

Solomon's Search For Satisfaction

WHAT IS THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS?

Is happiness even the point of life? Is it necessary? Are you happy? What will it take to make you happy? Is it even wise to expect happiness? Is there a secret to it? What do you think it is?

SOLOMON'S SEARCH FOR SATISFACTION

In Ecclesiastes the wise King Solomon describes his quest for happiness...

Ecclesiastes 2:1. I said to my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good."

A... LAUGHTER & ENTERTAINMENT

Ecclesiastes 2:2. "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?"

Aussies average ~ 2 and a half hours PER DAY on audio visual entertainment.
Australians spend ~ \$36 billion a year on media.
Australians give ~ \$11 billion a year to charities and non-profit organisations

https://www.communitybusinesspartnership.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/giving_australia_2016_report_-_individual_giving_and_volunteering.pdf
<https://www.nielsen.com/au/en/insights/reports/2018/screen-time-still-an-australian-pastime.html>

Solomon found that entertainment looks good on the outside, filling lives with noise, light, colour and sound, but not truly answering our deepest needs.

In the classic book "**Amusing Ourselves to Death**" Neil Postman says that modern people are dumber because we have moved from patience and reading and thinking to sound-bytes, tweets, clickbait – fast and entertaining, but no substance.

A... ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Ecclesiastes 2:3. I tried cheering myself with wine and embracing folly - my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for humans to do under heaven during the few days of their lives...

Alcohol and drugs do not take away problems. They just weaken your ability to cope further.

A... WORKING & BUILDING

Ecclesiastes 2:4-6 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees...

Fiona Allon writes: "This book is about the Renovation Nation, the nation Australia became when we took our obsession with home to new heights... Bunnings Warehouse hardware stores, IKEA, Freedom Furniture and House are our new sacred sites... where we spend our weekends... where we direct our desires and fantasies, imagining the joy of doing up the kitchen or bathroom... Shows like "The Block" and "Backyard Blitz" create a boom [and bust] market." - Fiona Allon, Renovation Nation, Pg 33-35.

Aussies like the ancient king Solomon build our little kingdoms. But does it bring ultimate happiness?

A... BUYING & COLLECTING

Ecclesiastes 2:7-8a. I bought and owned many slaves. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces...

We believe that retail is therapy. We consume more and more each year. But we're not getting happier.

A... SEX & PASSION

Ecclesiastes 2:8b,10. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well - the delights of the heart of man... I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.

If you try to find happiness or life-satisfaction in sex, you will always be empty, truly empty. Sex is not bad or wrong. But learn from King Solomon who got it more than any of us – it is not the ultimate answer to satisfaction or happiness. In our culture, we overemphasise it too much.

WHICH ARE AUSTRALIANS ABUSING MOST?

Amusement Anaesthetic Achievement Acquisition Arousal

All of these have a place – they are not essentially bad. But none of these are the meaning of life and none of these will satisfy a soul! But which ones do you feel Australians are emphasising most? The most bored people I know are people who live for these things.

WHERE DID IT ALL LEAD FOR SOLOMON?

Ecclesiastes 2:17-23. So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labour under the sun. For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labours under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

It seems that all that pleasure had made Solomon empty. He ended up 'hating life'. The more he tried to fill himself up, the more empty he was.

STOP WORKING SO HARD FOR HAPPINESS AND YOURSELF

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25. A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in all they do. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

The problem is that we have become (falsely) convinced that the goal of life is happiness. The more we seek happiness the more elusive it gets. Because happiness is not the goal! The more we search the less we are satisfied. But there is no satisfaction without God.

WHAT IS THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS?

The secret is to lose yourself; to give yourself away, to become lost in the boundless love that is Jesus – because he loves you first! The secret to life is not your plans for the future, not your memories of past, not what you achieve or enjoy it is that God delights in you. Now. Rest in that!

Mark 8:35. "Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, And whoever loses their life, for my sake and for the god news, will save it."