



“Failure to Thrive”
FUEL
Small Group Plan

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

In chapter 2, Solomon describes his excursion into pleasure and its total failure. He followed this philosophy, “You only go around once in life, so grab all you can.” He reached for all the pleasures of life. But after some time he realized that all of this was less fulfilling. In the first eight verses, he speaks of at least six kinds of pleasure he tried in his effort to find satisfaction.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

Eat, Drink...and Be What?

— *Review* —

- Solomon was the king of Israel and had everything he wanted. If anyone could enjoy life to the fullest it was Solomon, but he failed to use it wisely.
- At the end of his pursuit Solomon concluded that ‘all is vanity and striving after wind’ Eccles. 1:14.
- The pursuit of contentment ‘under the sun’ is purposeless and valueless.

— *An Invitation* —

- After stating his conclusion about life without God, Solomon describes the paths he explored.
- He mentions pleasure as the first path. Eccles. 2:1, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself”. His wildest dreams became a reality.
- And what did he find? Emptiness.

— **Games** —

- vv. 2-3. Solomon tried laughter.
- But questioned, “What does it accomplish?”
- He concluded life geared only toward fun and games will not bring lasting satisfaction.

— **Houses, plants, parks, and pools** —

- vv. 4-6. Solomon embarked on a construction enterprise that rivaled anything else.
- ”I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; I made gardens and parks for myself, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees”.
- But none of this gave Solomon a sense of accomplishment and worth.

— **Slaves, animals, singers, and wives** —

- vv. 7-8. Solomon filled his life with purchases of slaves, and flocks and herds larger than all’ who had preceded him in Jerusalem.
- He collected silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. He even surrounded himself with singers and the pleasures of men.
- But all of this eventually turned his heart away from God.

— **The Good Life** —

- vv. 9-10. Solomon became great and increased more than all who preceded him.
- Solomon achieved the good life.
- But the thrill of all of this was fleeting, while the guilt and anguish lingered on.

It’s Time to Face the Truth – How Do We Face Life as it Really is?

Sensual pleasure make promises that they cannot keep.

- No matter what it is, pleasures never deliver the satisfaction they promise.

Sensual pleasures offer to open our eyes, but in reality they blind us.

- Some say if we follow our urges, a new world of incredible pleasure is ours. But what actually happens is that a lifestyle of self-gratification leads us away from the important things of life – family, friends and God.

Sensual pleasure disillusion us, turning us into dishonest people.

- The pursuit of pleasure may satisfy for a time, but will most certainly leave us empty. That's a hard fact to face for some and many refuse to do so choosing instead to pretend that they have found satisfaction.

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Is pleasure important to you?
- How do you find pleasure? List specifics.
- How do you overemphasize pleasure in your life?
- How is pleasure underemphasized in your life?
- What helps you achieve balance in this area?
- Is there a close association between your pursuit of pleasure and your involvement in the world's system?
- What is the most significant lesson you learned from this study on pleasure?