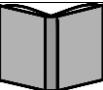




Small Group/ Reflection Notes

	18-06-2023	YOLO! The Pursuit of Happiness	
 Start		<input type="checkbox"/> What has made you happy this week? <input type="checkbox"/> Where is your 'happy place'?	
 Discuss		<input type="checkbox"/> Who is your favourite comedian/ entertainer? <input type="checkbox"/> What makes you laugh the most? When did you last have a 'side-splitting' real belly-laugh? <input type="checkbox"/> 'Don't worry. Be happy!' What's the secret to being happy? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a difference between 'happiness' and 'joy'? If so, what?	
 Read	<u>Ecclesiastes 2:1-</u> <u>26</u>	 Listen again	ChesterRoadBaptist.org.uk/Watch
 Explore		<input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.1</u> : What gives you pleasure? Why do we often think of happiness as past or future, less present? It's either what we <i>once</i> had but have lost, or it's the <i>next</i> thing we hope for? Why can even the nicest/ best of things be 'hevel'/ temporary, like mist that comes and goes? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.2</u> : Why have comedians become the new rock stars? Why is the everyday absurdity of real life (like a puppy seeing itself in the mirror for the 1 st time) often more funny than one-liner jokes? To what extent is 'laughter a good healer'? How does side-splitting laughter demonstrate that <i>both</i> pleasure <i>and</i> pain can co-exist? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.3</u> : We all have something/ different we use as our 'pick me up' (self-mediation) e.g. alcohol, chocolate, coffee, exercise, nicotine... What's yours? How/ when does even this cease to 'hit the spot'? What do we often do then? What happens when we attach certain <i>feelings</i> to certain <i>consumptions</i> ? How can this be 'hevel'/ temporary? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.4-6</u> : Why do we often think 'bigger/ latest is best'? Why do sofa sales go up the nearer to Christmas? What happens when we seek happiness in our 'stuff'? How can this be 'hevel'/ temporary? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.7</u> : Qoheleth's wealth was powered by slavery. What distinction does he make between his <i>slaves</i> and his <i>animals</i> ? What has slavery enabled him to amass? How do we face up to the reality of the UK's slave-trading past? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.8</u> : Why do we as society often promote/ seek happiness in sex? What happens when sex is separated from relationship? How is even the best sex 'hevel'/ temporary? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.9</u> : Who do so many people crave becoming a 'celebrity'? How is this 'hevel' temporary? What might the effect be of losing celebrity status? <input type="checkbox"/> <u>v.24-25</u> : What do laughter, food & drink, work & career, wealth & possessions, relationships & sex, even fame & celebrity etc have in common? They are all 'hevel'/ temporary. AND they are all good, God-given for our	

	<p>enjoyment & good use. What does that say about God? BUT why can they not in themselves bring us true contentment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Why does Qoheleth say everything, whether pleasure or pain, is ‘hevel’/ temporary. So, YOLO – live in each moment, be fully present: yes, eat, drink & be merry. Not to escape the present, instead to be more fully present in it. When/ how does this become sacred? Spiritual? Spirit-filled? A God thing?
 Go further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Watch the Bible Project overview of the Book of Ecclesiastes (8 mins) <input type="checkbox"/> Read Philippians 4:13. Why is this such a ‘go to’ Bible verse? How do we often use/ apply it? What difference does seeing v.13 in the context of v.11-12 make to our understanding? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the Bible promise us <i>happiness</i>? Read Hebrews 12:1-3. Was the Cross a place of <i>happiness</i>? No. Yet, even in this most horrific of moments, there was JOY. How? Again, there’s co-existing pleasure & pain.
 Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Which one verse stands out to you? Why do you think it grabs your attention? <input type="checkbox"/> Which verse(s) will you need to think more about? Why? <input type="checkbox"/> What does it mean to be <i>fully present</i>? Why is ‘our head elsewhere’ sometimes?
 Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take a moment to be intentionally <i>present</i>. Become aware/ conscious of your surroundings: the sights, sounds, smells, sensations... Tune in, using your senses, and become more fully <i>present</i>. If you get distracted, don’t worry; just bring yourself back into the <i>present</i>. Reflect that Risen Christ is present with you, in this moment – right here, right now.
 Pray	
 My questions:	

If you’re not yet in a small group, why not join one! Check out: ChesterRoadBaptist.org.uk/SmallGroups
 Can’t see a group to suit your availability/interest? Start one! SmallGroups@ChesterRoadBaptist.org.uk.