

# Holly bible ecclesiastes reading response creative writings example

[Education](#), [Teaching](#)



In the book of Ecclesiastes, the author, often called “ the Teacher” discusses the results of his life’s pursuit of both worldly success and wisdom. Through his discussion, he expresses the need to temper one’s life with the goal of the afterlife in mind. In this sense, the Teacher is attempting to express his understanding of how a good life can be achieved. By doing so, he is able to communicate the expectancy that he believes people should have of their worldly and otherworldly pursuits.

In the outset of the first verse, the Teacher discusses the idea of vanity. He puts forth his ideas in this discussion. When the Teacher says, “ All is vanity,” it is difficult to fully discern exactly what he means by this. However, in saying that all is vanity, the teacher is reflecting upon the meaning of the struggles and the tribulations that mankind has to go through in order to not only live, but to pursue some quality or value within their lives.

This is hearkening to the fact that, while the years come and go, and generations live and die, individuals place a large amount of importance upon their particular lives. When reflecting upon the enormity of creation it becomes difficult to conceive of the logic behind this vanity. In this sense, people continue to persist and pursue their goals, even though they will ultimately die and leave the world behind. While people take themselves and the work that they do seriously, the Teacher is reflecting upon how these things truly matter in the grand scheme of things.

While he discusses this problem, he reflects upon the idea that all that is achieved in this life is held as being of the utmost importance. “ What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?” (1) He asks this question in order to begin a dialogue that questions the very foundations of

his life. The principles that he had built his being around seem to be called into question in this account.

According to the Teacher, “ In much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow” (Eccl. 1: 18)? By this, the Teacher is alluding to the idea that those who can perceive more about the world can also perceive its folly. Those who seek higher wisdom will ultimately alienate themselves from their peers. Furthermore, they will have a fundamentally altered perspective of the world around them.

In this sense, the idea of knowledge can be a double sided sword. While it helps people to come to a more intimate understanding of the world, it also has the effect of showing boundaries that were not previously perceivable. At a certain level, it becomes obvious to a person who has achieved this level of wisdom or knowledge that all of it was meaningless to begin with. While, perhaps, they thought that they were reaching towards something grand or great, they realized that it was nothing compared to the vastness of creation itself.

In regards to what the Teacher thinks of human innovation, it seems that it is taken in the same regard. While man strives towards progress, and is constantly creating new things, none of these will ultimately guide him into the afterlife. In this sense, these things should not be considered as important as they tend to be seen. Ultimately, there are no things that man can create that are of use to him after he has died. The Teacher, though he has built and toiled to build, seems to see all that he has created as being meaningless in the end.

This is evidenced by what the Teacher thinks of human innovation. “ I made

great works. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.” (2: 4-9) Upon reflecting upon all that he had done, the Teacher ultimately saw it as having been pointless, done in vain self-fulfillment that only covered the true nature of the world to him, and led him astray from the correct and righteous path. The teacher did many things throughout his life before ultimately arriving at his position, including land, slaves, and women. He explains how he built vineyards and grew gardens. The Teacher explains that he was essentially seen as having been successful in his life by his peers and community. All of these things, he considered to be accomplishments throughout his life, which were seen as being positive by him and the community.

Furthermore, in addition to all of the wealth and material value that he possessed, he also attained a level of wisdom. This would seem to be the life’s quest for many people. However, the Teacher explains that once he obtained all of these things he realized that it had all be futile, essentially done in vanity. “ The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them.” (2: 14) No matter who the person, or the things that they had done in their lives, they would ultimately die and be judged for the things that they had done.

Thus, according to the Teacher, people should live their lives living towards the light. In this, the Teacher means that people should strive towards wisdom, knowledge, and morality rather than disseminating into desolation. In this sense, he is expressing his understanding that money and material

goods are not what will make a person happy. “ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.” (5: 10)

In the end, he understands that people will inevitably leave the Earth, to die, and not able to take their wealth with them, they should consider the overall importance of having or not having beyond what is necessary. He seems to have a mixed perspective regarding how people should live, and the text itself is a reflection of this uncertainty. He is pondering the value of considering this morality and perhaps reflecting upon the importance of expressing these values onto others.

The fundamental aspects of life are eating and reproduction. In this sense, eating ones fill and having children should be enough to satisfy the appetites of mankind. However, the Teacher explains that this is another fundamental problem. “ Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.” (6: 9) In this way, the Teacher is expressing the importance of working to eat and have children, beyond this any desires are those that could potentially lead to immorality.

The Teacher goes on to explain the importance of understanding and keeping in mind that all lives will inevitably end in death. He explains that those who live with this in mind, as opposed to filling their minds with mindlessness and indulgence, will ultimately reach a state of wisdom. “ The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.” (7: 4) Tus, those who live with the knowledge that they will one day fade from the world will ultimately walk a more moral path than those who do not.

The Teacher goes on to explain that even those people who go out of their way to do good deeds have the same fear of God as those who are wicked and do immoral things. “ In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.” (7: 14) In this sense, a person should not fear the idea of God and death, and work for the afterlife, rather than for the world that they find themselves within.

9. What advice does the Teacher have for young people? (Eccl. 11: 7-10, 12: 1-2)

In the end, the Teacher gives advice to those young people that might be in contact with his words. He expresses their need to live in and enjoy their years of youth, before the weight of the world begins to press upon them. “ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.” (11: 9)

This is the essential message of Ecclesiastes. That there are, in fact, no things upon the Earth that men should work for. They should, instead, live in reverence of the fact that they will one day return to their creators. This, though, does not mean that they should not enjoy their lives, rather they should enjoy what they can, in the understanding that the things they create and build will, like them, return to the Earth.

This is the important advice within the context of the work. It is important for people to enjoy their youth, and not become too enamored in the trappings of wealth and worldly possessions. This is due to the fact that these things

cannot be taken along after death. In a sense, the most important aspect of life is to live it in a moral way, in regards to the fact that the end of life brings the end of all of the things of the world.

## **References**

Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version. Zondervan Publishing, 1989.