



## **“Death is Inevitable”**

The Good Life: A Study in Ecclesiastes

Week 6 | May 21st, 2023

Community Group Discussion Guide

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Church-Wide Family Meeting + Potluck**

*Saturday, June 3 | 4pm-7pm*

On Saturday, June 3rd we will hold our semi-annual Family Meeting. This is a chance for us as a church to celebrate God's faithfulness, to commemorate what He is doing in our church, to worship together, and to look for what God might do in the months ahead.

This year, we are doing it church potluck style! Citizens will be providing pulled pork for dinner. If your last name starts with A-N bring a side, if O-Z bring a dessert to share! We will worship and hear church-wide updates from 4:00pm-5:00pm then spend the rest of the evening eating and hanging out together.

This meeting is open to any current Citizens Member or Member-in-Progress. Childcare will be provided.

#### **MORE INFO**

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#### **Community Group Basics**

*Sunday, June 4 | 11am-12pm*

We offer Community Group Basics three times a year for anyone who wants to join a Community Group (CG) or has joined one recently. We discuss what a CG is, how they function within the life of our church and what to expect as a part of one.

If you're about to join, have recently joined or are considering joining a CG, register for 30 minutes of teaching and 15 minutes of Q&A with some of our pastors and staff.

Lunch and childcare is provided, but you must register in advance.

#### **MORE INFO**

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## **Membership Class**

*Sunday, June 11 | 4pm-6:30pm*

We believe the church is central to all God is doing in the world. When you read the New Testament, wherever the gospel is proclaimed, people believe, disciples are made, and then churches are formed. When you put your faith in Jesus, you don't just get God as your Father, but you are now put in relationship with other Christians who are your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are now a part of the larger global Church, lived out in small local expressions, such as Citizens Church Charlotte.

This is why membership is so important. It's you committing to play your role in the larger family of God through a particular local congregation.

Our Membership Class is the first step towards membership at Citizens Church. If you're interested in becoming a member at Citizens, or just interested in finding out more about who we are, join us Sunday, June 11th from 4pm-6:30pm.

Coffee + light refreshments are provided. Childcare is also provided, but please register in advance.

## **[MORE INFO](#)**

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## **Community Group Member Updates**

Use the remaining time to let group members share any big life updates they have for the group. Examples could be Missional updates/people to pray for, life updates such as moving, job changes, or big prayer requests.

## **PRAYER + SCRIPTURE**

The most vital component of our time together tonight is the Spirit of God making alive to us the Word of God. So we will start with prayer. We will open with a short prayer, take a minute or two of silent reflection, read the Scripture from Sunday, take one more minute of silent reflection, then close in prayer.”

**Open with a brief word of prayer:** “God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Allow us to hear your voice and experience your work among us. Come Holy Spirit.”

**1-2 minutes of silent reflection.**

**Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-6.**

But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. 2 It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil,[a] to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. 3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. 4 But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.

**1-2 minutes of silent reflection.**

**Close with this short prayer:** “God, death is a hard topic for us to grapple with. Thinking and talking about it can be challenging and we want to avoid it or seek comfort in other ways. We ask that the Spirit would help us see death the way that God does and for us to be honest with ourselves about our own death.”

**As you reflect on Ecclesiastes 9:1-6, what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?**

## SERMON DISCUSSION

Let's have a discussion around these main points from Sunday's teaching:

### DEATH IS INEVITABLE

In the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher wrestles with the evil reality of death, "the same event happens to all", he says. In the sermon, Garrison said we tend to respond to that reality in three unhealthy ways:

- Cheapen Death - We overly embrace it or desire it, viewing death as an "out" for our suffering and pain
- Ignore Death - We try to distract ourselves from ever thinking about it.
- Delay Death - We do everything we can to fight against aging and dying.

***Which unhealthy response to the reality of death do you see most often in yourself?***

### SACRED HONESTY

In the sermon, Garrison challenged us to step into Psalm 90:12, which tells us to "number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." By crossing out various items on our lists for our lives – family members, friends, work, hopes, dreams, etc – we were forced to grapple with the reality that these things and people are not permanent.

***As you crossed out these various items, what were some of the emotions or thoughts you felt rising up within you?***

### THE INVITATIONS OF ECCLESIASTES

James 1:22 challenges followers of Jesus to "be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

At the end of the sermon, we were challenged to live both in light of our death, but also in light of life after death for all who trust in Jesus.

***How should death and eternity impact how you go about specific parts of your life this week?***

## SERIES PRACTICE

One of our key discipleship values as a church is that of practice. Moving forward, we are going to begin emphasizing one of our key spiritual practices during each sermon series. This practice is meant to coincide with the theme of the series, and something we invite our church to practice as a part of their spiritual formation.

During The Good Life Series, we will be focusing together on the spiritual practice of Sabbath. Sabbath is a 24-hour period of rest and refraining from work to be with God and His people. Sabbath is a perfect practice for this series, as Sabbath is a crucial part of learning to find joy in our everyday life.

For more on the practice of sabbath, you can head to <https://www.citizenscharlotte.com/sabbath>.

*This week, we encourage you this week to spend part of your Sabbath contemplating death and eternity. Let that contemplation lead you into prayer as you seek the God who stands outside of time and rules over death.*

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Pray over what was shared in the discussion, for your group to be united in the gospel, and for help from the Holy Spirit to be shaped to be more like Jesus as we put God's ways into practice.