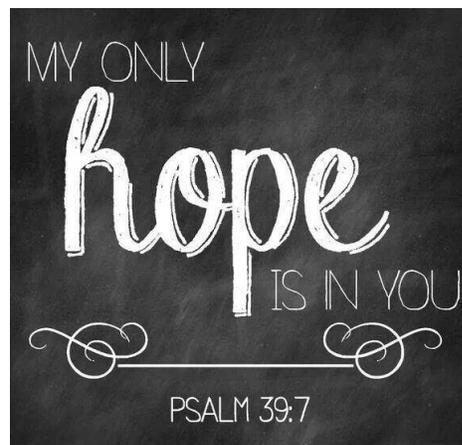


# A LOOK AT ECCLESIASTES FOR HOPE

## DAY 1 SPEAKING OPTIMISTICALLY

I think the bible is mostly optimistic, but it is not the stereotypical optimism that we like to characterize as hopeful and fantastical. It is a realistic optimism that is founded in our faith. How REAL you feel the optimism is depends on your faith. For example, we are faced with some hard truths in the bible about what will happen to those who are not saved, those who do not believe, and those who deny the grace of God in their lives. We face tough truths about the crime and violence and blasphemy that will fill our earth until the second coming of Christ. Eccl 5:8. All of these promises are in the bible. However, as sad as they may be, they are not pessimistic in any way, shape or form for me. They are more like promises that the world will be the world, as we can only expect it to be, full of carnality and evil-doing in many ways. BUT God ... GOD will always be GOD ... faithful and true and a keeper of his promises to deliver us from evil and guide us through hard times and love us eternally.



Although, the book of Ecclesiastes seems to put a DANGER DO NOT ENTER sign on many areas of life, I think the book of Ecclesiastes is very optimistic. For me this book is a warning against OVER-INDULGING. Basically a warning that many things will look enticing and fulfilling along my way down life's trails but it is "a chasing of the wind." Eccl 1:14. And for me that only means one thing ... that our duty to GOD is so much more. Not to say that we shouldn't participate in anything that this world offers, BUT I think the point is that God is so much more fulfilling. HE is the wise choice. Eccl 2:12. Placing our hope in HIM is not a futile work. Eccl 2:17. GOD is our Father and the ultimate decider of our fate, whom we should spend more of our time and energy pleasing than anything else in this earth. What is your view of Ecclesiastes? Optimistic or Pessimistic? Why?

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# A LOOK AT ECCLESIASTES FOR HOPE

## DAY 4 GRASPING AT SHADOWS

I won't spend long on this commentary because I think this theme is pervasive in Eccl. **BUT** the main focus here is that if Solomon is right, if all this is meaningless, a chasing of the wind. Then when can you actually catch a chasing of the wind? **NEVER.** It's impossible. Why isn't our first college degree enough? Why isn't working for someone else enough? Why isn't your first million dollars in earnings enough? There are no concrete answers for these questions because it is an empty yearning that has no bounds, no truly fulfilling end. Because the nature of God is so perfect that nothing in this world besides God can be perfect enough to fulfill us completely. It is the miraculous way of God: to perfectly fulfill us, where things cannot fulfill us. This is where we find our hope. How can you show the world that the world does not control you, because the world cannot fulfil you?

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# A LOOK AT ECCLESIASTES FOR HOPE

## DAY 5 AHHH... LOOKING IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES.



This is a strong message in Ecclesiastes. The author of this book, also seeks to make a strong point about the grace of God that saves us and not our own works. And although faith without works is dead, there is nothing we can do on our own to secure our salvation. (James 2:26) And also the author brings to the light that the death of Christ is what redeemed us and in effect “bridged the gap” from sin to God. (Ephesians 2:1-18.) How can you make a shift away from the “wrong places”?

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