those who make it their focus are trapped in a cycle of endless wanting. Even when an individual acquires more income or riches, they are never truly satisfied.

5:11. As material goods and wealth increase, so do the number of people consuming them (family members, retainers, taxes). The Preacher concludes that the wealthy owner's primary "advantage" is simply having the ability to gaze at their wealth.

12:13. After evaluating all of life's pursuits ("under the sun" and apart from God), the Preacher summarizes the entirety of human existence. "The conclusion of the matter: fear God and keep his commands".

"Fear of God" does not mean being terrified of Him, but rather holding a profound, heartfelt respect for His majesty, holiness, and sovereignty. This reverence naturally gives rise to loving obedience.