



The Common Thread
*"Ecclesiastes: The Enigma and
Enjoyment of a Vaporous Life"*

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ENIGMA

To be clear, life is not meaningless, but its meaning as humans try to ascertain it is not easily grasped, especially when we attempt to grasp it through all the lenses we naturally use (work, fun, security, justice, etc.) These are not bad things, but our world is broken, so what is good never reaches its fullest form.

It is the awareness of eternal things that creates the enigmatic tension.

Ecclesiastes 3: 11 ESV—"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."

Because eternity is in our hearts, but not yet fully accessible in our humanity.

God invites us to confront the illusion of our control and thus fully feel as out of control as we actually are. And if we can accept it, something strange happens: joy.

ENJOY

To be present with Christ first, and then to move with Christ to be present with the hurting. To not deny the weight, but also not to try to carry it or bear it alone. To acknowledge that it exists and is too heavy, yet acknowledge that it still must be moved. To live in the enigma, but not be consumed by it.

Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647): “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.”

The practical conclusion of the Teacher: “Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. 8 Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. 9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.”
(Ecclesiastes 9:7-10 ESV)

The spiritual conclusion of the Author: “12 But, my child, let me give you some further advice: Be careful, for writing books is endless, and much study wears you out. That’s the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone’s duty.” **(Ecclesiastes 12:12-13 NLT)**

*God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.*

*Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a 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.