

# LIVING ON THE RAGGED EDGE: COMING TO TERMS WITH REALITY

HAVE A BLAST WHILE YOU LAST!

ECCLESIASTES 9:1-10



## The Heart of the Matter

Solomon pulled out all the stops in this section of his journal. With bold strokes of his pen, he declared some of the inevitable, inescapable realities in life. Solomon hammered away at man-made philosophies of life that had failed to provide meaning and fulfillment. Following such brash assertions, he turned to the reader and offered counsel on how to conduct his or her life. In chapter 9, Solomon argued that human beings must accept God's sovereignty and find meaning in relationship with Him. And keeping in mind God's sovereignty and the finite nature of our lives, we must live life to its fullest, making the best of every moment of every day. We may resist the writer's go-for-broke attitude in verses 7-10, but we are hard pressed to offer a better plan, especially in light of the certainty of death and the evil so prevalent in our world. See if you don't agree that this section, though direct and bold, is very much in tune with life today.



## Discovering the Way

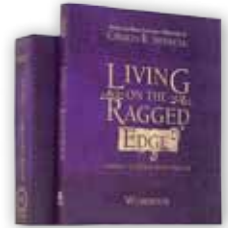
### 1. Familiar Philosophies of Life

Throughout his journal, Solomon blasted away at the bedrock of these man-made philosophies of life, because they fail to provide meaning and fulfillment:

- *Materialism*: Possessions satisfy, so provide for yourself!
- *Epicureanism*: Life is a ball, so enjoy yourself!
- *Humanism*: Humanity is glorious, so exalt yourself!
- *Fatalism*: The game is fixed, so resign yourself!



## Tools for Digging Deeper



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## 2. Biblical Philosophy on Living (Ecclesiastes 9:1–10)

After breaking down the false philosophies of life, Solomon built up a God-focused life by explaining:

- *Inescapable and inevitable realities:* First, we must accept the sovereign work of God, the absolute certainty of death, that a mixture of evil and insanity resides in the human heart, and that there is hope for the living.
  
- *How to respond to such realities:* Solomon then exhorted believers to live happily wherever we are, to walk in purity and in the power of the Spirit, to give ourselves completely to our spouse, and to throw ourselves fully into all of life.



### Starting Your Journey

Solomon instructed us to do whatever we do in this life with vim and vigor (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Based on this biblical philosophy of life, we should live free of guilt, contagiously happy, committed to God, and thoroughly involved in life! Don't wait until you retire to start enjoying life. How do you know you'll make it that long? If you were to die today, would your family be left with memories or just money?

We need to actively pursue the good gifts God has given us. To neglect His gifts or to pick at them delicately may show a lack of appreciation to the Giver. As we partake in God's blessings, however, we must always remember to do all things to the glory of God and in fear of Him (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23). Wise living balances an enjoyment of the gifts with a love for the Giver, never forgetting that "from Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Romans 11:36).

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In the following chart, evaluate your personal application of these four responses to life, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

I live joyfully wherever I am.	1	2	3	4	5
I walk in wisdom and purity by the Spirit.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy life with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
I embrace God's gifts to the fullest.	1	2	3	4	5

Based on your ratings, which response needs the most work?

What specific thing can you do today to begin applying at least one of these four principles?