



**“Something More”
*FUEL***

Small Group Plan

— Ecclesiastes 3:1 —

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven.*

There are two ways people usually approach time: as a circle or as a line. And even though there are cycles in life, I have learned that time is completely irretrievable. There are no instant replays. It can never be recaptured or relived. Moments come and go. Occasions come our way that we didn't ask for and that we have no control of. And when we throw ourselves into some absorbing activity, it is often not long before we find ourselves doing the exact opposite. Planting ... uprooting. Scattering ... gathering. Searching ... giving up. Weeping ... laughing.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How do you usually see time – in cycles or moving from point “A” to point “B”? Explain your answer.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

GOD’S TAPESTRY
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

There is a rhythm here. And the rhythm itself is appealing to us. It carries us from one activity to another. But sometimes it's the rhythm that disturbs us. The constant change, the endless movement, nothing permanent, always shifting, always changing, moving us from one stage to another. So, the peace-loving nation prepares for war. The farmer makes meat out of the animal he earlier nursed back to health. The little boy who once thrived on your hugs now wants your handshake. The tyranny of time.

I call verses 2-8 God's tapestry, 14 movements in life, 14 contrasts. All of them are familiar cross-sections of life. And the issue they bring to light is our cooperation with God's timing. They are 14 examples of our need to wait, to accept and to co-operate.

PLANTING AND UPROOTING
— Verse 2 —

- From those in the group who garden, what are the rules?
- What happens if you plant or prune at the wrong time?
- What does agriculture teach us about cooperating with God?

KILLING AND HEALING
— Verse 3 —

- How is life a mixture of battlefields and first aid stations?
- How do you reconcile that in our own city, some are paid to attack while others are paid to heal?
- Why is killing not always described as murder in scripture (Rom 13)?

SCATTERING AND GATHERING
— Verse 5 —

- For those who have been to Israel, you know that it is a very rocky place.
- For those who live in rocky places, what does it mean to cooperate with the stones?
- What is the difference between cursing the stones and using the stones?

EMBRACING AND REFRAINING
— Verse 5 —

- Affection in the east is very open. People touch and embrace.
- What kinds of situations require the encouragement of an embrace?
- What kinds of situations need the cool confrontation of caring criticism?

SEARCHING AND GIVING UP
— Verse 6 —

- How can “giving up” sometimes be a part of searching?
- Can you think of times when someone didn’t know his or her “limits” and ended up hurting everyone?
- How can a person know when to keep going and when to stop?

BEING SILENT AND SPEAKING
— Verse 7 —

- What is your commentary on Proverbs 18:21 “The tongue has the power of life and death”?
- What does Paul mean when he writes in Colossians 4:6 “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt”?
- How do you know when its time to stop speaking and be silent?

These are just 6 of Solomon’s 14. I abbreviated his list just like he abbreviated life’s list. But there is enough to see his point. Life is like a large tapestry. There are many interweaving and contrasting threads. Each is moving in a different direction, finding its own place in the pattern. And our problem is that we can’t see the whole tapestry. Our view of life is fragmented. We only see a piece of the tapestry, just a moment in time. And so, it’s difficult to trust in God’s design.

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- Why does the “under the sun” earthbound person see verses 2-8 as a prison that he cannot break out of?
- Why do the man and woman of God hear that God is faithful in these verses?
- What is the difference between seeing life as a beautiful tapestry or a confining net?
- How does life usually feel for you?
- Read the following verses aloud, and let the group share on how each verse makes them feel.

— Verse 1 —

*“There is a time for everything
and a season for every activity under heaven”*

— Verse 11 —

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time.
He has also set eternity in the hearts of men”*

— Verse 14 —

*“Everything God does will endure forever,
nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it”*

— Verse 15 —

“God will call the past to account”

- Spend some time in prayer asking for God’s forgiveness when we have not trusted Him with the big picture. And pray for a more joyful understanding and acceptance of His guidance through life.