



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

If you could instantly become famous, wealthy, or popular, which would you choose and why?

Many people believe that popularity, money, success, or influence will make them happy. Social media often reinforces that message. But Solomon, one of the wealthiest and most influential people who ever lived, discovered that those things could not provide lasting satisfaction.

Today we'll learn that the things most people chase cannot fully satisfy us—only a life centered on God can.

SCRIPTURE

Read Ecclesiastes 4:13–16; 5:10-11; 12:13 together.

Ask students to listen for:

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

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Solomon spent much of his life exploring what could make a person truly happy.

He looked at:

- Popularity
- Success
- Power
- Wealth
- Achievement

What he found was surprising:

- Popularity doesn't last.
- People quickly move on to the next trend or person.
- Money never seems to be enough.
- Success alone doesn't provide purpose.

After examining all of these things, Solomon came to a simple conclusion:

The most important thing in life is knowing God and living for Him.

The main point is:

If you build your life around temporary things, you'll eventually be disappointed. If you build your life around God, you'll find lasting purpose.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think so many people want to be popular, successful, or famous?

Because people want acceptance, recognition, influence, and significance.

What does Ecclesiastes 4 teach us about popularity?

Popularity is temporary. People's attention and approval can change very quickly.

How do social media and culture encourage people to chase popularity?

Likes, followers, views, and online attention can make people feel valuable or important.

Why do you think money never fully satisfies people?

Because there is always a desire for more, and money cannot meet our deepest needs.

What are some things students often look to for their identity or worth?

Friends, sports, grades, appearance, relationships, social media, achievements, or popularity.

What does it mean to "fear God and keep His commandments"?

It means honoring God, trusting Him, respecting His authority, and living according to His ways.

How would your life be different if pleasing God became more important than impressing others?

Students may discuss confidence, better decisions, less pressure to fit in, and stronger faith.

APPLICATION

Which of these is the biggest temptation for students today: popularity, success, money, or approval? Why?

Allow students to discuss and explain.

Are there any areas where you are looking to something other than God to give you value or identity?

Encourage honest reflection.

What is one practical step you can take this week to focus more on God than on what others think of you?

Examples:

- Spend time in Scripture
- Pray daily
- Limit comparison on social media
- Choose obedience over fitting in
- Thank God for who He says you are

DIG DEEPER

Why is approval from others so appealing?

How can social media affect our identity and priorities?

What are some signs that something has become too important in our lives?

How does knowing that God loves you change the way you view success and popularity?

CLOSING THOUGHT

The world tells us that if we can just become popular enough, successful enough, or wealthy enough, we'll finally be happy.

Solomon tried all of those things. His conclusion was that none of them could provide lasting satisfaction. Only God can do that.

Popularity fades. Money comes and goes. Success doesn't last forever. But a relationship with God gives purpose that lasts beyond this life.

Challenge the students in your LIFE group:

This week, when you feel pressure to impress others, ask yourself:

"Am I living for God's approval or everyone else's?"

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

Pray together:

- Thank God for loving us and giving our lives purpose.
- Ask Him to help students find their identity in Christ rather than popularity or success.
- Pray for wisdom when facing pressure to fit in or seek approval.
- Pray that students would pursue God's priorities above temporary trends and cultural expectations.
- 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.