

## THAT'S NOT FAIR:

# Hard Realities Of The Real World!

### TEACHER'S GUIDE

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Our objective in this lesson will be to use Ecclesiastes to illustrate how life is not always fair and to teach the students some ways to cope when faced with the injustices of our world.

#### PAGE-BY-PAGE TEACHING GUIDE

- Page 40 Have the students prepare this sheet before class. Begin class by discussing the introductory paragraphs on the left. Point out that living in the real world requires that we understand that life will not always be fair. From here you can transition into a discussion of the 9 passages where Solomon complains about the injustice he sees in his world. Discuss what Solomon is saying in each passage.
- Pages 41 Use this page as a team project. Have each team take Solomon's complaints and find an example of that same problem in our world. Challenge them to come up with very specific examples, i.e. like world leaders today who are using their positions of power to oppress other people, etc. When each team is finished, discuss their answers as a class.
- Pages 42 You can work this page as a team project, or allow the students to fill it out individually. Have some fun with this sheet by allowing the students to "blow off some steam" about things in life that seem really unfair. This should bring to a close your first class session.
- Page 43 Have the students prepare this sheet before coming to class (also have them prepare the case study on page 44). Begin class by working through this sheet. Discuss each of the five responses and whether or not this response is typical of us. Finally, evaluate whether each is the way God would want us to respond to injustice. Give the students opportunity to add responses not on this list.
- Page 44 Introduce the additional response to injustice that is mentioned in the grey box, i.e. to blame God. Get personal with this one. Ask students if they've ever been tempted to blame God when life is not fair. Then, break into teams and have them search for answers to the questions raised, i.e. if God is just and powerful, then why doesn't He do something about the injustice in our world. When the teams are finished, discuss their answers. You will want to emphasize that men cannot always understand why God works as He does. What seems unfair now may actually work out to His glory in the end. Also, ultimately God will address all the injustice in the world when He comes in judgment. Finally, discuss the story of Joseph with your students. Note how Joseph teaches us that we must make the best of whatever situation we find ourselves in and use our lives to bring glory to God.

I have seen  
under the sun  
that in the place  
of justice there  
is wickedness  
and in the place  
of righteousness  
there is  
wickedness.

- Ecclesiastes 3:16

# LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD



**Studies In  
Ecclesiastes**

# LIFE'S NOT FAIR!



# SOLOMON'S COMPLAINTS

Read each of Solomon's complains and  
rewrite them in your own words.

Have you ever felt that way? Does it ever seem like things happen in this world that just SHOULD NOT HAPPEN? Are you ever troubled by the injustice we see around all too often?

If we are going to live in the real world, then one of the realities we must learn to accept is that life is not always fair. Solomon came to this conclusion. As he continued his study of life on planet earth, he found that there were a lot of things that happen that simply were not fair. He complains about these things in Ecclesiastes.

In this session we will take a closer look at some of his gripes as he examines the injustices of life around him. We will also examine some of the things that we gripe about too! But ultimately, we want to figure out why things like this happen and what we should do about it!

Let's begin by examining some of Solomon's complaints. Read the passages to your right and analyze Solomon's complaint. Take a moment to explain what reality he sees in the world that just does not seem fair.

**ECCLESIASTES 3:16** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 4:1** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 7:15** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 8:11** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 8:14** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 9:14-15** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 9:16** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 9:18** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

**ECCLESIASTES 10:1** ▶  
Life is not fair because:

# IN OUR WORLD

Take each of Solomon's complaints about the world of his day and find an example of this same problem in our world. Try to find very specific examples, i.e. actual people or situations.



Team Project



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# GRIPE SHEET!

It may be that Solomon's list of gripes do not cover all the injustices that you can see in our world today. So, here's your chance to let off steam about all of the injustices that really bother you. Work with your team to find as many examples as you can think of that illustrate how life is not always fair.

Life's Just Not Fair!

COMPLAINT DEPARTMENT

[1] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[2] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[3] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[4] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[5] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[6] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[7] \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW DO YOU RESPOND... *when life is not fair?*

In column [1] you will find 5 different ways that people respond to injustice in our world. You can add your own additions to the bottom of the list. Put a check in column [2] if this is a way you typically respond to injustice. Then, carefully evaluate each response in column [3]. You must decide if this is the way God would want us to react when life is not fair.

[1] <b>REACTION</b>	[2] <b>ADMISSION</b>	[3] <b>EVALUATION</b>
<p><b>SEEK REVENGE</b> When I see injustice, I strike back and get even.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>think about: Romans 12:14-21</p>
<p><b>GET DEPRESSED</b> When life isn't fair, I just get depressed and give up.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>think about: Galatians 6:9, Psalm 73:1-20</p>
<p><b>MAKE IT RIGHT</b> When I see injustice, I want to fix things. I do all I can to make things right.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>think about: Galatians 6:10</p>
<p><b>IGNORE IT</b> I've accepted the fact that I cannot right all the wrongs in the world. I just ignore the world, focus on living my life and take care of myself.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>think about: Ephesians 5:11, Philippians 2:3-4</p>
<p><b>JOIN IT</b> If other people are not going to play fair, then I'm not going to let them get ahead of me. I'll play by their rules and be just as unfair to others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>think about: Romans 12:1-2; Micah 6:6-8</p>
<p><b>OTHER</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## TEAM PROJECT

# ONE MORE RESPONSE...

Some respond to the injustice of our world by blaming God. In fact, sometimes critics of Christianity will argue that, if there really is a just and powerful God in heaven, then why doesn't He do something about all of this injustice on this earth. Perhaps you've even experienced some moments when life did not treat you fairly. At those times you may have wondered, "Why did God let this happen?"

## How would you answer these questions?

Work with your team to put together a response that you can share with the class. As you discuss this question, consider the follow passages:

**Isaiah 55:8-9**

**Ecclesiastes 8:11-13**

**Ecclesiastes 12:14**

**Romans 12:19**

## CASE STUDY

Joseph

If there was ever a Bible character who had the right to feel that life had treated him unfairly, it was Joseph. Consider the early years of his life:

- He was hated by his own brothers (Genesis 37:3-4).
- His brothers first plotted to kill him, and then sold him into Egyptian slavery (Genesis 37:18-28).
- Once in Egypt, he prospered as a slave in the house of Potiphar. But a false accusation by Potiphar's wife landed him in prison (Genesis 39:1-20).
- In prison he was forgotten by one of the inmates who could have helped him gain his freedom (Genesis 40:1-23).

It is clear that life was not always fair with Joseph. But how did he respond to all of these setbacks?

[1] When sold into slavery, how did Joseph respond to this situation (see Genesis 39:1-6)?

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[2] When thrown into prison, how did Joseph respond to this situation (see Genesis 39:21-23)?

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Like Joseph, life will not always be fair with us. Things will not always turn out the way we hope they will. Sometimes we will be victims of injustice and oppression. What should we do at times like these? How should we respond? Draw from Joseph's example to answer to these questions.

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Come up with one very specific illustration of how we can use Joseph's example in our own life.

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