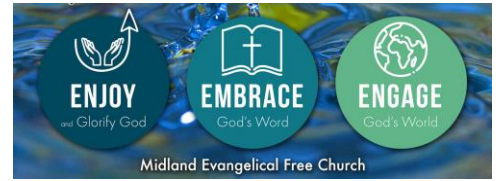




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Date: September 19, 2021

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 2

**Review: Chapter 1 -**

The Book of Ecclesiastes teaches us how to live in harmony with God, life, and the universe.

What does the title "Ecclesiastes" mean?

What word picture does the word "vanity" imply?<sup>i</sup>

How does that picture help us interpret the very strong statements of Ecclesiastes?<sup>ii</sup>

What would you say is the message of Ecclesiastes?

How does that message relate to our Mission at Midland Free?



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## **Chapter 2** –

Please look up the following verses (Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:12, 22; 8:15) and fill in the blank in the following statement:

“There is nothing better than to\_\_\_\_\_?” Why is that?

Is the author a Hedonist?

What differentiates Pagan Hedonism from Christian Hedonism?

How does the Lord’s prayer point us towards enjoying each day (Matthew 6:11)?

What is a “portion”?

How is it that the Psalmist can call God his “portion”? (Psalms 73:26)

How can God be our portion now? What parts of Him do we receive by faith now?

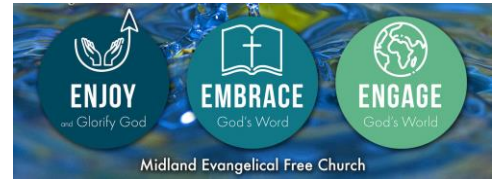
What parts of our portion (inheritance) in Him will we receive later?

Have you ever come to a complete point of despair (Eccl 2:17-20)? What drove it? How did you come out? What would you do differently now to avoid falling back into that pit again?

Please see the following prayer...



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## **The Serenity Prayer** <sup>iii</sup>

The following prayer represents the message of Ecclesiastes very well.

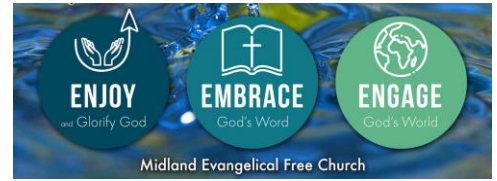
Connect the dots

- What lines of this prayer go with things said in Ecclesiastes 1-2?  
(Try writing references after each line.)

God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time,  
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace,  
Taking, as Jesus did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
Not as I would have it,  
Trusting that you will make all things right,  
If I surrender to your will,  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,  
And supremely happy with you.  
Forever in the next.  
Amen



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- How do we know what to accept now and what to work towards changing?

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<sup>i</sup> “A wisp of vapour, a puff of wind, a mere breath—nothing you could get your hands on; That is the ‘vanity’.” Derek Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes: A Time to Mourn, and a Time to Dance*, ed. J. Alec Motyer and Derek Tidball, *The Bible Speaks Today* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 22.

<sup>ii</sup> The brutality of his unmasking of the world of human desire and action is thus balanced throughout the book by the gentler unveiling of a better way of being.

There is no *gain* to be found under the sun (2:11; 3:9; 5:16), but none need be found. To pursue *gain* is pointless, but there is no need for the pursuit.

There is sufficient reward in life itself, if it is received as a gift from God and lived well.

<sup>1</sup> Iain Provan, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 56.

<sup>iii</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), American pastor and theologian.