



What
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For?

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Joe Andrews, now middle-aged, was stopped short one day by the thought, *Suppose I got everything I wanted—a better job, a new house, and more leisure time—would I be really satisfied?* His honest answer was “No.”

For many at middle age, bright hopes and dreams of youth grow dim. Defenses and pretenses begin to crumble. And a horrible, hollow emptiness remains.

Life has lost meaning for many young people also. Suicides by teenagers and college students are all-too common. Life without God has no meaning. Years ago wise King Solomon wrote a book. His writings portray the pain and emptiness of life when God is left out.

Solomon had walked many paths. He had drunk deeply from many cups and labeled each. He had gotten whatever he wanted, in wisdom, wealth, and pleasure. His book is the tragic tale of a disappointed man standing at the door of death and looking back, realizing he had lived for the wrong things.

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Solomon tells how he tried the path of wisdom. He became a scientist, a philosopher, a moralist, a historian, and a great poet. “I gave

my heart to know wisdom," he wrote, but his unhappy conclusion was, "I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:17).

So he tried the way of wealth. No one today has the wealth Solomon had. Besides impressive lists of houses, farms, and gardens, he had immense holdings of silver and gold, and beyond this, he had "the peculiar treasure of kings" (Ecclesiastes 2:8). His conclusion? "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity" (Ecclesiastes 5:10).

In search for happiness he turned to wine. He drank the finest wines from cups of pure gold but concluded that wine produces, not happiness, but woe, sorrow, contentions, wounds, and redness of eyes (Proverbs 23:29, 30).

Solomon put a premium on pleasure. But song, humor, and laughter also brought him to a barren land of futility, failure, and frustration.

He also turned to women for enjoyment. But his unholy desire drove him to despair. "I find more bitter than death," he cried, "the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands" (Ecclesiastes 7:26). Wisdom, wealth, wine, and women cannot provide meaning and purpose for life. Solomon

ended his sensual quest by exclaiming, “All is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

In all his searching Solomon was seeking a substitute for God. Yet apart from God, the riddle of life will never be understood. Apart from God our deepest longings will not be satisfied.

We do not need wealth, position, or pleasure to be happy. But we do need God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. No life is too empty to be filled with purpose and power through the living Christ. No life is too desperate and hopeless, bound, and broken. When we come to Christ confessing our sin and putting our trust in Him, we experience a new, changed life.

God calls us to Himself. He offers us the joy and freedom found in doing His will. Only in God as Creator is there real purpose in being. Only in Christ as Saviour is there forgiveness in its fullness. Only in the power of God’s Spirit is there enablement to live a new life.

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We find real purpose for living when we surrender our wills to Jesus Christ as Lord, and yield our lives to His control.

—John M. Drescher, adapted