

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, August 28, 2005

Passage: Ecclesiastes 11

Memory Passage: 2 Corinthians 9:6

**TODAY:** *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-2.** What is the general picture that these verses give regarding the question of generosity?
- (b) What attitude are we encouraged to have toward those that have needs (Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Proverbs 3:27; 28:27; 29:7)?
- (c) What promise does God give to those who are generous toward others (Proverbs 19:7; 11:24-25; 22:9)?
- (d) Read Luke 12:13-21. *Why* did Jesus give this parable? What concern was he addressing? What does it mean to be “rich toward God?”
- (e) What reason is given for being generous in Ecclesiastes 11:2? How should this motivate our giving?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 and Proverbs 29:7. Discuss the responsibility of believers to share with others. How does Solomon picture sharing in Ecclesiastes 11:1-2? What does God promise to us when we share with others? Talk about some ways that you can “cast your bread upon the waters” as a family. Pray that the Lord will give you a desire to be “rich toward God.”

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-2.** What reason for being generous is given in verse 1?
- (b) What do Galatians 6:8-10 and Luke 6:38 promise us? How is this related to our love for others (Luke 6:30-35; Matthew 5:43-48)? What does God promise to those who will serve others (Hebrews 6:10; Matthew 10:42)?
- (c) In Ecclesiastes 11:2, what is the idea of “giving a serving to seven and also to eight?” What kind of heart does this portray? What reason is given for being generous in this verse? How should this motivate our giving?
- (d) What does Paul remind us in Ephesians 5:15-17? Why are we to be wise and make the most of our time and opportunities? How is this similar to what we have read in Ecclesiastes?
- (e) Read John 4:27-38. What kind of “sowing” is Jesus referring to? What do Proverbs 11:30 and Daniel 12:3 tell us about sharing the gospel?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-2 again and Matthew 5:43-48. How is our love for others a testimony of God’s love? What if we do not share with others—how does that affect our testimony? Discuss what Solomon is referring to at the end of verse 2. Why should the “evil” on the earth motivate us to love others? Pray for someone who does not know the love of God through Jesus.

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 11:3.** What picture does Solomon give through *the clouds*? What is he saying about our actions and our heart? How might this relate to generosity?
- (b) What similar truth did Jesus remind us of in Matthew 12:34-35? What does Solomon say about the heart in Proverbs 4:23?
- (c) What does the picture of *the fallen tree* represent? How might this be a *warning* to share *now* rather than waiting? How is this theme mentioned in Ecclesiastes 9:10?
- (d) What does the parable in Luke 14:12-14 teach us about sharing with others? What kind of “fast” does the Lord really desire (Isaiah 58:7)? How is this a “fast?”
- (e) Read Psalm 112. What are some characteristics that God will bless? Which refer to giving and sharing?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 11:3, Matthew 12:34-35 and Proverbs 4:23. Discuss the importance of having a giving heart. How does a person get a giving heart? What kinds of things can you do this week as a family to cultivate a giving heart? Pray that God would open your eyes to the needs of others around you and that your heart would be sensitive to meeting those needs.

### DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 11:4-6.** What are some of the excuses that people give for not sharing with others? What “unknowns” does Solomon remind his readers of (also Proverbs 20:4; 22:13)?
- (b) What has he already told his readers about the work of God (Ecclesiastes 3:11; 8:17; also Isaiah 40:28; Romans 11:33)? How do these apply to this situation?
- (c) Why are we encouraged to continue sowing (Ecclesiastes 11:6; Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58.)? What are some other reasons to share (1 Corinthians 3:5-8; 1 Thessalonians 2:19)?
- (d) *When* are we encouraged to “sow?” *Why?* What was the situation in which the church at Macedonia shared (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)? Why did they give in this way?
- (e) Read Psalm 126. What *promise* does God give to those who sow in sorrow?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 11:4-6 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. Talk about some of the reasons people do not want to share with others. How does Ecclesiastes encourage us to share generously? Pray for someone who is going through a difficult time.

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 11:7-10.** What does verse 7 tell us about the general attitude that we should have toward this life? How has this been one of the major themes of Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:13; 5:18-20; 9:7-9)?
- (b) Why are we told to rejoice *now*? *What* should we remember in all our years? How does such a perspective encourage us to enjoy life today?
- (c) What caution is given in verse 9? What do Romans 2:5-6 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 remind us?
- (d) What *two things* are we told to remove from our lives? What is Solomon recommending in both? How are both an appropriate balance for the believer's life?
- (e) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 and Ecclesiastes 7:15-18 and discuss the importance of living a “balanced” Christian life. Why should you enjoy the life God has given you? What happens when we only focus on joy for this life? What happens when we only focus on judgment in this life? How should the reality of God's judgment change the way we live our lives? Pray that each of you might live joyfully, in light of God's judgment.

**DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT****READ THE PASSAGE**

*Think back through what you have learned each day this week.* What does it mean to “cast your bread upon the waters?” What have you learned about God's promises to those who share with others? What kinds of sharing have we talked about? Is there any reason that we should not share (2 Thessalonians 3:10-13)? Explain. Pray for your church tomorrow that you might be sensitive to the needs in your church family and that the Word of God will touch and change hearts.

**DATE:** August 28, 2005

**PASSAGE:** Ecclesiastes 11

***Sowing Generously at All Times***

*“In the morning, sow your seed, and, in the evening, do not withhold your hand...”*