Ecclesiastes

PART I: ALL IS VANITY (1:1-11)
1:1-3 A. Introduction: All Is Vanity
1:4-11 B. Illustrations of Vanity

PART II: PROOF THAT ALL IS VANITY (1:12-6:12)
1:12-2:26 A. Proof from Experience
1:12-18 1. The Vanity of Wisdom
2:1-3 2. The Vanity of Pleasure
2:4-17 3. The Vanity of Accomplishments
2:18-26 4. The Vanity of Hard Labor
3:1-6:12 B. Proof from Observation
3:1-22 1. God's Unchangeable Program
3:1-8 a. God Predetermines Life's Events
3:9-15 b. God Predetermines Life's Conditions
3:16-22 c. God Judges All
4:1-16 2. Inequalities of Life
4:1-3 a. Evil Oppression
4:4-12 b. The Folly of Hard Work
4:13-16 c. The Fleeting Nature of Popularity
5:1-7 3. Insufficiencies of Human Religion
5:8-20 4. Insufficiencies of Wealth
5:8-12 a. Wealth Does Not Satisfy
5:13-17 b. Wealth Brings Difficulties
5:18-20 c. Wealth Ultimately Comes from God
6:1-12 5. The Vanity of Life
6:3-6 b. No Satisfaction in Children
6:7-8 c. No Satisfaction in Labor
6:9-12 d. No Satisfaction in the Future

PART III: HOW TO LIVE WITH VANITY (7:1-12:14)
7:1-9:18 A. Coping in a Wicked World
7:1-14 1. The Contrast of Wisdom & Folly
7:15-18 2. The Wisdom of Moderation
7:19-29 3. The Strength of Wisdom
8:1-9 4. Submit to Authority
8:10-17 5. You Can't Understand All God's Doing
9:1-6 6. Judgment Comes to All
9:7-12 7. Enjoy Life While You Have It
9:13-13 8. The Value of Wisdom
10:1-12:8 B. Counsel for the Uncertainties of Life
10:16-20 2. Wisdom Related to the King
11:1-6 3. Wisdom Related to Business
11:7-12:8 4. Wisdom Related to Youth
11:7-10 a. Rejoice in Your Youth
11:1-8 b. Remember God in Your Youth
12:9-14 C. Conclusion: Fear God & Keep His Commandments

Inductive Study Approach

To facilitate “hearing” God’s Word as you study, the Inductive Study Approach employs three basic, sequential techniques:

• Observation
• Interpretation
• Application

Teaches you to see what the passage says and is the basis for accurate interpretation & correct application. Observation answers the question, “What does the passage say?”

Step 1: Begin with Prayer
Step 2: Ask the “5 W’s & an H”
  □ Who is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? To whom are they speaking?
  □ What is the subject or event covered in the chapter? What do you learn about the people, event or teaching?
  □ When do/will the events occur or do/will something happen to someone in particular?
  □ Where did or will this happen? Where was it said? Does the location have a relevant past or future mention elsewhere in Scripture?
  □ Why is something being said or mentioned? Why would/will this happen? Why at that time/to this person/in that place?
  □ How will it happen? How is it illustrated?

Step 3: Mark Keywords & Phrases
Step 4: Look for Lists
Step 5: Watch for Contrasts & Comparisons
Step 6: Note Expressions of Time
(Don’t forget “until”, “then”, “when”, etc.)
Step 7: Identify Terms of Conclusion
(“wherefore”, “finally”, “for this reason”, “therefore”, “so”, etc.)
Step 8: Develop Chapter Themes
Ignore the ones printed in your Bible and instead write in the margin the theme YOU see, centering on the main person, event, teaching or subject of Scripture. (Sometimes themes span chapters.)

Interpretation

Follow these basic rules:

1. Remember that context always rules first.
2. Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God. (Compare and contrast similar passages.)
3. Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture.
4. Don’t base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture.
5. Interpret Scripture literally.
6. Allegories and typology are used to illustrate & confirm, never the basis to replace and/or create.
7. The NT has priority.

Application

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)