



# BETTER

## Some Things Never Change

#npbetter

Week 9

9 of 12

August 2, 2020

**Bottom Line:** Death is certain; life is out of my control.

**Icebreaker:** What's on your bucket list? Share something and a reason it matters to you.

**Key Verse:** *This, too, I carefully explored: Even though the actions of godly and wise people are in God's hands, no one knows whether God will show them favor.* Ecclesiastes 9:1

Solomon says that there is nothing new under the sun—history basically repeats itself. COVID-19 has shown us one more time that we are all going to die—we are not in control. But Solomon tells us we can't let that rob us of life's joy. Don't let the mundane duties of life rob you. Don't let the pain of life rob you. Don't let the mystery of life rob you. Life is meant to be joyful. We can enjoy life if we remember that **death is certain. Don't deny it and don't ignore it.** Think of it as God does. If you think that death is the end of everything, it will warp the way you live life. God says death is not the end of the good He has planned, but we are not in control of our death. Everyone will die sometime, and God is in charge. While we are living, God wants to not **despise death**, but to **embrace life**. You do it by enjoying the simple things. **Enjoy your meals.** Eat them with your family and relax. **Enjoy your routines** and make every day a special day by honoring your occasions. **Enjoy your spouse.** Move them up on your priority list and make some memories. **Enjoy your work.** Whatever you do, do well. Death is certain, so embrace life while you can.

On the other hand, **life is uncertain.** We live under an illusion, thinking we can manage it. But all of us, even the most powerful, will find things we don't know about until they blindside us. We can influence our lives, but we can't control them. **The best isn't always rewarded, and the good isn't always remembered.** But Solomon wants us to know that doesn't mean it doesn't matter how we live. He says wisdom is better than strength. Wisdom is better than weapons of war. Wisdom is recognizing there are both things and people in life you can't control. The one thing that you can control is your response to all of those things and people. Solomon always uses wisdom in regard to God—being an expert in godly living. It begins with trust in God and submission to God. Knowing and accepting that God is in control is wisdom. Wisdom is good, but when one chooses not to embrace the wisdom of God, not to see and live life from God's perspective, one person can destroy much good. When life gives you choices, choose better.

### THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Is it hard for you to have a "funeral moment"? Why or why not?

When you are "robbed of the joy of life," what is the most likely thief?

Do you struggle with the inequities of life and wonder why God doesn't do anything about it? What bothers you most? How do you resolve/accept it?

How does the belief that death ends it all, that when you're done, you're done, impact the way a person lives?

It seems that realizing God is in control of all of this might make people tend to bitterness. Solomon believed that acknowledging God is in control led to peace. How and why do you think so?

What life routines give you joy?

### LOOK IT OVER <<<

Solomon's advice is extraordinarily practical. What do you think you might do to enjoy your spouse/family more? How about your mealtimes? What if you are single? How could you enjoy your work more?

Stuart Hall, a pastor who unexpectedly lived through a brutal case of COVID-19, (see his testimony here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdkQMSTgi2E>) says that he believes we struggle because we have made an idol of certainty. Reflect and discuss.

The best isn't always rewarded, the good isn't always remembered. How does that square with our attitude toward prayer? What would you say to someone who sees this as a depressive, fatalistic look at life?

When life offers you choices, choose better. Choose trust and submission. Can you share an experience in your life where you have done this? What happened? How did God show up?

# NEXT STEPS

1. Choose to trust God no matter what. Surrender to His wisdom.
2. Pray daily for wisdom, God's perspective and skill for living.
3. Determine not to be the one who ruins much good.

## EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

**Bottom Line:** Death is certain; life is out of my control.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

## PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

## DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at [newpointe.org/daily](http://newpointe.org/daily):

Monday: 1 Peter 3:10

Tuesday: John 16:33

Wednesday: James 4:13-16

Thursday: Proverbs 14:30

Friday: Hebrews 9:27-28

***Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.***

*(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)*