

**Speaker:** Pastor Buster Brown

**Today's Message:** The Pleasure Matrix

**Today's Text:** Ecclesiastes 2

*"I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. <sup>2</sup>I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" <sup>3</sup>I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. <sup>4</sup>I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. <sup>5</sup>I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. <sup>6</sup>I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. <sup>7</sup>I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.<sup>9</sup> So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. <sup>10</sup> And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. <sup>11</sup> 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." **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11***

King Solomon in his reflections on his life thinks through his mid-life crisis. This was a time when Solomon walked away from a life of loving obedience before the living God.

He laments his pursuits that led to personal decay.

Hedonism-The radical pursuit of pleasure; sensual, self-indulgence. The ethical theory that pleasure is the highest good and proper aim of human life.

Epicureanism: an ancient school of philosophy founded in Athens by Epicurus, 341-270 BC.

This thought system advocated hedonism (pleasure is the highest good), but of a RESTRAINED KIND; mental pleasure was regarded more highly than physical, and the ultimate pleasure was held to be freedom from anxiety and mental pain. [Personal peace and affluence - Francis Shaeffer, 1912-1984.]

To be an epicurean in the mold of Solomon is to pursue pleasure in a socially acceptable fashion.

**Thesis Statement** regarding the pleasure lifestyle...

*"I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.' But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, 'It is mad,' and of pleasure, 'What use is it?'"*

**Ecclesiastes 2:1-2**

The pursuit of pleasure; “my heart still guiding me with wisdom.” (Ecc 2:3-11)

So I became \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ all who are before me in Jerusalem. (Ecc 2:9)

### The Descent Into Despair

*“How the wise dies just like the fool! So, I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind. I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool*

### **Ecclesiastes 2:16b-19a**

#### Life Lived Under the Sun Only

1. Purpose? (Ecc 2:3)
2. Significance? (Ecc 2:11)
3. Return/Yield? No enduring legacy. (Ecc 2:16a) Leaves it all behind. (Ecc 2:20)

#### Biblical World and Life View

1. Purpose?  
“Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.” **Psalm 19:12**  
  
*“...from men by your hand, O Lord, from men of the world whose portion is in this life. You fill their womb with treasure; they are satisfied with children, and they leave their abundance to their infants. As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.”*  
**Psalm 17:14-15**
2. Significance?  
The creation/cultural mandate (1 Cor 3:10-15)  
  
*“And I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’”* **Revelation 14:13**
3. Return/Yield?  
*“I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”* **John 10: 9-10**

**Response:** To live in Biblically-saturated gospel community where we challenge one another to continuously conform to the Biblical message which brings freedom and joy. A disciple is a forgiven sinner (!) who continuously learns of Christ (in the transformative fashion) in repentance (fleeing from sin and re-aligning under the Lordship of Christ) and faith (trusting in the promises of Christ and the hope of heaven.)

1. Make a distinction between a hedonist and an epicurean. Give examples of each.
2. Why is the pursuit of living 'only under the sun' and 'the pursuit of pleasure in a socially acceptable fashion' death to the Christian faith...(admittedly a respectable death, but death all the same)?
3. What drove Solomon to the depths of despair? (Ecc. 2:12-19)
4. What type of 'wisdom' guided Solomon in his epicurean pursuit? (Ecc. 2:3, 9)