

mist.

Week 1 | Mist | January 10

Key Focus: There is something worse than failing; it is succeeding at the wrong thing.

Opening Up:

What has been your favorite music phase and why?

If you could be a member of any band, what band would you play in? What would you play?

What genre or time period of music do you wish was still around today? Why?

Reference: Ecclesiastes 1-2

Discuss:

1. It seems like music, along with every new thing, fades away. Yet, our hunger for new things never leaves us. As the Preacher says, everything is vanity or chasing after wind. There is a sick joke in the fallen world. Think about this idea: "We are burdened by a longing for **more**, and **more** is never enough." Do you feel like this is true? Why do you think so?
2. The Preacher is looking around and he notices that eyes and ears never have their fill of new things. In the same way the ocean is never satisfied by the rivers. It seems like this idea holds true: "The only thing that satisfies our longing for **more** is **more**, and **more** is never satisfied." Can you think about something you really wanted in the past, but it is totally obsolete now? Why does our hunger for more make us feel so discontent? Why do we need contentment for our own sanity?
3. In 1:11 the Preacher says no one is going to remember you when you die. How does that make you feel? Is there anything good about realizing that you will never be the **more** humanity is looking for?
4. In 1:17, 18 the Preacher says that wisdom can't save you. He says that wisdom is vexing and knowledge brings sadness. Have you have experienced wisdom making you angry, or sad? (Think about what not knowing about poverty, gun violence, and abuse would mean to your psychological health.)
5. In 2:1 the Preacher observes that, like wisdom, the pleasures of life cannot save. He tries to fill his life bucket with the pleasures of laughter, wine, homes, slaves, treasures, singers, and sex. Have you ever tried to bring more meaning into your life through dumping your time and energy into pleasures? Explain.
6. The Preacher tried dumping hard work into his bucket. In 2:23 he says that this kind of workaholicism leads to sleepless nights. In other places he says his work made him depressed and he even hated life. Has work ever done this to you? Have you ever felt a hatred for life for some other reason?
7. In Mark 8:36, Jesus says that we would gain nothing if we gained the whole world and lost our souls. In someways Jesus and the preacher are on the same page. Both are encouraging us to succeed at the "right" thing. The preacher says that nothing under the sun can satisfy us. We must then look beyond the sun. How does God bring joy as a gift? Has God ever gifted you with joy in your work?
8. Read 2:24 and 25 out loud. What do you think about these verses as you read them? How can we pray for God to give you joy as a gift? How has the hunger for more brought sadness into your life? How do we become content and even experience joy with what God has given us?